

News from . . .



Association for Institutional Research in the Upper Midwest

a professional organization for higher education institutional researchers

www.airum.org

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Dear members and other potential attendees of the AIRUM 2006 Conference:

The AIRUM 2006 annual conference is **November 2 and 3 at the Sheraton Hotel, Bloomington, Minnesota**. This Sheraton is a stone's throw from last year's Sofitel Hotel, which clearly jumped to "prohibitively expensive," but houses two fine restaurants. The conference theme this year is "**Enriching Organizational Learning and Development through Institutional Research.**"

Last year saw a record attendance of 111. All members of the Steering Committee of your peers have worked very hard, and will continue to work very hard, to provide you the best program environment they can. However, it is you, the attendees, who control the quality level of the conference by filling that environment with your attendance, participation, presentations, and encouragement of others, including graduate students, to attend and give presentations.

Guest presenters this year are two people instrumental in guiding Richland Community College of Dallas, Texas to a 2005 Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award (www.nist.gov). **Fonda Vera** is Dean and Director for Planning and Research for Institutional Effectiveness. **Mary Frances Gibbons**, a faculty member, not only contributes to institutional effectiveness, but also assists the College's liaison officer in leading the College's reaccreditation process; including its very recent, highly praised piloting of an accreditation renewal process similar to the Higher Learning Commission's Academic Quality Improvement Program. Her primary role is to help faculty in their Quality Enhancement Plan activities, currently the assessment of student-learning outcomes and administrative and educational support services.

Fonda Vera holds a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in urban affairs from the University of Texas-Arlington. Mary Frances Gibbons, who holds a Master of Arts in English from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, began as an original faculty member when Richland opened in 1972. Richland College is only the third higher education Baldrige winner in the education division. I just spent a day and half listening to Fonda and Mary Frances and other leaders of Richland College tell of its best practices and student learning results, which are very impressive and become even more so as you ask for more and more of the details.

We hope to see you November 2 and 3 at the 2006 AIRUM Conference.

Sincerely,

Bill Slanger, AIRUM Steering Committee Chair for 2006

Treasurer's Update

AIRUM's financial activity revolves around the annual fall conference. Virtually all of AIRUM's revenue is generated from conference registration fees and lifetime membership fees. Most of the expenditures are for conference-related activities (food, printed materials, technical equipment

rental, room rental, and speaker costs). Other annual expenses include the cost of printing the semi-annual newsletter and AIRUM's scholarships (to AIRUM and AIR).

Despite increases in food and equipment rental costs, the AIRUM Steering Committee was able to offer last fall's conference without any increase in the conference

registration fee. We accomplished this through thoughtful planning and menu choices and by taking advantage of savings opportunities when possible. For example, AIR offered its affiliated groups free web hosting and we were able to take advantage of this service. This saved AIRUM \$35 per month. For the last two conferences, we have offered vendors the opportunity to participate in our annual conference. The vendors pay for this privilege and, in effect, subsidize part of the conference costs.

At the end of the 2005 accounting period—after all conference income and costs were complete—the AIRUM checking account balance was \$8,669. The shared goal of the Steering Committee members is to offer a high quality fall conference that is affordable and covers expenses.

Once again, we anticipate that we will be able to offer the fall 2006 AIRUM conference for the same \$150 conference fee. Despite the fact that costs have increased substantially—and we were forced to consider a new hotel to work with—our record attendance last fall has resulted in a larger than normal cash reserve that can be used to offset some of these increases.

—Clare Huhn, AIRUM Treasurer

The 2005 Best Presentation

Congratulations to **David Blough**, Senior Institutional Planner at the University of Wisconsin System, Madison. His 2005 AIRUM presentation—*Access to Higher Education by Family Income: ACT Test-Taking, Application, Admission, and Enrollment*—was presented at the 2006 AIR Forum in Chicago on Wednesday, May 17 at 2:40 p.m. as one of the “best regional papers.”

David examined access by income in two ways. First, he compared the family income distribution of ACT and SAT test takers to the income distribution of all families within Upper Midwest states. He noted a decline in some states since 1998 in the proportion of lower income test takers. Second, he examined rates of application, admission, and enrollment by family income in Wisconsin. He found the biggest disparity by income at the stages of taking the ACT and applying to college, with less difference in admission and enrollment rates. He also discussed some implications of income’s relationship to test scores and race/ethnicity.

David received a \$500 stipend from AIRUM to attend the May 14-18 AIR Forum in Chicago.

“This regional conference brought me in contact with so many others in my field in one convenient location and enabled me to add to my limited knowledge of the field of IR through the various presentations.”



Read more about the scholarship recipients and what their participation meant to them. . .

As a first-time participant at the fall AIRUM conference, I was very pleased to be selected to receive the scholarship that allowed me to attend. I was sincere in my comments at the fall meeting when I was introduced to the AIRUM membership in my gratitude for the scholarship.

All college budgets are tight, but those of us at the tribal colleges usually have a little less in our budgets. I had been appointed to the position of Director of Institutional Research in February 2005. I was familiar with the reporting requirements of IR, and I had tried—on my own—to seek out others in the field at institutions to learn more of the role of IR.

This regional conference brought me in contact with so many others in my field in one convenient location

What is AIRUM?

AIRUM is a regional affiliate of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR—airweb.org), a national organization dedicated to the profession of institutional research.

AIRUM’s objectives are to:

- improve and disseminate research predominantly of concern to institutions of higher education
- provide a collegium for professional persons in a common profession
- provide an avenue for professional accomplishment by offering at least an annual meeting at which papers may be presented, speeches given, workshops taught, and other such professional contributions made
- encourage association with the Association for Institutional Research and to promote AIR forums and other activities
- encourage professional identification, development and renewal

Go to www.airum.org for more information.

New to AIRUM?

Scholarships are available for up to \$250 each to cover most (or all) of the expenses for two individuals to attend the November 2006 AIRUM conference. Visit www.airum.org this summer for scholarship criteria and deadline information.

Scholarships were awarded to **Donna Statzell** from College of Menominee Nation, and **Wendy Knutson** from the University of Wisconsin-Stout to attend the 2005 AIRUM fall conference.

and enabled me to add to my limited knowledge of the field of IR through the various presentations. Members were very easily approached and often offered their assistance prior to my asking.

I have utilized the information I learned from the North Dakota presentation on marketing your IR department, and have since contacted CUPA-HR in an effort to assist our institution in HR data gathering for comparisons as a result of this conference. I was pleased to see familiar faces from AIRUM at the recent HLC-NCA meetings held in Chicago. I spoke with pride to the AIR folks following their presentation at the HLC meeting that I had attended our regional conference and how valuable the program had been.

While I know I have a lot more to learn in the field of institutional research, the AIRUM conference is an excellent way to get that professional development boost in a cost-effective way. I usually can only attend one conference in my field a year, and I will make every effort to attend the fall AIRUM meetings on a regular basis. Thanks again for the opportunity to meet and learn from all of you.

*Donna S. Statzell
Director of Institutional Research
College of Menominee Nation*

I attended AIRUM as a first-timer only a month after beginning my first job in IR at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Now in the sixth month of my job, I am looking forward even more to this year's AIRUM conference, and hope to possibly be a presenter. The experience of being in the company of so many like-minded people was truly inspiring. I came to IR later than many people, but I have embraced my new field with my whole heart, and look forward to being a part of AIRUM for many years to come. Thank you for the scholarship and for holding a wonderful conference!

*Wendy S. Knutson
Associate Institutional Planner
University of Wisconsin-Stout*

2006 Steering Committee

New members **Gretchen Bogenrief**, **Mark Schmidt**, and **Peter M. Radcliffe** were elected at the 2005 conference replacing the three-year terms of **Sr. Georgia Christensen**, FSPA, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, Viterbo University; **Jeri Kurtz**, Director of Institutional Research, South Dakota State University; and **Kay Ma-**

gadance, Director of Institutional Planning, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Interest in being on the committee is always high. New membership is determined by a vote of the existing Steering Committee, which attempts to maintain a balance of geographical and institutional representation as required by the AIRUM Constitution.

Contact information for all eight steering committee members can be found at www.airum.org.

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Gretchen Bogenrief: I've worked for Briar Cliff University for 15 years, starting as a grant writer in Institutional Advancement, supporting a capital campaign. After the campaign ended, we won a five-year Department of Education Title III grant, which I coordinated from 1994-1999, and which networked the campus and provided computers and training for students, faculty and staff. When that grant ended, I moved to the Library as Electronic Services Librarian and helped facilitate a migration to a new automated system while expanding the library's website, installing a proxy server for off-campus access to our online subscription databases, developing an acquisitions database, online ILL request forms, and generally supporting library users and "all things digital" in the Library.

During my nearly three-year tenure in the Library, I helped our Provost develop another Title III application, this time to enhance BCU's science laboratories and other classrooms as well as to ensure a robust assessment program takes hold to improve institutional effectiveness. With a 2004 accreditation looming, I joined the Steering Committee and put library skills to work collecting data for the accreditation process and developing Briar Cliff's first online Fact Book.

I became Director for Assessment and Institutional Research through the second Title III grant, and have been involved with the Provost and faculty to

develop new Program Review criteria, procedures, and quantitative data for each program undergoing review, while answering survey requests, performing peer comparisons, and other staples of the trade. I continue to enjoy teaching EDUC 500: Library Information and Research in Education for Briar Cliff's Master's of Arts in Education program and, with another capital campaign on the horizon, will most likely be exercising my grant-writing chops again.

I have been a member of AIRUM since 2002, AIR since 2003, and last summer completed Penn State University's course, "Foundations and Fundamentals of

Institutional Research.” As a relative newcomer to the profession, I’m pleased to be working alongside some wonderful colleagues on AIRUM’s Steering Committee.

Mark Schmidt: I’ve worked for North Dakota State University and the Tri-College University for over eight years. Currently I’m an assistant professor in the School of Education’s Institutional Analysis doctoral program. As with most members of AIRUM, I didn’t wake up one morning and decide to become a professor in institutional research. Rather, my academic preparation began with majors in math and music prior to earning my bachelor’s and master’s degree from North Dakota State University in Agriculture Education. Later, my career transitioned into educational leadership followed by an Educational Specialist Degree—again from NDSU concluding with a Ph.D. from The Florida State University in Comprehensive Vocational Education with an emphasis on higher education program development.

My affiliation and membership in the Association of Institutional Research and the Southern Association began while at FSU. The offices for my program of study were across the hall from the AIR offices. As a result, I made the acquaintance of the Executive Director, Dr. Terrance Russell, many of the AIR staff, and the activities of the organization. Dr. Russell later served on my doctoral committee.

This affiliation with AIR continued in 2001 when the Dean of the Graduate School at NDSU challenged our faculty to develop and implement three new doctoral programs. Two of the programs: Occupational and Adult Education implemented in 2003 currently has 64 students. The Institutional Analysis doctoral degree tracts were modeled after AIR affiliated certificate programs that focused on institutional research in higher education and expanded to also include K-12 education.

This past fall, I transferred from Educational Leadership to the Institutional Analysis program fulltime. My duties include supervising program development with tenure tract and adjunct faculty, and advising general leadership master’s students and doctoral students in both tracts. Teaching responsibilities include statistics, research designs, and organizational theories. My service area and a great deal of my scholarship focus are on assessment of student learning and accreditation processes.

Peter M. Radcliffe: I’ve worked for the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota for the past eight years, first in the rank of Analyst, and since 2001 as a Senior Analyst. I advise the Chief Financial Officer, Dean, and Associate Deans on data issues, particularly in the areas of student success and enrollment management.

Like many institutional researchers, I wandered into the field by happy accident. I earned my undergraduate degrees in Economics and Political Science from the University of Minnesota, here in the College of Liberal

Arts, and then left for graduate school at The Ohio State University. After earning my Ph.D. in Political Science, I was home-sick and returned to Minnesota, where I stumbled into institutional research after answering a newspaper ad for my current position.

In my former life as a political scientist, I specialized in political parties and interest groups, particularly in the area of campaign finance. I also taught research methods and statistics, political behavior, and legislative politics. In my current incarnation as an institutional researcher, my research interests include student retention and graduation and performance measurement.

2005 Conference Evaluation

Last fall, the AIRUM conference was attended by 111 college faculty, staff, and students from around the upper Midwest region—the largest attendance ever! There was a good balance of “old-timers” and “new comers.” Assessments of key conference indicators are shown below:

| 2005 Conference Survey Results | | |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| <i>Based on a scale of 5 (excellent) to 1 (poor)</i> | | |
| Item | N | Mean |
| Keynote: Victor Borden | 38 | 4.39 |
| Keynote: Karen Soloman | 29 | 4.24 |
| Concurrent sessions | 38 | 4.05 |
| Range of topics covered | 38 | 4.08 |
| Keynote nationally known | 34 | 3.09 |
| Registration costs | 38 | 4.42 |
| Quality of food | 38 | 4.26 |
| Breakout session rooms | 34 | 3.97 |
| Hotel costs | 17 | 4.47 |
| Hotel room accommodations | 15 | 4.67 |
| Location: Bloomington, MN | 38 | 4.84 |
| Conference Mean rating | 37 | 4.41 |

Based on open-ended comments such as “really liked the Hotel Sofitel Bloomington location,” the Steering Committee approached the hotel again this spring, but was disappointed with a substantial increase in costs over last year’s rates. On the bright side, right across the street, the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel came in with a strong contract and will provide a beautiful site for the conference this year.

—Leonard Goldfine, AIRUM Steering Committee

Address Correct?

Contact Clare Huhn, chuhn@vc.wisc.edu, if your address is incorrect.

News from . . . AIRUM is published semi-annually. The next issue—fall 2006—will have more information about the annual conference.