Facilitator

Volume 46, Issue 3



Southern Association for Institutional Research

Fall Newsletter 2023

President's Message - Kristy Neal, 2022-23

Point Clear or bust! In just a few weeks, SAIR will make its grand entrance at the 50th SAIR conference in lovely Point Clear, Alabama. Let's hope cooler temperatures also make their grand entrance after a summer of record high temperatures in the south.

2023 SAIR Conference

The SAIR Board has been hard at work planning this year's conference. Your 2023 Program Chair, Meaghann Wheelis, has been working diligently to ensure we have a quality conference within our still recovering budget. She has made sure it is packed with educational opportunities with a little networking mixed in. Member-at-large Suzanne Klonis has been busy pounding the pavement and locking in sponsors committed to the advancement of our profession. You will see a few corporate partners who have participated and contributed to SAIR for many years, but you will also find a few new partners who offer services your institution may already utilize. We are excited to learn what they have to offer. If you have not registered for a pre-conference workshop, check the listing. Member-at-large Marc Turner has lined up a phenomenal slate of sessions to boost our enrichment at the conference. The entire board has contributed to the event, and we truly look forward to seeing you in a few weeks.

President's Reception - Saturday, October 15

As SAIR President, I wish to personally invite each of you to the President's Reception on Saturday evening at 6 pm. This casual reception is open to all conference attendees. Come join as we plant the foundation for SAIR 50!

Proposed Changes to SAIR Bylaws & Articles of Incorporation

Recently, I distributed an email regarding changes to the bylaws and articles of incorporation with a marked copy of the proposed changes attached. If you haven't received it, please let me know. Our goal is to move SAIR forward and address challenges faced over the past several years. We will vote on these changes at the business meeting concluding the 2023 Conference.

Looking Ahead

Hopefully, when we arrive in Point Clear, many of us have passed the busiest point of Fall reporting, and we can refocus and enjoy the opportunities SAIR provides. May it be a time to refresh and recharge.

See you in October!

Kristy R. Neal SAIR President



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SAIR

http://sair.org/about-sair/

PresidentKristy Neal
Louisiana State University, LA

Vice President Meaghann Wheelis Baylor University, TX

Past President Emily Erwin River Parishes Community College, LA

Treasurer
James Hunt
Florida State University, FL

Secretary Eric Atchison Arkansas State University System, AR

Members-at-Large

Member Engagement & Awards Molly Hall Virginia Tech, VA

Professional DevelopmentG. Marc Turner
Texas State University, TX

Registration Wendy Broyles Troy University, AL

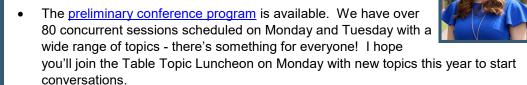
Sponsors & Exhibitors Suzanne Klonis Furman University, SC

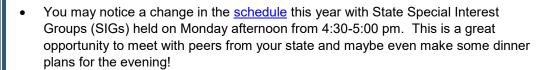


Vice President & 2023 Conference Program Chair Meaghann Wheelis, 2022-23

SAIR 50 is only a few weeks away!

As you make plans for your time at the conference, don't forget to check out these resources on the conference website:





 Speaking of dinner plans....the Local Arrangements Committee has prepared a "Guide to Point Clear" with recommendations for dining and other activities in the local area. Look for the shell icon throughout the guide to find top picks!

Interview with Dr. Jason Simon, SAIR 50 Keynote Speaker

This year's opening session is one you won't want to miss! Join us on Sunday evening to hear Dr. Jason Simon discuss all things Artificial Intelligence in his presentation titled *Innovation Amplified: Harnessing Al/NLP to Help Push Institutional Research Forward*. We had a few questions for Dr. Simon to help attendees prepare for Sunday's presentation:



What interested you in AI?

I am always looking for ways to be of service and value to my campus in terms of marshalling data resources and opportunities to improve the outcomes for our students and stakeholders. I believe this mindset is consistent with our AIR Statement of Aspirational Practice so it just felt right to dig into Al. Additionally, I realized early on that Chat GPT (while not the totality of AI as we know it) was going to be a disruptive force for all industries. I always prefer being on the front end of a learning curve, and I often think about the future of higher education. This wasn't the first time I had to think about AI over the course of my life. From an early age, I have always been a bit of a scifi film buff. I have seen Al portrayed in a host of ways across a diverse array of characters, and here we are now today, no longer in the land of science fiction but everyday application. Campus presidents were turning themselves into robots, 3rd graders were developing prompts to write poems, and friends were using these tools to plan vacations and gourmet supper club meals. That being said, my interest in Al/NLP/ML grows each day as I learn more about how to best leverage these technologies to improve the efficiency of our work and optimize outcomes for our constituents.

What is one application of Al/NLP you've used in your work?

Last Spring we conducted a three question mobile phone survey. We wanted to know why students hadn't re-enrolled for the Fall despite registration being open for many weeks. In a matter of minutes, we had over 1,100 responses and due to the way the survey was constructed it was all open text in 7–10-word phrases. I ensured that no identifiable personal or institutional information existed in the dataset. Then, I wrote a

Vice President and 2023 Program Chair - Meaghann Wheelis

prompt where I helped direct Chat GPT to assist me in theme categorization, counting, and the identification of key responses. I double checked the findings against my own reading through the themes and developed a Pareto graph to help executives key in on the main findings. This entire process took about 45 minutes. Knowing that a picture is worth a thousand words, I then used Adobe Firefly to showcase a fictitious student that might have said the verbatim quote from the survey. The hyper-realistic photos were combined, and a deck was sent off to our Cabinet for discussion and next steps. The entire process went much quicker due to the support of the technology, but I never lost my own role as the institutional researcher (and human!) in the process.

What can SAIR attendees expect to learn?

While I don't want to give away too much here, I do think it is important to share that we will cover a really diverse set of topics (and do it in a way that takes some really complex processes and deconstructs them for better understanding). We will discuss why IR needs to be focused on these tools and how we are in a perfect place to help provide leadership to our campuses. We will discuss exactly what is AI, NLP, and Machine Learning. We will also talk about possible use cases and hurdles needing to be overcome to best implement these tools. Finally, I will address some of the ethical challenges related to these technologies and how we may best proceed at a time when the landscape really is evolving at a lightning-fast pace. I am eager to share and eager to see how our SAIR members engage with these important concepts!

I can't wait to see everyone in Point Clear! If you have any questions about the conference feel free to reach out to me at vp@sair.org.

Get a 360 View of Your Students

Is your institution using data to anticipate the ups & downs of the higher education market? We can help.

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- · Align academic trends with institutional capacity
- Respond to increased calls for accountability & outcomes
- Manage student & campus revenue needs
- Maximizing net tuition strategies

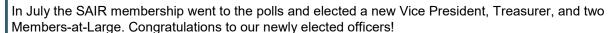
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Emily Erwin - Past President, 2022-23

2023 SAIR Board Election Results





- Vice President Dr. James Hunt, Florida State University
- Treasurer Erica Hughes, Southwest Tennessee Community College
- Member-at-Large, Engagement & Awards Dr. Carley Dear, University of Mississippi Medical Center
- Member-at-Large, Vendor Relations Samantha James, Georgia Tech

These four individuals will take the lead following the 2023 Conference in October. Thank you to all the other candidates who stood for election. It was a competitive slate. Last, I would be remiss if I forgot to thank the 2023 Nominating Committee (NC) for their work in pulling together a wonderful slate of candidates.

2023 Nominating Committee

- LaDonna Eanochs, Alcorn State University
- Melissa Lewis, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- Will Miller, Embrey-Riddle Aeronautical University
- Jacob Pleitz, University of Alabama
- · Galiya Tabulda, Florida State University

Farewell

As my time on the SAIR Board winds down, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to serve this wonderful organization, and for the patience and grace you have shown me. My time as Vice President and President were some of SAIR's most challenging times as we navigated the COVID-19 pandemic. My time as Past President has been personally challenging as I juggled career, pregnancy, and new motherhood. Through it all you have been understanding and gracious with me. Thank you!

In closing, it has been an honor and a deeply enriching experience to serve as your Vice President, President, and Past President. I look forward to seeing where SAIR's future leaders take this great organization.

Stay well, productive, and healthy.

Emily Erwin SAIR 2022-2023 Past President



A Grand Oak lines the walkway along the bay at the Grand Hotel in Point Clear.

Southern Association for Institutional Research Statement of Financial Position As of June 30, 2023 James Hunt - Treasurer, 2021-23



	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
Banks	
PayPal Account	0.00
Vanguard Mutual Fund	71,501.27
Wells Fargo Checking	19,429.87
Wells Fargo Savings	20,735.94
Total Banks	111,667.08
Total Bank Accounts	\$111,667.08
Accounts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable	50.00
Total Accounts Receivable	\$50.00
Other Current Assets	
Uncategorized Asset	350.00
Undeposited Funds	3,000.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$3,350.00
Total Current Assets	\$115,067.08
TOTAL ASSETS	\$115,067.08
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Total Liabilities	
Equity	
Net Assets	172,021.53
Opening Balance Equity	0.00
Retained Earnings	-53,290.75
Net Revenue	-3,663.70
Total Equity	\$115,067.08
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$115,067.08



The pier at the Grand Hotel offers a chance to unwind after a day of networking and collaboration.

Southern Association for Institutional Research Profit & Loss, Accrual Basis April through June, 2023 James Hunt - Treasurer, 2021-23

	TOTAL
Revenue	
Bank Interest	14.11
Change in Mutual Fund	1,420.38
Conference Revenues	14,010.00
Direct Public Support	
Edith H. Carter Travel Grant	5,000.00
Total Direct Public Support	5,000.00
SAIR Memberships	325.00
Total Revenue	\$20,769.49
GROSS PROFIT	\$20,769.49
Expenditures	
Conference Expenditures	5,576.68
Elavon Merchant Account Fees	75.00
Overhead Expenditures	330.89
QuickBooks Payments Fees	16.20
Total Expenditures	\$5,998.77
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$14,770.72
NET REVENUE	\$14,770.72

SAIR Fall Word Search

Can you find all the words below?

V D S E W T C U S E S S I O N S O S H A CIMPUDLOYAWCFCBZPYKW UNSYOUQDNCATFOYPXMEA AYWNNNZPKCHUANMKTNYR D J A G V X S N F J U A L F E W W O N D SSFKQZGOTFGRLEEIMZOS MWZBDPEERILGRRTWMNTI VYEAIFOPZSYGVEIELEER OORWAZRIMMTKBNNCZWKK LELLOVHTNYGKCCGTTCWL EPFUQRHYVTPISECXWOYO AGRXNIKUSHCUEOMTHMVW V B J E N T H S R C O L L E A G U E S U EAUGCUESHAANEKEHPRBJ SVXSPEPEUOVLOAUWGSCC OMDLIEPORNPVAGRTLIDC RCSZMNPTDBSSABDNVHTG EOSUAHEYIWUEGKAWROCR ILVOMUHSLOZZTWYMVFRG TAWKSKQOSUNENFU | AYXC

ALABAMA AWARDS BUSINESS FALL COLLEAGUES CONCURRENT CONFERENCE KEYNOTE LEAVES MEETING NEWCOMERS POINTCLEAR RECEPTION SESSIONS SPONSORS SUNSET VOLUNTEER WORKSHOPS



A view of one of the two championship golf courses at the Grand Hotel.

Secretary - Eric Atchison, 2022-24

Point Clear, here we come!

I love when a unified theme occurs organically, and as you've read (and will continue to read), this edition of *The Facilitator* is all about preparing for and getting excited to join your colleagues for a couple of days to grow our knowledge, skills, and abilities within the IR/IE profession.

Be Strategic with Your Time

In 2015, the **Harvard Business Review** published a short article, <u>How to Get the Most Out of a Conference</u>, that shares several great recommendations like "be strategic with your time." While it may feel like several days provide plenty of opportunities to connect, these will go by fast. Plan ahead to make sure this is a meaningful experience that will enhance your career. I remember attending the SAIR Newcomers Workshop in 2009 when we were asked to turn to our neighbors for a brief discussion. The three people that were in my immediate vicinity (Abby Wilcox, Emily Erwin, and Greg Ohlenforst) would become my first SAIR friends and copresenters at nearly every SAIR conference since.

Make Time for Yourself

Another key recommendation by the HBR is to "make time for yourself." You might think this goes against my initial recommendation to network effectively, but going non-stop can wear us down. We operate at different levels for different periods, so don't feel bad for taking a personal time-out - you do you. I also want to acknowledge the fact that our lives don't stop when we attend a conference. We should take this opportunity to remember to rest, rejuvenate, and restore. Let's also remember to follow the newly established SAIR Code of Conduct.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health & well-being, there is help. You are not alone. Calling or texting 9-8-8 provides free and confidential emotional support.

Signup Continues for the SAIR Weekly Update

More than 300 individuals have signed up to continue to receive updates after the SAIR 2023 conference! We are excited to provide you with the information you need in a timely and efficient manner. Also, you will have the opportunity to manage your own account and update your preferences. If you haven't signed up or would like to share the link with others, please click here.

Newsletter Shell Game

Congratulations to the second winner from the Summer Issue, **Sara Gravitt** (Wake Forest University)! In this issue, we have once again <a href="https://nicons.nico

(actual size may vary - this one does not count!):

Member News & Updates

Carley Dear (UMMC) received the Mississippi Association for Institutional Research 2022 Best Presentation Award for her presentation titled "Outcomes for Effectiveness, Efficiency and Quality."

Eric Godin is now Vice President of Strategic Planning and Effectiveness at St. Thomas University.

Erica Hughes is now Associate Vice President for Institutional and Accreditation Reporting at Southwest TN Community College.

Charles Miller (SLCC) received the 2023 the Louisiana Association for Institutional Research Leadership and Service Award.

Mitzi Norris (UMMC) received the 2023 Mississippi Association for Institutional Research Unsung Hero Award.

Don't forget to <u>submit your news and updates</u> for the next issue of *The Facilitator*!



Several of the more than 20 public art sculptures celebrating oyster gardening along the Alabama coastline. Follow the Oyster Trail here.

Member Engagement and Awards - Molly Hall, Member-at-Large, 2021-23

I am looking forward to seeing so many SAIR colleagues at the upcoming SAIR Conference in Point Clear, Alabama. This year, the SAIR board is thrilled to award 21 colleagues from a diverse group of institutions with 2023 SAIR Travel Grants to help offset travel expenses to Point Clear. Congrats to the following 2023 SAIR Travel Grant recipients!

Newcomers Grants for First-Time Attendees

- Sejin Ahn, Louisiana Christian University
- Dedrick Brooks, Murray State University
- Jose Lozano, Central Texas College
- Sandra Taylor, University of West Florida
- Carrie Varney, Morehead State University
- Elizabeth Wakefield, Arkansas State University-Newport
- Marjorie Washington, Southern University and A&M College
- Rachel Whitman Rotch, Auburn University

Bill Fendley Travel Grant for Second-Year Attendees

• William Luton, University of Holy Cross

Larry G. Jones Graduate Student Travel Grant

• Shelby Morris, University of Alabama

Edith H. Carter Travel Grants

- Ashton Davis, Western Oklahoma State College
- Rebecca Elliott, Thomas More University
- Jessica Harber, Florida SouthWestern State College
- Jennifer Hutson, University of Arkansas Pulaski Technical College
- Stacy Lynch, Louisiana Tech University
- Will Miller, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
- Teja Plyler, University of North Georgia
- Berdikul Qushim, Southern University and A&M College
- Cynthia Senior, University of Mississippi Medical Center
- Christopher Weldon, Augusta University
- Charlie Wilder, Auburn University



For those of you attending the 2023 SAIR Conference you won't want to miss the <u>SAIR</u> Awards Breakfast and Annual Business Meeting held on Tuesday, October 17th from 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

In addition to acknowledging 2023 SAIR Travel Grant recipients, recipients of the 2023 SAIR Best Practice Awards and SAIR Service Awards will be announced. Please join us in celebrating SAIR's 2023 award winners in Point Clear!

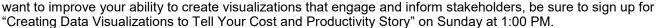
A Grand Oak branches out across the grounds at the Grand Hotel in Point Clear, Alabama.

Professional Development - G. Marc Turner, Member-at-Large, 2022-24

Can you believe SAIR 2023 is just around the corner? We look forward to seeing you for our preconference workshops! There's still time to sign up for a workshop if you haven't already.

<u>Plethora of Workshop Professional Development Opportunities</u>

One exciting opportunity offered this year as a pre-conference workshop is provided by the Higher Education Consortia (HEC) on data visualization of financial costs. Participation in the Cost Study is not required. If you are interested in learning some of the best practices of data communication and want to improve your ability to create visualizations that engage and inform stakeholders, he sure to



Those looking for advice and guidance on hosting a "gold standard" SACSCOC on-site visit, be sure to check out "It takes a (Loveliest) Village: A how-to on hosting an elevated SACSCOC On-Site Review Visit" offered by Auburn University. In this workshop, you will explore tips and tricks to ensure a successful on-site accreditation visit. You'll gain several ideas and resources to take back to your campus on Sunday at 8:30 AM.

Reminder - Separate Registration for IPEDS Workshops

We are excited to offer two AIR-sponsored IPEDS workshops! Everyone who selected these options in the SAIR registration form needs to also register separately with AIR via the below links:

- Beyond Compliance: How to Use IPEDS Data to Examine Student and Institutional Success Saturday, 10/14
- IPEDS Data Tools Sunday, 10/15

Online Workshop Learning Series

I'm now pulling together ideas for the SAIR Online Webinar and Learning Series (OWLS) to begin following this year's conference. This series provides a chance for low-cost, year-round virtual professional development. If there is a topic you would like to see included, or if you are interested in presenting, please reach out and let me know!

Gain Insights into Costs and Productivity!

The Cost Study at the University of Delaware answers the question:



Who...



is teaching what to whom...



and at what cost?

...by using program-level benchmarking of faculty workloads and instructional costs.

Registration Now Open! ire.udel.edu/Cost/About

Registration - Wendy Broyles, Member-at-Large, 2022-24

The SAIR 2023 Conference is just around the corner, and I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in coastal Alabama! If the count-down widget on the <u>registration site</u> isn't enough to excite you, then look again at the <u>conference website</u> and give serious thought to volunteering during the conference. The on-site registration desk is a great place to make or renew SAIR connections. The registration desk will be open in the Grand Ballroom Foyer during the following times:



8:00 am to 6:00 pm on Saturday, October 14 8:00 am to 6:00 pm on Sunday, October 15 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on Monday, October 16

<u>Contact me</u> if you're interested in volunteering for an hour (or more) at the registration desk. I'll send a Calendly link in the coming weeks to individuals who have expressed interest in working the registration desk.

And while I've got your attention, I'd like to mention a couple of Bucky/Buc-ee characters you might like to know before you go...

The Grand Hotel features a signature cocktail lounge named after local legend Bucky Miller. You might want to know that Bucky's Lounge features nightly entertainment from 8:00 pm to midnight and offers firepit reservations on the lawn nearest the point that gives Point Clear its name. Bucky's is also supposed to be a great place to catch the sunset, especially during the Sunday sunset celebration from 3pm-7pm on that one day of the week. Click here for more information.

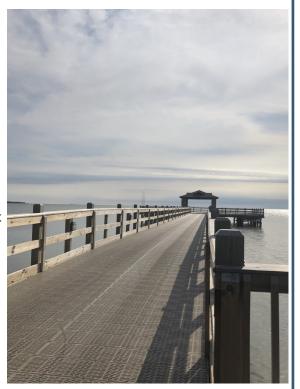
Bucky Miller was a 61-year employee of the Grand Hotel. An award-winning hospitality ambassador, Bucky developed a set of 12 commandments for people who work with people, and I truly believe this list is relevant for IR/IE professionals. "Bucky Miller's rules to live by" are as follows:

- 1. Love people.
- 2. Smile.
- 3. Fill the "bucket" of others.
- 4. Exhibit a spirit of caring.
- 5. Display a "Can Do" attitude.
- 6. The "Chicken Little Syndrome" is contagious.
- 7. Strive for quality in all you do.
- 8. Help people more; hassle people less.
- 9. Never be afraid to try to make things better.
- 10. Train your ears and tame your tongue.
- 11. Tell the truth. It's a lot easier to remember.
- 12. Practice the Golden Rule.

I would love to hear that this is the experience our members have when they check in for the conference with us!

Now that you know about Bucky's, let's very quickly touch on Bucee's. If you don't know about Buc-ee's, and if you're coming to Point Clear from the East through Pensacola, then you might have an opportunity to see the big beaver mascot for yourself. Just off I-10's exit 49 in Robertsdale, Buc-ee's is much more than a gas station, offering clean restrooms, good food, fun t-shirts, and all kinds of bric-a-brac to tempt you to spend time and money during a pit stop. If exit 49 is out of your way, or if you don't have time to stop, you can make plans to visit another time or another location. Buc-ee's likely has locations along your route in the region in Texas, Tennessee, South Carolina, Kentucky, Georgia, Florida, or elsewhere in Alabama.





A view of the pier at The Grand Hotel in Point Clear, Alabama.

Sponsors & Exhibitors - Suzanne Klonis, Member-at-Large, 2021-23

The SAIR Board and members are extremely appreciative for the support and generosity of our sponsors and exhibitors!

Visit our sponsors' booths and ask them to punch your Sponsor Passport, then enter to win a drawing for a laptop backpack and other swag. Exhibit hall hours are Sunday, October 15th from 3:00 PM – 8:30 PM and Monday, October 16th from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. We will be collecting completed passports at the SAIR registration desk.



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Updates from SAIR State Affiliate Organizations

The Alabama Association of Institutional Research elected the following officers at its annual conference in March: Vice President - Preston Robinson (Tuskegee); Treasurer - Tish Worthington (UA); and Nominating Committee - Jesse Lowe (UAB), and Eva Painter (MMI).



The **Arkansas Institutional Research Organization** 2023 Annual Conference will be held at the University of Arkansas Pulaski Technical College in North Little Rock on November 13-14. [Details] AIR will provide two half-day IPEDS Workshops on Benchmarking and Data Tools.



The **Florida Association for Institutional Research** recently began sharing free webinar information on their <u>LinkedIn page</u>.



The Louisiana Association for Institutional Research elected the following officers at its annual conference in July: Vice President - Steven Brouillette (LSU); Treasurer - Andrea Simien (SUNO); Continues as President.



The **Maryland Association of Institutional Research** 2023 Annual Conference will be held on October 27 at Montgomery College in Germantown with the theme "Institutional Research and Enrollment Management: Pathways for the Future." [Details]



The **Mississippi Association for Institutional Research** 2023 Annual Conference was held at the U.S. Army Engineering Research and Development Center in Vicksburg on September 18-20. Newly elected officers include: Vice President - Melanie Davis (PRCC); Secretary - LaDonna Eanochs (ASU); Members-at-Large - Margaret Walden (UM) and Valerie Bishop (MCC).



The 2024 **Texas Association for Institutional Research** Annual Conference will be held March 26-29, 2024 at the Hyatt Regency in Frisco. [Details]



The **Tennessee Association for Institutional Research** held its annual conference August 2-4 at the Hilton Memphis. Newly elected officers are Vice President - Bridgette Decent, University of Memphis, and Secretary - John Grubb of Northeast State Community College. Next Year, the TENNAIR conference will be held in Murfreesboro from August 14-16, 2024.



The **Virginia Association for Management Analysis and Planning** is partnering with the Virginia Assessment Group for the 2023 conference to be held at the Delta Marriott Hotel in Richmond on November 15-17. [Details]

Affiliate Organization Updates

Are you an officer of a state affiliate IR/IE association? Please send announcements to be included in the SAIR newsletter to secretary@sair.org.

