

IAIR Newsletter

October 2000

IAIR ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE 2000

Thursday and Friday, November 2-3, 2000
Touch of Nature Environmental Center
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Information for Decision-Making in the 21st Century is the theme for the 30th Annual Fall Conference with 19 presentations by Illinois colleagues. **Dr. Hazel Loucks**, Deputy Governor of Education, is the keynote speaker at the Thursday luncheon. **Erika Johanson**, University of Indiana, Bloomington, is the presenter of the pre-conference workshop entitled *Research Designs for Institutional Researchers*. Erika is a Research Analyst in the Office of the Registrar. This pre-conference workshop topic was presented at the AIR conference in Cincinnati this past summer.

Southern Illinois University-Carbondale is looking forward to hosting the annual, statewide conference for institutional research. SIUC is home to a unique center for outdoor, environmental, and experiential learning known as *Touch of Nature Environmental Center*. It

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Research Note on Outsourcing Surveys and Data Entry

Trudy Bers, Gene Atkin, Pam Galowich
Oakton Community College, Office of Research

Oakton Community College just completed a mini-research project about the process of conducting surveys. We did this through a Request for Proposals (RFP) for companies to conduct telephone interviews and to perform data coding and entry functions for the College. In the RFP we described a multi-part project, the first part comprising the six Career Program follow-up surveys scheduled for spring 2000 and the second part comprising our annual survey of Baccalaureate-Transfer Alumni, which we conduct each summer.

The Career Program surveys comply with ICCB requirements, though we typically expand the survey population and the items on the questionnaire in order to obtain more useful information for the College. Thus questionnaires and population definitions are customized. We anticipate a total target of some 350 completed interviews for the six surveys. For the Baccalaureate-Transfer study we survey students who earned 30 or more credits or an associate degree in a transfer curriculum, and who have been away from Oakton for one year or three years. We target 300 completions for each cohort (away one or three years).

We sent the RFP to ten companies identified through our own knowledge, recommendations from others, and requests for the proposal that were prompted by a notice in our local newspapers. A week before proposals were due we contacted the companies we'd not received proposals from to remind them of the project and deadline date. We received five proposals. The other five organizations told us they couldn't do the job within the timeframe, felt the project was more complicated than

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has become well respected in North America for programs that emphasize both natural and human resources. Dress is casual. Bring your walking shoes. *Touch of Nature* is bordered by the Shawnee National Forest, Giant City State Park, and Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge.

The Continuing Education office at SIUC will handle your reservations for the conference as well as collect your IAIR dues. Conference registration can be done on-line using a credit card at the Continuing Education web site <http://www.dce.siu.edu>. Conference registration fee is \$90 and \$10 for the pre-conference workshop. All meals and breaks, beginning with Thursday luncheon through Friday luncheon, and registration materials are included in the \$90 registration fee. A continental breakfast is available for \$3.50 on Thursday morning (8-9 a.m.) for early arrivals. Registrations will be accepted through Monday, October 23.

- Lodging at *Touch of Nature* (618-453-1121) is encouraged. Facilities, such as Super 8 (618-457-8822) and the Hampton Inn (1-800-hampton or 618-549-6900), are also available.
- Check the Institutional Research and Studies homepage at SIUC for more information and updates: <http://www.irs.siu.edu>.

Please feel free to contact Linda Benz, Program Chair (618-536-2384 or llbenz@siu.edu) or Rhonda Kline, Associate Program Chair (309-298-1185 or Rhonda_Kline@cmail.wiu.edu). ☞

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versity Indianapolis; phone (317) 274-8213 or e-mail: vborden@iupui.edu.

Also, be sure to plan for the 2001 AIR Forum in Long Beach. It should be another excellent Forum. The facilities, including the hotels and meeting center, are all centrally located and are all nearly new (plus, you can even get a hotel room on the nearby Queen Mary if you prefer vintage accommodations). Although the committee slots for the 2001 Forum are already filled, **John Porter**, the current Forum Chair, will also be looking for additional people to facilitate sessions at the Long Beach Forum to be held next June. John is at Arizona State University and can be reached at (480) 965-1550 or e-mail: john.porter@asu.edu. ☞

THE IAIR NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is a publication of the Illinois Association of Institutional Research (IAIR). It is intended to provide information on issues and events important to members of the Association. It is produced semi-annually in October and April. The newsletter is published in both paper and electronic form. The electronic form may be accessed via the Internet on the IAIR website at:

<http://www.ppsis.ilstu.edu/IAIR/default.asp>

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Comings and Goings

Joe Lanni recently became the Associate Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning at National-Louis University. Before coming to NLU he was director of institutional research at Southeast Missouri State University for two years. Prior to that, Joe was a postdoctoral fellow at the National Center for Education Statistics for one year. Joe started in institutional research at Montgomery College in Maryland where he was a research analyst for ten years. He can be reached at jlanni@nl.edu.

Joe is joined by **Jennifer Eudy**, who has begun work as Research Analyst at the Wheeling Campus of NLU. Jennifer also has migrated from Southeast Missouri State University, where she worked for five years in the areas of finance and accounting and later as the Information Specialist in the SMSU Institutional Research Office.

Julie Weissman, former director of Institutional Research and Planning for the College of Lake County and, more recently, Associate Director with the North Central Association has made the jump to Missouri. Effective November 1st, Julie will be Assistant Provost at St. Louis University. 

POSITION AVAILABLE

National-Louis University is currently in search of a Research Analyst with expertise in research methodology and statistical analysis to conduct survey research, design studies, make professional presentations, and write reports. The Analyst will also respond to ad hoc requests, and advise faculty and staff on research projects. The Analyst will contribute to the development and maintenance of the IR databases and website. A Bachelor's degree is required; a graduate degree is preferred. Salary will start between \$37K and \$41K. See the AIR website for full details on this position. To apply send a cover letter and resume to:


National-Louis University
1000 Capitol Drive
Wheeling, IL 60090
Attention: Human Resources
FAX: (847) 465-5610

they could manage, gave no particular reason or, in one case, never communicated back to us.

Here are some of the things we learned through the RFP process:

Expertise about conducting telephone interviews and data coding and entry are not always present in the same company. One company called repeatedly with questions about the data coding and entry aspects of the project. It rapidly became clear that this company not only had no experience with data coding and entry, but also had virtually no clue about what was involved. For example, we were asked whether the data should be provided in Windows, and what it meant when we said data should be entered in a fixed-format (we had given sample surveys with data entry columns).

There are multiple levels of subcontracting within the market research industry. In one case we talked with a local company that had just completed a telephone survey for a local community. The representative told us her company hadn't actually done the telephoning, and she gave us the name of the company to whom she had subcontracted this part of the project. When we called that company we were told they had not done the telephoning either, but had subcontracted yet again with another firm. We called that firm, which did submit a proposal. We don't know if they further subcontract any of the work.

Advanced technology isn't always more efficient or cost-effective. Companies that use Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) technology were more expensive than were those using paper surveys with separate data entry procedures. The set-up fees for CATI were typically more costly than the separate data entry charges. If the identical survey is used each year set-up costs might not have to be done more than once, at Oakton we customize surveys for each program so the exact survey is not repeated over time. 

**Amtrak Passenger Information and
Reservations between Chicago and
Carbondale:**

<http://reservations.amtrak.com>

President's Report

IAIR Fall Conference

The Illinois Association for Institutional Research annual conference is coming up on November 2-3, 2000 at SIU's *Touch of Nature Environmental Center* near Carbondale.

Linda Benz, our program chair, and **Rhonda Kline** our associate program chair have done a super job of putting together a great conference program for us. Check out Linda's article on page 1 of this newsletter. And if you're from the northern part of the state, Amtrak offers a great opportunity for networking with your colleagues while you travel. Hope to see you all there

Building AIR Ties

We are seeing increased opportunities for closer ties between IAIR and AIR. Over the past several years, AIR has strengthened its relationships with a variety of agencies and organizations in Washington, DC, in particular, the National Center for Educational Statistics. State and regional organizations may have an increased role in decisions made in Washington that affect us.

An example is the recent IPEDS training workshops par-

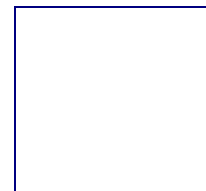
tially funded by grants from NCES through AIR to state and regional institutional research groups. Two workshops were held in Illinois--one in the southern part of the state at Southern Illinois University--Edwardsville and a second in the northern part of the state at College of DuPage, both sponsored by IAIR. The workshops enabled NCES to demonstrate the new system and to train people in the web-based IPEDS submission process as well as in the use of several related analytic tools. Overall, the process was successful and demonstrated the feasibility of that model for future efforts (hopefully, only one-day sessions).

Also on the topic of AIR, **Karen Conklin** from NCRP reminds us of several ways to increase your involvement with our national professional organization:

If you would like to volunteer for duties having to do with the 2002 AIR Forum to be held in Toronto, now would be the time to contact **Vic Borden**, the Associate Forum Chair, and let him know of your interest. You needn't even attend the Forum to be helpful, as many people will be needed on the various track committees to review and evaluate proposals next fall. Since these Forum positions are often filled well in advance, I would encourage you to volunteer soon. Vic is at Indiana University-Purdue Uni-

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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