

«  
**Southern Association  
for Institutional Research**

**SAIR 2024**

**50**  
**YEARS**

LOOKING  
« « **BACK**  
MOVING  
**FORWARD** » »



# SAIR 50th Anniversary: Looking Back, Moving Forward

## Featuring an All-Star Opening Keynote Panel!



**Dr. Rick Burnette**  
*2019-20 SAIR President*



**Dr. Christine Keller**  
*AIR Executive Director & CEO*



**Dr. Glenn James**  
*1998-99 SAIR President &  
2016-17 AIR President*



**Dr. Mary Sapp**  
*1989-90 SAIR President &  
1997-98 AIR President*

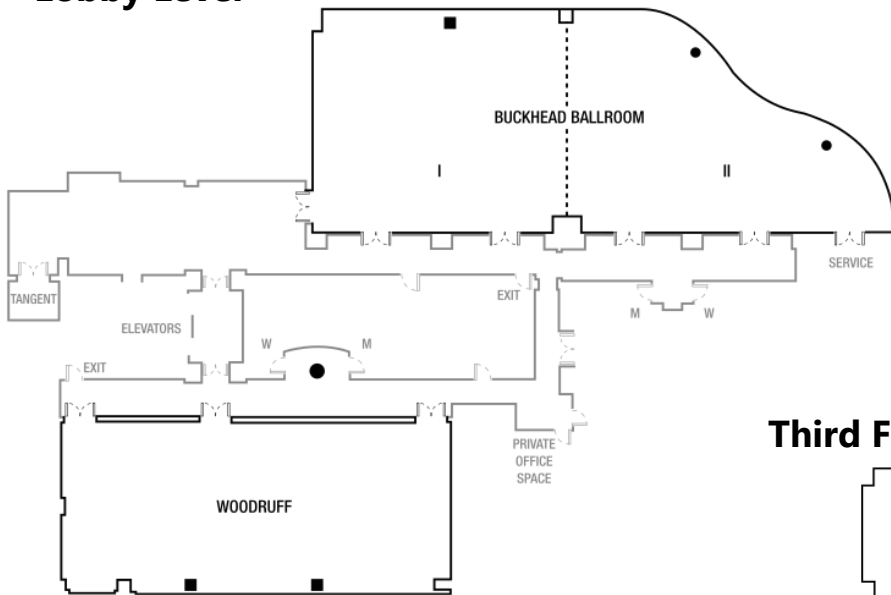
As we gather to celebrate SAIR's 50th anniversary, we should look back on our history as an association and as a field, while looking forward to future challenges and opportunities that await us in a rapidly changing and complex environment. The Opening Session Panel brings together four outstanding contributors to SAIR and the IR/IE field. The panelists will reflect on their professional journeys, discuss the evolution and impact of SAIR and IR/IE over the past five decades, and offer their perspectives and advice on how to thrive and innovate in the next 50 years. We hope you will join us for this insightful and inspiring conversation.

**Join us for the Opening Session Sunday, September 29, to learn more!**

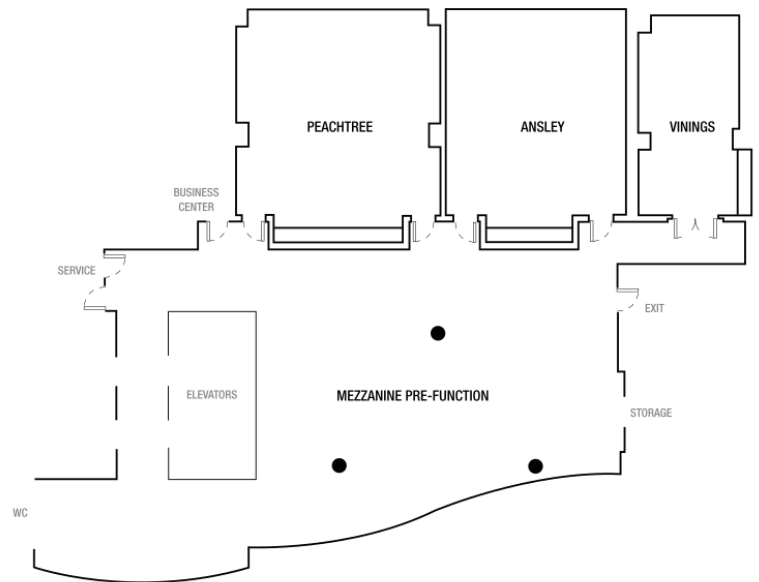


**Scan here for a digital program**

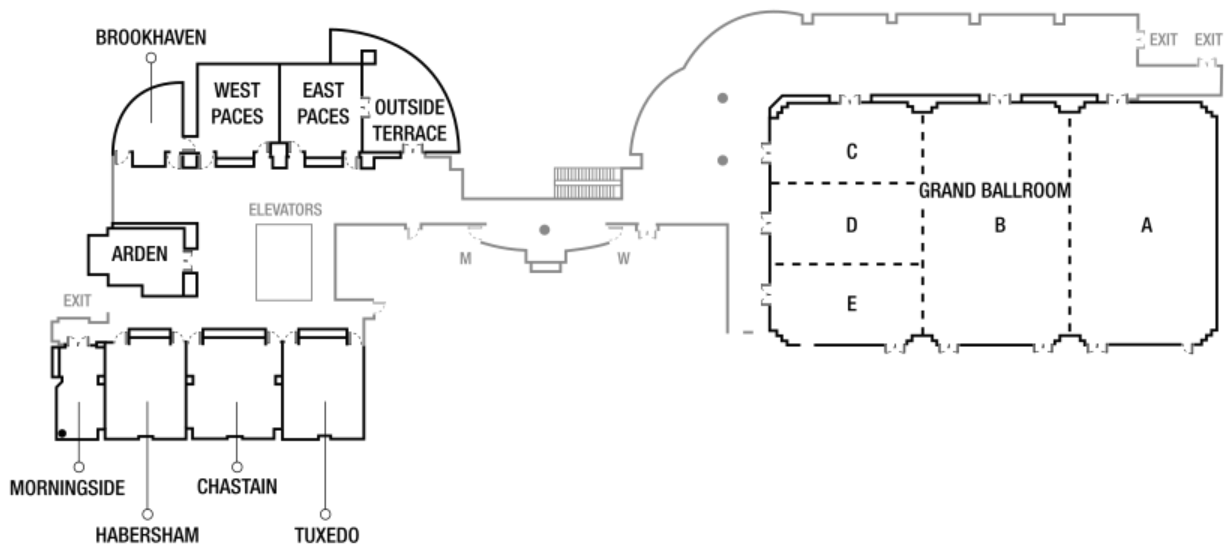
### Lobby Level



### Third Floor



### Fourth Floor



# SAIR 50th Anniversary: Looking Back, Moving Forward

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### Conference Evaluations

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### Conference Publications

FSU Print Shop, *Tallahassee, Florida*

### Conference Website

Michelle Hall, *Southeastern Louisiana University*

### Conference Photos

Lee Howell, *Florida State University*

## Program Track Chairs and Members

### Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation

Ashley Gerhardson (Chair), *Ark. Colleges of Health Education*  
Alex Anderson, *Southeastern Louisiana University*  
Nicole Connors, *Virginia Tech*  
Laverne Macon, *Livingstone College*  
Melanie Simpson, *The University of Alabama in Huntsville*  
Naima Wells, *Embry Riddle Aeronautical University*

### Best Practices in Reporting

Chris Weldon (Chair), *Augusta University*  
Eric Atchison, *Arkansas State University System*  
Jim Lenio, *The University of Tennessee - Knoxville*  
Chris Orem, *James Madison University*  
Justin Shepherd, *Emory University*

### Data Analytics and Visualization

Katie Gipalo (Chair), *Florida State University*  
Hilary Carter, *University of Alabama at Birmingham*  
Ginny Cockerill, *Greenville Technical College*  
Sara Myers-Compton, *University of Oklahoma*  
Lee Howell, *Florida State University*  
Cassandra Kepple, *Florida State University*  
Angelina Kuleshova, *Tallahassee State College*  
Eric Lovik, *Radford University*  
Willie Moore, *Fayetteville State University*  
Jeanna D. Wilkes, *University of Mississippi Medical Center*  
Laura Wilkins, *SOWELA Technical Community College*  
Qiong (June) Zhou, *Baylor College of Medicine*

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Kate Failing, *Mississippi Delta Community College*  
Molly Hall, *Virginia Tech*  
Heather Lewis, *Augusta University*

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Heather Epstein-Diaz, *Florida State University*  
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Michelle Hall, *Southeastern Louisiana University*  
Brian Joy, *Belmont University*  
Susannah Livingood, *University of Oklahoma*  
Allan Joseph Medwick, *Ursidae Analytics, LLC*  
Will Miller, *Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University*  
Samantha Nix, *Florida State University*  
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V. Allen Gale, *Xavier University of Louisiana*  
Diann Nichols, *Mississippi State University*  
Nigel Noll, *Tulane University*  
Rachel Whitman Rotch, *Auburn University*  
Charlie Wilder, *Auburn University*

## SAIR 50th Anniversary: Looking Back, Moving Forward

Welcome to SAIR's 50th Anniversary conference in our founding city of Atlanta, Georgia! Fifty years is an incredible milestone for our organization, and as we gather to celebrate this golden anniversary, we have an opportunity to reflect on our past while also considering the future ahead of us. It was this sentiment that provided the inspiration for our 2024 conference theme of "Looking Back, Moving Forward," and I am thrilled to welcome you to Atlanta where we will do just that!

I am particularly excited for our opening session this year. In 1999 at SAIR's 25th anniversary conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee, then-Conference Chair Dr. Glenn James moderated a panel of "SAIR All-Stars." One of those panelists was Dr. Mary Sapp, who along with Dr. Rick Burnette, Dr. Glenn James, and Dr. Christine Keller, will open our 50th anniversary conference with a reflective and forward-looking panel discussion.

For longtime SAIR attendees, there are a couple of key schedule adjustments that I hope will enhance the SAIR experience. New this year is the Awards Luncheon, which is open to all attendees and will provide a new way to celebrate the exceptional work happening across our region. Also new this year is the SAIR Zen Room in Brookhaven where you find opportunities to decompress and relax.

Planning our conference would not be possible without the help of many people. I want to thank everyone who played a role in in this conference—proposal reviewers and track chairs, session and workshop presenters, awards reviewers, registration and facilitation volunteers, staff of the Westin Buckhead, sponsors, and the SAIR Board of Directors. Put simply, we would not be here today without the generous efforts of these incredible professionals. And lastly, thank you, conference attendees, for making the trip to Atlanta, and I hope you enjoy looking back and moving forward!

Sincerely,  
James M. Hunt,  
2024 Vice President and Conference Chair

## SAIR Conference Schedule


### Friday, September 27

2:00pm – 4:00pm SAIR Board Pre-Conference Meeting (Arden)

### Saturday, September 28

8:00am – 6:00pm Registration (4th Floor Entryway)  
8:30am – 11:30am Pre-conference workshops  
10:00am Workshop Coffee Break (East Paces)  
1:00pm – 4:00pm Pre-conference workshops  
2:30pm Workshop Coffee Break (East Paces)  
6:00pm – 7:00pm President's Reception (Mezzanine Pre-Function)

### Sunday, September 29

8:00am – 5:00pm Registration (Grand Ballroom Pre-Function)  
8:30am – 11:30am Pre-conference workshops  
10:00am Workshop Refreshment Break (East Paces)  
8:30am – 4:00pm Newcomers workshop (Buckhead I)   
11:30am Newcomers Lunch (Buckhead II)  
12:00pm – 2:45pm Sponsor/Exhibitor Setup (Grand Ballroom South)  
1:00pm – 4:00pm Pre-conference workshops  
2:30pm Workshop Refreshment Break (East Paces)  
3:00pm – 7:00pm Exhibit Hall open (Grand Ballroom Pre-Function)  
4:30pm – 6:00pm Opening Session (Ballroom AB)  
6:00pm – 7:00pm Opening Reception (Grand Ballroom Pre-Function)

### Monday, September 30

8:00am – 5:00pm Registration (Grand Ballroom Pre-Function)  
8:00am – 5:00pm Exhibit Hall open (Grand Ballroom Pre-Function)  
8:00am – 9:00am Continental Breakfast (Ballroom AB)  
8:00am – 9:00am Dinosaur's Breakfast (Buckhead II)  
9:00am – 9:45am Concurrent Sessions  
9:45am – 10:15am Refreshment Break (Grand Ballroom Pre-Function)  
10:15am – 11:00am Concurrent Sessions  
11:15am – 12:00pm Concurrent Sessions  
12:00pm – 1:30pm Awards Luncheon (Ballroom AB)  
1:45pm – 2:30pm Concurrent Sessions  
1:45pm – 2:45pm SAIR Business Meeting (Buckhead I)  
2:45pm – 3:30pm Concurrent Sessions  
3:30pm – 4:00pm Coffee Break (Grand Ballroom Pre-Function)  
4:00pm – 4:45pm Concurrent Sessions  
5:00pm – 5:30pm State Special Interest Groups

### Tuesday, October 1

8:00am – 9:00am Continental Breakfast (Buckhead)  
8:00am – 10:30am Southern University Group (East Paces)  
9:00am – 9:45am Concurrent Sessions  
10:00am – 10:45am Concurrent Sessions  
11:00am – 11:45am Concurrent Sessions  
12:00pm – 3:00pm SAIR Board Post-Conference Meeting (Arden)

## Session Tracks

**Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation:** issues related to regional accreditors, such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, the Higher Learning Commission, and other national and professional accreditors, including critical evaluation of student success and of administrative and academic support functions.

**Best Practices in Reporting:** examples of designs that improve efficiencies or practices for producing reports including internal reporting, mandated external reporting, and survey data.

**Data Analytics and Visualization:** effective uses of tools to represent data and communicate outcomes to stakeholders, including interactive dashboards and other dynamic reports.

**Leadership and Management:** navigating leadership roles in higher education, especially within the areas of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, Assessment, and Accreditation.

**Policy and Decision Intelligence:** effective and efficient collection of data to inform college and university decisions, data analyses, and dissemination to various stakeholders.

**Technology and Innovation:** creative and innovative uses of technology, such as business analytics, to support and improve institutional research and effectiveness activities.

# Saturday, September 28

## Registration

Saturday, September 28, 8:00am-6:00pm in the 4th Floor Entryway

## Workshop WKSH05: IPEDS Data and Benchmarking Saturday, September 28, 8:30AM-11:30AM in Peachtree

### Track: Pre-Conference Workshop

Presented by: Carrie Mata, *North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities*  
Jason Wang, *Georgia Institute of Technology*  
Jessica Shedd, *Tulane University*

This workshop introduces the fundamentals of benchmarking as a measure of institutional effectiveness. It is designed for individuals with little to no experience in benchmarking studies. Participants use data from the IPEDS Surveys, Data Feedback Reports, and the "Use the Data" section of the NCES website to learn about the types of comparison groups that can be constructed. Exercises demonstrate establishment of key performance indicators (KPIs) and identification of variables to refine comparison groups. Note: Participants are required to bring a MAC or PC laptop with wireless capability and Microsoft Excel

## Workshop WKSH01: Building Blocks and Baby Steps: Creating a Data Governance Program Saturday, September 28, 8:30AM-4:00PM in Tuxedo

### Track: Pre-Conference Workshop

Presented by: Zachary Hayes, *Georgia Institute of Technology*

The workshop will provide attendees with an opportunity to learn about the building blocks of a data governance program, easy approaches to begin creating a program, and tips, tricks, and lessons learned. Learning will take place through a presentation, in-workshop exercises, and collaborative dialogue.

## Workshop WKSH02: Visualizing Data to Measure and Communicate Using Tableau Public Saturday, September 28, 8:30AM-4:00PM in Chastain

### Track: Pre-Conference Workshop

Presented by: Eric Atchison, *Arkansas State University System*  
Elizabeth Wakefield, *Arkansas State University-Newport*

As a market-leading choice for modern business intelligence (BI), the Tableau software platform is known for taking data from almost any system and turning it into actionable insights with speed and ease. This full-day workshop will provide attendees with a background in data visualization basics and how to: create several of Tableau's primary chart types, aggregate tables/charts into usable dashboards, utilize filters to customize views, utilize navigation tools to switch between views, and publish and share their work. To get the most out of this course students should have a working knowledge of spreadsheet applications such as Microsoft Excel.

## Workshop Coffee Break

Saturday, September 28, 10:00am-10:30am in East Paces

*This break is open to Saturday morning workshop registrants.*

**Workshop WKSH03: IPEDS Data Tools**  
**Saturday, September 28, 1:00PM-4:00PM in Peachtree**

**Track: Pre-Conference Workshop**

Presented by: Carrie Mata, *North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities*  
John Ingram, *La Roche University*  
Jason Wang, *Georgia Institute of Technology*  
Jessica Shedd, *Tulane University*

This workshop is designed for individuals interested in utilizing IPEDS data to examine and measure student and institutional success. The first half of the workshop explores the five IPEDS surveys that contain academic performance metrics (Completions, Graduation Rates, 200% Graduation Rates, Fall Enrollment, and Outcome Measures). Through group discussion, activities, and lectures, participants will learn what the measurements can and cannot tell us about student and institutional performance. The second half of the workshop will involve hands-on activities to work through a series of case studies based on real-life scenarios. Note: Participants are required to bring a MAC or PC laptop with wireless capability and Microsoft Excel.

**Workshop WKSH04: PowerBI Day One: Getting Started with PowerBI Dashboards**  
**Saturday, September 28, 1:00PM-4:00PM in Habersham**

**Track: Pre-Conference Workshop**

Presented by: Andrew Brady, *Florida State University*  
Logan A Poland, *Florida State University*  
Cassandra R Kepple, *College Board*  
Joling Emerick, *Florida State University*

Power BI is a business analytics service by Microsoft. This software provides interactive visualizations and business intelligence capabilities with an interface that end users can create their own reports and dashboards. In a hands-on training structure, instructors guide users on building a Power BI dashboard from the ground up. The session starts with basic data cleaning in Excel and concludes with an interactive dashboard featuring several visualizations. Along the way, the user will learn important information and navigation of the tool, import the cleaned dataset, build the visualizations, incorporate interactive slicers (filters) and format the final dashboard.

**Workshop WKSH06: Visualizing Achievement of Student Learning Outcomes Using Power BI**  
**Saturday, September 28, 1:00PM-4:00PM in West Paces**

**Track: Pre-Conference Workshop**

Presented by: Caitlyn Jessee, *Florida State University*  
Galiya Tabulda, *Florida State University*

Effectively visualizing student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessment data in the form of a robust, user-friendly dashboard can help instructors shift focus from data wrangling to analysis and improvement of student learning. In this workshop, we will guide participants through the steps of building an interactive Power BI dashboard that shows how well each program-level SLO was demonstrated by the students. Participants will learn how to leverage various visualizations, custom calculations, and other features in Power BI to create a comprehensive dashboard that facilitates outcomes assessment.

**Workshop Coffee Break**

Saturday, September 28, 2:30pm-3:00pm in East Paces

*This break is open to Saturday afternoon workshop registrants.*

**SAIR 50th Anniversary President's Reception**

Saturday, September 28, 6:00-7:00 pm in Mezzanine Pre-Function

*All conference attendees are invited to join Meaghann Wheelis, SAIR President, for a casual welcome to SAIR's 50th Anniversary Conference with light refreshments and a cash bar.*

# Sunday, September 29

## Registration

Sunday, September 29, 8:00am-5:00pm in Grand Ballroom Pre-Function

## Workshop WKSH09: Highly Effective Teaming Pt1: Effective Utilization of Microsoft Tools in the IR/IE Context

Sunday, September 29, 8:30AM-11:30AM in Habersham

### Track: Pre-Conference Workshop

Presented by: Katherine Gipalo, *Florida State University*  
Samantha James, *Georgia Institute of Technology*  
Samantha Nix, *Florida State University*

Part one of a two-part series, the Highly Effective Teaming SAIR pre-conference workshop will introduce you to project management concepts and support the execution of these skills through Microsoft tools. In this session, we will specifically focus on knowledge management through Microsoft Teams and OneNote. Participants may register for both Parts 1 and 2 of this workshop series for optimal skills development or select only one part of the workshop series if necessary. Facilitators will provide information on how participants may receive project management educational credit for engaging in this session.

## Workshop WKSH10: Basic Statistics Using Excel

Sunday, September 29, 8:30AM-11:30AM in West Paces

### Track: Pre-Conference Workshop

Presented by: Emily Erwin, *Louisiana State University*

This workshop will cover basic statistical principles and procedures for Institutional Researchers who do not have a statistics or other research-related educational background. Software will be limited to Excel. Topics to be covered include descriptive statistics, effectively and accurately displaying and summarizing data, hypothesis testing with Chi-Square and other measures of association, simple linear regression, multiple regression analysis, and logistic regression. At the end of the workshop, participants will be better consumers and producers of data analysis.

## Workshop WKSH11: A Beginner's Workshop for Access Databases using IPEDS Downloads

Sunday, September 29, 8:30AM-11:30AM in Chastain

### Track: Pre-Conference Workshop

Presented by: Julia Thompson, *Auburn University*  
Danielle Navarrete, *Auburn University*

IPEDS has available almost twenty years of Microsoft Access databases summarizing submissions from all participating institutions. In this half-day workshop, we will download their most recent version and use it for a beginner's introduction to Access. We will learn how to decipher the table and column names, create some simple queries, use query results to build a visualization, and even explore the SQL generated behind the scenes. Geared toward true beginners, the workshop requires no previous database experience,

## Workshop WKSH08: Newcomers Workshop

Sunday, September 29, 8:30AM-4:00PM in Buckhead I

### Track: Pre-Conference Workshop

Presented by: Tracey Baham, *Mississippi State University*  
Carley Dear, *University of Mississippi Medical Center*  
Jeanna Wilkes, *University of Mississippi Medical Center*



The workshop will provide an introduction to institutional research, its principal components, and the practices of institutional researchers including the sourcing of data, communication and reporting of data, and the role of institutional research in supporting assessment and accreditation. The workshop will also address how institutional research offices function and how to be an effective practitioner of institutional research. Lunch is included with this session.



**Workshop WKSH07: IPEDS Beyond Compliance: How to Use IPEDS Data to Examine Student and Institutional Success**

**Sunday, September 29, 8:30AM-4:00PM in Peachtree**

**Track: Pre-Conference Workshop**

Presented by: Eric Atchison, *Arkansas State University System*  
Carrie Mata, *North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities*  
John Ingram, *La Roche University*  
Jason Wang, *Georgia Institute of Technology*  
Jessica Shedd, *Tulane University*

This workshop is designed for individuals interested in utilizing IPEDS data to examine and measure student and institutional success. The first half of the workshop explores the five IPEDS surveys that contain academic performance metrics (Completions, Graduation Rates, 200% Graduation Rates, Fall Enrollment, and Outcome Measures). Through group discussion, activities, and lectures, participants will learn what the measurements can and cannot tell us about student and institutional performance. The second half of the workshop will involve hands-on activities to work through a series of case studies based on real-life scenarios. Participants will identify the question being asked in each case study; determine the best metric(s) to use to answer the question; extract data using the IPEDS tools; perform analyses; and present the data to answer the question. Note: Participants are required to bring a MAC or PC laptop with wireless capability and Microsoft Excel.

**Workshop Coffee Break**

Sunday, September 29, 10:00am-10:30am in East Paces

*This break is open to Sunday morning workshop registrants.*



## Sunday, September 29

### **Workshop WKSH12: Streamlining Data Requests using Microsoft Power Automate** Sunday, September 29, 1:00PM-4:00PM in Tuxedo

#### **Track: Pre-Conference Workshop**

Presented by: Lee Howell, *Florida State University*  
Heather Epstein-Diaz, *Florida State University*

Join our pre-conference workshop to discover how automation can transform your business processes. This hands-on session will guide you through creating and managing automated workflows using Microsoft Power Automate and Forms, focusing on practical applications for data requests. Learn to identify automation opportunities and implement robust automated systems across various business functions. Enhance productivity, improve data accuracy, and foster innovation within your organization by mastering these essential tools and strategies. Gain the skills to revolutionize efficiency and strategic capabilities in your workplace.

### **Workshop WKSH13: Rethinking Assessment: A Blueprint for Institutional Revolution** Sunday, September 29, 1:00PM-4:00PM in Chastain

#### **Track: Pre-Conference Workshop**

Presented by: Will Miller, *Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University*

Join our cutting-edge workshop, "Rethinking Assessment: A Blueprint for Institutional Revolution," designed for forward-thinking educators who aim to use assessment as a force for social equity and academic excellence. This session offers innovative strategies for overcoming traditional barriers and reimagining institutional roles. Participants will engage in dynamic discussions, share valuable resources, and explore case studies to co-develop new methods for transformative change. Discover how to propel assessment beyond mere compliance to become a pivotal tool in reshaping educational practices and breaking down longstanding siloes effectively, safely, and powerfully.

### **Workshop WKSH14: Highly Effective Teaming Pt2: Effective Utilization of Microsoft Tools in the IR/IE Context** Sunday, September 29, 1:00PM-4:00PM in Habersham

#### **Track: Pre-Conference Workshop**

Presented by: Katherine Gipalo, *Florida State University*  
Samantha James, *Georgia Institute of Technology*  
Samantha Nix, *Florida State University*

Part two of a two-part series, the Highly Effective Teaming SAIR pre-conference workshop will build on the morning session's introduction to project management concepts and support the execution of these skills through Microsoft tools. In this session, we will specifically focus on communication, stakeholder, and project scope/schedule management through Microsoft Outlook, Bookings, Teams, and Planner. Participants may register for both Parts 1 and 2 of this workshop series for optimal skills development or select only one part of the workshop series if necessary. Facilitators will provide information on how participants may receive project management educational credit for engaging in this session.

#### **Workshop Coffee Break**

Sunday, September 29, 2:00pm-2:30pm in East Paces

*This break is open to Sunday afternoon workshop registrants.*

**Opening Session and Conference Keynote Panel**

Sunday, September 29, 4:30pm-6:00pm in Ballroom AB

**Looking Back on 50 Years and Moving Forward Into an Exciting Future**

The Opening Session will be a time of celebration, reflection, and call to action. As we gather at this anniversary conference, we will recognize the achievements of our organization and engage in discussion about our collective future. The Opening Session is also a time for recognition and appreciation for all of the SAIR members and volunteers who give their time and energy to advance our field and SAIR’s ongoing efforts to provide the very best professional home for IR and IE in the South. Join us in Ballroom AB...you don’t want to miss this golden anniversary session!

**SAIR 50th Anniversary Opening Reception**

Sunday, September 29, 6:00pm-7:00pm in Grand Ballroom Pre-Function

*Immediately following the Opening Session, join your SAIR colleagues and conference sponsors in the Grand Ballroom Pre-Function. Hors d'oeuvres will be served and a cash bar will be available.*

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# Monday, September 30

## **Registration**

Monday, September 30, 8:00am-6:00pm in Grand Ballroom Pre-Function

## **Exhibit Hall Open**

Monday, September 30, 8:00am-5:00pm in Grand Ballroom Pre-Function

## **Dinosaurs Breakfast**

Monday, September 30, 8:00-9:00 am in Buckhead II

Convened by: Kristy Neal, *Louisiana State University*

*This meal is open to all past-presidents of SAIR.*

## **SAIR Conference Breakfast**

Monday, September 30, 8:00am-9:00am Ballroom AB

*All SAIR conference attendees and exhibitors are welcome to drop in to this continental breakfast.*

## **Session A1: Dinosaurs at 50: SAIR Past Presidents' Panel Monday, September 30, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Buckhead I**

### **Track: Leadership and Management**

Presented by: Denise C. Gardner, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

A panel of SAIR Past Presidents, affectionately referred to as "Dinosaurs", will look back at the history of SAIR and the IR/IE fields. Their perspectives and experiences will help shape our focus on the next 50 years. Questions from the audience are encouraged!

## **Session A2: Leveraging Rubrics, Canvas Outcomes, and Power BI in the Assessment of General Education Student Learning Outcomes: A Case Study Monday, September 30, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Ballroom D**

### **Track: Technology and Innovation**

Presented by: Caitlyn Jessee, *Florida State University*  
Galiya Tabulda, *Florida State University*

This session explores the intersection of technology and assessment through a comprehensive case study from the Florida State University English department, showcasing the evolution of their approach to learning outcomes assessment – from the initial, imperfect process to the successful adoption of the Canvas Outcomes tool, associated rubric, and Power BI. In this session, we will describe how we streamlined instructors' role in scoring and documenting students' assessment scores, how we extracted and cleaned learning outcomes data, and ultimately leveraged interactive data visualizations to support informed analysis and improvement of the general education curriculum.

**Session A3: Beyond Box-Checking: Systems Thinking and Collaborative Governance for Transformative Administrative Assessment**  
**Monday, September 30, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Habersham**

**Track: Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Presented by: Naima Wells, *Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University*

Ascend beyond incremental improvements and siloed assessments. Research shows that systems thinking and collaboration are crucial for tackling complex challenges in higher education administration (Stroh, 2015; Meadows, 2008). In this interactive session, administrative assessment professionals will gain the knowledge and tools to drive transformative change within their institutions. Learn how systems thinking unveils the interconnected roots of challenges, organizational development fosters a culture of improvement, and collaborative assessment builds shared ownership of solutions. Gain the tools to move beyond band-aid fixes, create lasting solutions, and improve the student experience through strategic, impactful administrative change.

**Session A4: Investing in Success: Evaluating Financial Barriers to Student Retention**  
**Monday, September 30, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Peachtree**

**Track: Best Practices in Reporting**

Presented by: Katherine Gipalo, *Florida State University*  
Samantha Nix, *Florida State University*

Your institution has been gifted funds to be used to help students with “financial need”. How can you make sure you allocate them in a way that will most positively impact retention? This is a question we set out to investigate. Using several measures of “financial need” (including the FAFSA calculation of unmet need, EFC, outstanding balance in the first fall, and schedule cancellation due to nonpayment), we reviewed rates of these characteristics across retained/not retained students in our FTIC cohorts. Join us as we identify which indicator was the most notable for us in the comparison of these measures.

**Session A5: From Data to Action: Enhancing First Year Experience at Emory**  
**Monday, September 30, 9:00AM-9:45AM in East Paces**

**Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Liz Alexander, *Emory University*  
Shari Obrentz, *Emory University*

With a campus mandate to improve First Year Retention, Emory’s Institutional Research and Decision Support (IRDS) office partnered with the Office for Undergraduate Education (OUE) to identify a comprehensive strategy to collect data on First Year students through surveys which could quickly be passed to stakeholders (e.g., academic advisors, campus life staff) that would allow them to respond with supportive services. In this presentation, we will describe the history of the project, our partnership, and we will share examples of survey questions and the process flow between survey response and intervention.

**Session A6: Peer Salary Reimagined: Dynamic CIP matching and PowerBI Dashboard**  
**Monday, September 30, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Chastain**

**Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Sara Myers-Compton, *University of Oklahoma*  
Susannah Livingood, *University of Oklahoma*

Oklahoma State University's Faculty Salary Survey is used by many institutions to ensure faculty compensation is comparable to similar institutions. Matching OSU's data back to your institution's data can be tricky. We've developed a system using dynamic CIP code matching and PowerBI and thought we'd share our process. The PBI dashboard allows leadership to see comparisons and trends by College, Department, Peer Groups, and more. It also provides 6, 4, and 2 digit matching to allow for quick comparisons at multiple levels. We'll also provide a PBI code handbook complete with Higher Education use cases for others transitioning to PBI.



## Monday, September 30

### **Session A7: Creating Peer Groups that Serve a Purpose** **Monday, September 30, 9:00AM-9:45AM in West Paces**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Chris Orem, *James Madison University*  
Stephanie Stevens, *James Madison University*

Institutional peer group development often falls under the purview of institutional research offices, though it's inherently an institution-wide initiative. Institutional stakeholders often try to use a single peer group for multiple purposes, from identifying aspirants to establishing faculty salary peers, leading many to question the veracity of these benchmarking efforts. Presenters from James Madison University will describe how they revised their peer group development process after changing Carnegie Classifications. Attendees will gain insights into their approach for crafting a comparative peer group and developing a toolkit for campus-wide groups to construct purpose-specific peer groups, facilitating effective benchmarking for decision-making.

### **Session A8: Choosing Your Data Champion: Tableau Prep vs. Power Query** **Monday, September 30, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Tuxedo**

#### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Elizabeth Wakefield, *Arkansas State University-Newport*  
Donyell Francis, *Georgia Institute of Technology*

In the ever-evolving landscape of data analytics, effective data preparation is crucial for deriving meaningful insights. This presentation delves into two prominent data preparation tools, Tableau Prep and Power Query, examining their functionalities, strengths, and limitations. Through a live demonstration, attendees will gain a comprehensive understanding of how each platform operates and how they can be leveraged to streamline data workflows in institutional research.

### **Session A9: Assessing Academic Program Marketability: Free Third-Party Data** **Monday, September 30, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Ansley**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Samantha James, *Georgia Institute of Technology*

Academic program marketability is a key indicator of program viability, communicating the attraction potential for students to specific schools in an oversaturated higher education marketplace. Third party data sources can be used as a tool, providing national, state, and institution level data that can aid in communicating a program's institutional market share, related occupational characteristics and projections, along with associated wage trends. This session will demonstrate the use of a free, publicly available tool. This session will also provide a forum for light discussion of other publicly available third-party data

### **Session A10: The Sorting Hat: an Undergraduate Admissions Yield Dashboard with Exclusion Buckets and Predicted Metrics in Power BI** **Monday, September 30, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Buckhead II**

#### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Zhen Zhang, *University of Georgia*  
Andrew Westbrook, *University of Georgia*  
Isha Naidu, *University of Georgia*

Undergraduate admissions is a process with high levels of uncertainty. To help address this, UGA OIR has developed a scenario dashboard that connects admit decisions with post-yield metrics. This dashboard combines predictive analytics with Power BI measures to give users the ability to admit in "buckets" with different admissions criteria for each bucket and the automatic exclusion of chosen students in subsequent buckets. Furthermore, users can instantaneously see the predicted value of key metrics such as yield, residency split, average test scores, and more for each bucket and for the entire admitted class.

## **Morning Coffee Break with Exhibitors**

Monday, September 30, 9:45am-10:15am Grand Ballroom Pre-Function

*Visit with conference exhibitors for a coffee break.*

## **Session B1: Curated & Reproducible Reports with R, Python, or Julia: Empowering Institutional Research**

**Monday, September 30, 10:15AM-11:00AM in Peachtree**

### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Andrew Westbrook, *University of Georgia*

Struggling to create professional reports that go beyond basic charts? Quarto, a free markdown tool, bridges the gap between simple reports and interactive dashboards. This session is for anyone who wants to elevate their reporting. We'll explore Quarto in two parts: A hands-on tutorial and a real-world UGA case study. Discover how UGA uses Quarto to create impactful reports for senior administration, like visualizing projected faculty attrition.

## **Session B2: Empowering Academic Leadership: Practical Dashboards for Strategic Decision-Making**

**Monday, September 30, 10:15AM-11:00AM in Habersham**

### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Sarah Gallimore, *University of North Texas Health Science Center*

Provosts and other academic leaders often face the challenge of making critical decisions in areas such as budgetary analysis, faculty salary benchmarking, and market research for new academic programs. This session will feature a demonstration of three simple yet practical Tableau dashboards designed to significantly enhance the efficiency of academic leaders. The first dashboard provides insights into budgetary trends and includes "What-if?" analysis capabilities. The second dashboard presents CUPA data in an easy-to-use format, while the third effectively showcases IPEDS data for academic program market research. Resources will be provided for the attendees to build similar customized tools for their own institutions. This session promises to be valuable for institutional researchers at all levels.

## **Session B3: Drive Institutional Success with U.S. News' Data Platform Academic Insights**

**Monday, September 30, 10:15AM-11:00AM in Ballroom D**

### **Track: Sponsor Session**

Presented by: Jessica Locklear, *Academic Insights*

This session will show Higher Education and IR professionals how to leverage instant access to thousands of performance metrics and historical data for you and your peer schools by using Academic Insights for benchmarking and institutional data reporting. Academic Insights is U.S. News & World Report's rankings, data, and analytics platform which college and university administrators use to create custom peer and metric groups to compare and measure performance across internal programs and peer schools. The platform allows you to take a deep dive into all of the unpublished data behind the rankings to better understand any school's performance.

## Monday, September 30

### **Session B4: Enhancing Student Success and Evaluating Student Learning Through a SACSCOC's Quality Enhancement Plan - Professionalism in Practice** **Monday, September 30, 10:15AM-11:00AM in Ballroom E**

#### **Track: Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Presented by: Cynthia Senior, *The University of Mississippi Medical Center*  
Jeanna D. Wilkes, *The University of Mississippi Medical Center*

The UMMC Quality Enhancement Plan, "Professionalism in Practice," aligns with SACSCOC accreditation standards to enhance student success and evaluate student learning of professionalism in clinical and lab practice, focusing on behavior, values, and identity using Canvas LMS and valid assessment tools.

### **Session B5: Unlocking Strategic Insights: Leveraging Proprietary Data Partnerships in Higher Education** **Monday, September 30, 10:15AM-11:00AM in Ansley**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Adam Elder, *Louisiana State University*  
Anna Bartel, *Louisiana State University*

In today's ever-evolving landscape of higher education, institutions continuously explore innovative approaches to guide their strategic decision-making processes. Traditional datasets and tools can lack the depth and specificity required to tackle complex challenges effectively. To address this shortfall, institutions often utilize external vendors to access proprietary data and tools. This presentation will describe how IR offices can utilize strategic analytics to go beyond the surface level of these partnerships to empower university leaders to make well-informed decisions that align with their strategic objectives.

### **Session B6: Natural Language Processing Techniques to Cluster Events Data** **Monday, September 30, 10:15AM-11:00AM in Buckhead II**

#### **Track: Technology and Innovation**

Presented by: Ruchitha Vishwanath, *University of Georgia*

UGA OIR employs predictive modeling to predict post-graduation outcomes to assist the School of Law in their student success goals. While modeling, we encountered the challenge of working with raw events data presented as text. To leverage this data effectively, we chose to cluster the events based on similarity using the k-means clustering algorithm. We first employed natural language processing to convert the raw text into a format that could be analyzed using the clustering algorithm. This allowed us to turn raw events data into a dozen themed clusters in an automated and repeatable process that improved our models.

### **Session B7: How to Build a Data Strategy Roadmap: Lessons from Georgia State University** **Monday, September 30, 10:15AM-11:00AM in Tuxedo**

#### **Track: Leadership and Management**

Presented by: Melissa Barnett, *Georgia State University*

Even the thought of developing a data strategy can cause trepidation in the most qualified data professional. How do I begin? With whom do I speak? Once I find people willing to meet and speak with, what will we speak about? And who can serve as a sounding board for my ideas? This session will answer all those questions and more. Come learn about Georgia State University's journey in crafting a comprehensive data strategy roadmap by engaging with stakeholders from IT and administrative units and leaders, centrally-located and housed within its colleges and schools.



## **Session B8: Understanding the Communities You Serve and Developing Strategic Plans** **Monday, September 30, 10:15AM-11:00AM in Buckhead I**

### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Jim Purcell , *Alabama Commission on Higher Education*  
Patrick Kelly, *Alabama Commission on Higher Education*

Knowing about the communities your college and university serve can greatly improve strategic planning. Community measures of economic and social success can inform strategic plans to improve recruitment, retention, graduation, students support services, public service, academic program development and grant writing. The use of Census and other economic and social health data will make a difference in building effective plans. Using information from Census information, the Misery Index and the Education Workforce and Needs Index puts into focus the needs of communities and more clearly directs campus leader toward effective solutions.

## **Session B9: Winter is Coming: A Case Study on Snowflake for Data Democratization** **Monday, September 30, 10:15AM-11:00AM in Chastain**

### **Track: Technology and Innovation**

Presented by: Rashad Aziz, *Florida State University*  
Samantha Nix, *Florida State University*  
Rick Burnette, *Florida State University*

The siloing of university data across various campus departments and source systems has been a longstanding challenge to IR/IE offices. And yet, universities face growing pressure to apply a multifaceted lens to the analysis of students, faculty, and the institution. In this software demonstration, we will show how Florida State University leveraged Snowflake, a cloud data platform, to build a true self-service data warehouse. Attendees will be shown how source data is replicated into the warehouse, how offices build their own Snowflake databases with controlled data access, and how adoption has supercharged analytics, modeling, and data collaboration across the institution.

## **Session B10: Philanthropic Mechanisms for Postsecondary Data System Modernization** **Monday, September 30, 10:15AM-11:00AM in West Paces**

### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Eric Atchison, *Arkansas State University System*

This presentation reviews the history the influences of philanthropic organizations on the data-related activities of postsecondary institutions. I outline historical efforts spanning the 20th and 21st centuries in postsecondary institution development with specific attention to recent limitations set through the legislative process of the United States Congress. I describe efforts spanning nearly two decades to create a student unit record data system in the wake of a 2008 federal ban. Participants will learn about the history of philanthropic influence on higher education, with a focus on data collection and reporting.



# Monday, September 30

## **Session C1: Predictors Affecting Student Success at Georgia Gwinnett College Monday, September 30, 11:15AM-12:00PM in Peachtree**

### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: William Zhang, *Georgia Gwinnett College*  
Juan Ren, *Georgia Gwinnett College*  
Md Mahmoodur Rahman, *Georgia Gwinnett College*  
Nidhi Singh, *Georgia Gwinnett College*

Georgia Gwinnett College has been making campus wide efforts to enhance student success, which is defined as 1-year retention, 2-year retention, 3-year retention, 4-year graduation, and 6-year graduation. While our past experience has evidenced that these factors may all impact the outcomes of student success such as high school GPA, racial representation, selection of majors, scheduling for classes as full-time or part-time, student advising, and services taken from Academic Enhancement Center. This study was intended to find what factors statistically predict the outcomes of student success to what extent, all on one page.

## **Session C2: Having Bad Data is not a Reason to Delay an Analytics Initiative, It's the Reason to Start One Now. Monday, September 30, 11:15AM-12:00PM in Ballroom D**

### **Track: Sponsor Session**

Presented by: Leslie Sands, *HelioCampus*

Rarely does an institution say, "Oh, what great data we have!" More often, we hear it as a reason to delay the inevitable hard work. As in exercise, bad data are the muscles that have atrophied from years of under-use. The only way to make improvements is to start moving those muscles by actually using the data for institutional decision-making. A data analytics initiative is like a sturdy pair of running shoes that can enable your data-integrity couch-to-5K program in record time. With an accompanying data governance coach, to help during the training sessions providing a focus on consistency to ensure a solid foundation for success. In this presentation we will explore the root causes of bad data, various permutations of data governance and highlight best practices that organizations can adopt that will have them sprinting to success.

## **Session C3: Narratives That Measure: Designing Assessment Templates for Effective Storytelling and Closing the Loop Monday, September 30, 11:15AM-12:00PM in East Paces**

### **Track: Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Presented by: Naima Wells, *Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University*

This session explores how narrative-driven assessment templates can transform educational evaluation by emphasizing storytelling to demonstrate progress and close the loop effectively. Traditional quantitative metrics often miss the nuanced stories of student and institutional growth. This discussion will introduce principles of narrative assessment design, showcasing how templates can streamline data collection, highlight changes, and facilitate broader communication. Attendees will learn strategies to craft assessments that are both meaningful and actionable, promoting a culture of continuous improvement and shared understanding among educators, students, and stakeholders.

## **Session C4: Likert Scale Questions: Writing Tips & Analysis Options (No Means, Please!) Monday, September 30, 11:15AM-12:00PM in West Paces**

### **Track: Best Practices in Reporting**

Presented by: Laura Boyles, *Central Carolina Community College*

This session will provide survey developers with tips and options for developing and analyzing Likert Scale questions. The session covers development of scale categories and tips for wording of the items. Next the presentation focuses on analyzing the data collected, including why means should not be used to summarize Likert data. Recommendations for numerical and graphical presentations are shared, as well as an overview of three Chi-Square tests (goodness of fit, independence, and homogeneity) for comparative analyses. The presenter will share applications to easily conduct these tests. Attendees should leave with helpful tips for writing and analyzing Likert Scale questions.

## **Session C5: Collaborative Solutions for Promoting Data-informed Insights Monday, September 30, 11:15AM-12:00PM in Buckhead II**

### **Track: Leadership and Management**

Presented by: Cheryl Fogler, *University of Tennessee System*  
Taylor Sherrod, *University of Tennessee System*  
Caroline Mann, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

The University of Tennessee System's Institutional Research (IR) team collaborates with campus IR offices to support data-informed decision-making systemwide. This session highlights joint efforts to gather, analyze, and report data while addressing challenges like data quality issues, resource constraints, and communication barriers. Presenters emphasize the importance of collaboration between IR teams and campus colleagues in promoting data-driven insights. Specific projects illustrate how teams work together to improve data consistency and standardization despite disparate student information systems. Attendees will gain understanding of IR team challenges and evidence-based practices for overcoming them through collaborative problem-solving approaches.

## **Session C6: From Buzz to Blueprint: Unveiling the Institutional AI Sandbox Monday, September 30, 11:15AM-12:00PM in Tuxedo**

### **Track: Technology and Innovation**

Presented by: Smriti Ingrole, *Emory University*  
Elizabeth C. Alexander, *Emory University*

Building on last year's discussion of AI's impact on institutional researchers (IR), this session dives into a powerful tool: the "Institutional AI Sandbox." This dedicated environment allows safe exploration of generative AI. We'll showcase its potential through live demonstrations but go beyond mere utility. Institutional policies, costs, and ongoing challenges will be addressed. We'll showcase the Sandbox in action using Microsoft Copilot for a specific research task, such as retention analysis. We'll share how Copilot facilitated text analysis and our process of verifying its results. Our goal? Equip you to assess generative AI and implement your own Sandbox.

## **Session C7: Data in the Rough: Practical Techniques for Working with Limited Data Monday, September 30, 11:15AM-12:00PM in Ballroom E**

### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Melissa Juarez, *Southern Regional Education Board*

We always wish our data was more robust, asked more questions, and was actually complete. But what do we do when this is not our reality? This session offers a practical roadmap for navigating limited historical data to explore student socioeconomic profiles. Learn how to leverage publicly available resources to uncover community-level trends and inform decision-making for your programs and institutions.



## Monday, September 30

### **Session C8: Back to the Future with Data Dashboards** **Monday, September 30, 11:15AM-12:00PM in Chastain**

#### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Charlie Wilder, *Auburn University*  
Rachel Whitman Rotch, *Auburn University*  
Stuart Miller, *Auburn University*  
Rizwan Hussain, *Auburn University*

“Where we’re going, we don’t need roads,” but a good dashboard is always useful. Like time travel, data visualization exists within the constraints of accessibility, cost, and efficiency. Finding platforms that address these aspects is complicated when faced with the variety of institutional audiences – from digital novices to institutional techno-wizards. This session explores several options for data visualization by exploring the benefits and drawbacks of three data visualization tools: Excel, Power BI, and Qlik. Attendees are invited to join us to gain ideas and inspiration for creatively presenting institutional data. We’re going back to the future with data dashboards!

### **Session C9: Leveraging Data Catalogs for Organizational Learning: A Data Literacy Approach** **Monday, September 30, 11:15AM-12:00PM in Ansley**

#### **Track: Technology and Innovation**

Presented by: Heather Epstein-Diaz, *Florida State University*  
Lee Howell, *Florida State University*  
Andrew Brady, *Florida State University*  
Cassandra Kepple, *College Board*

Data-based approaches help higher education institutions make better decisions, improve results, and spark creativity. However, the effective use of data relies heavily on the data literacy skills of institutional stakeholders. This session explores the role of data catalogs as powerful tools for growing data literacy. It will delve into how data catalogs serve as gateways to institutional data, enabling stakeholders to access, analyze, and leverage data for institutional development. The session will also discuss best practices for implementing data catalogs as part of a comprehensive data literacy initiative to enhance data culture on campus.

### **Session C10: If You Formalize It, They Will Follow: Establishing a Formal Institutional Survey Schedule and Policy** **Monday, September 30, 11:15AM-12:00PM in Habersham**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Heather Lewis, *Augusta University*  
Andrew Tarr, *Augusta University*

The lack of formal processes or policies regarding institutional surveys often lead to a myriad of issues: confusion about survey populations/samples, scheduling conflicts, delays in approval decisions, distributing the survey, etc. An effective survey policy should detail matters of governance so that decisions and recommendations will be made consistently for each type of survey requested. Even when formal processes and policies do exist, they are too frequently not easily accessible or clearly communicated. This presentation will detail Augusta University’s Institutional Survey Policy, the submission/approval process, and schedule published as a Tableau dashboard (viewable to the public).

**Session C11: Surviving and Thriving in Your First Year as a Manager in Institutional Research**  
Monday, September 30, 11:15AM-12:00PM in Buckhead I

**Track: Leadership and Management**

Presented by: Tracy Bacon, *College of Southern Maryland*

Institutional research attracts professionals from a range of areas within and outside of higher education. It is a field that seems to be stumbled upon more often than it is actively pursued. Because of this, people may find themselves in leadership positions in institutional research without having much experience in it. This session will cover strategies for navigating the first year as a manager in IR, including tips on project management, networking across the institution, and figuring out all those acronyms. Participants will be encouraged to share their own experiences and ask questions.

**SAIR Awards Luncheon**

Monday, September 30, 12:00-1:30 pm in Ballroom AB

Hosted by: Carley Dear, *University of Mississippi Medical Center*

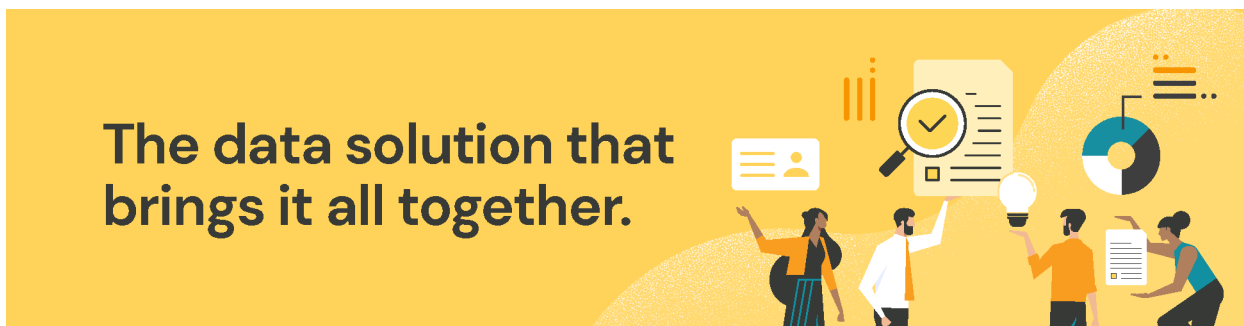
*Join your colleagues to recognize SAIR award winners for this year. All SAIR conference attendees and exhibitors are welcome to attend.*

**SAIR 2024 Business Meeting**

Monday, September 30, 1:45-2:45 pm in Buckhead I

Convened by: Meaghann Wheelis, *Baylor University*

*SAIR's Annual Business Meeting includes reports of the activities of SAIR Board Members as well as updates on the status of the association. All are welcome to attend.*



  
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## Monday, September 30

### **Session D1: Leveraging Program Economics Analysis for Strategic Decision Making** **Monday, September 30, 1:45PM-2:30PM in East Paces**

#### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Kangyang Wang, *Virginia Tech*

In higher education, where resources are constrained and demands constantly evolve, making informed decisions regarding program offerings, resource allocation, and strategic planning is paramount. At Virginia Tech, we have developed an analytic framework for evaluating academic programs called Program Economics Analysis (PEA), consisting of four elements: instructional cost, workload measure, program revenue, and degree economics. This presentation discusses PEA's methodologies, integration into decision-making frameworks, demos on our University DataCommons, and future directions. By leveraging PEA, institutions can illuminate curricular inefficiencies, optimize resource allocation, and enhance faculty productivity. Ultimately, PEA equips institutions to navigate challenges, optimize resources, and foster academic excellence.

### **Session D2: Developing a New Campus Community Survey: Lessons Learned from Six Years of Administering a National DEI Survey** **Monday, September 30, 1:45PM-2:30PM in Ballroom D**

#### **Track: Sponsor Session**

Presented by: Charles Blaich, *HEDS*  
Kathleen Wise, *HEDS*

Since 2018, the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) has administered a diversity and equity survey to over 200,000 students, faculty, and staff at over 300 institutions. Unfortunately, in the last year we have seen a significant decline in the number of institutions that use the survey as well as a decline in interest from institutional leaders in using any DEI-focused surveys. Some of this decline is the result of political pressure. However, beyond political pressure, are there other reasons for this decline? In this session, we will review the history of the HEDS Diversity & Equity Campus Climate Survey, including what we've learned about how campuses use data from the survey, what we learned from follow-up focus groups at eight institutions, and how we used this information to develop a new survey that addresses diversity and equity issues from the standpoint of membership in a campus community.

### **Session D3: Creating a Department or Program Report Generator in Tableau: How, Why, and Considerations** **Monday, September 30, 1:45PM-2:30PM in West Paces**

#### **Track: Best Practices in Reporting**

Presented by: Jennifer K. Doersam, *Vanderbilt University*

For campus-wide surveys, it can be challenging to give each department their own data while protecting the privacy of other departments. In my use case, I created a Tableau project that generates PDF or Powerpoint reports for each department included in the survey, on demand. The full project is shared with trusted, centralized staff who can generate and share reports for each of the departments they support. This approach is efficient and scalable, but project design must be thoughtful for this purpose.

### **Session D4: Supporting Student Success through Collaboration, Analytics, and Machine Learning Monday, September 30, 1:45PM-2:30PM in Chastain**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Taylor Patterson, *Virginia Tech*  
Coogan Thompson, *Virginia Tech*

In this presentation, we will briefly overview Virginia Tech's analytics ecosystem, the University Data-Commons, and highlight two projects illustrating how the Office of Analytics & Institutional Effectiveness supports student success. Using SAS, we explored the influence of VT's pathway to enter a college-specific undecided major versus a generic university undecided major on student academic outcomes. With Python, we look for demographic discrepancies in Recreational Sports data and use machine learning to predict student involvement. Our aim is to demonstrate the comprehensive analytic support AIE provides to generate insights on issues and promote the efficacy of student success programs.

### **Session D5: Using ChatGPT to Enhance Data Analytics Monday, September 30, 1:45PM-2:30PM in Buckhead II**

#### **Track: Technology and Innovation**

Presented by: Rick Loveday, *Clemson University*

Unlock the transformative potential of ChatGPT in data analytics. Explore real-world examples of streamlining manual reports, incorporating new metrics, and revitalizing outdated analytics. Learn to leverage ChatGPT for problem-solving through descriptions, schema breakdowns, and synthetic data to ensure privacy. Delve into its role in crafting complex formulas, dissecting code structures, facilitating language conversions, and building data-centric websites. This session is not just a success story but an insightful journey, sharing lessons learned from challenges. Jumpstart your AI-driven data analytics initiatives by gaining practical insights, refining approaches, and discovering ChatGPT as a powerful ally in deciphering data intricacies.

### **Session D6: Exploring AI: Perspectives and Practices in Christian Graduate Education Monday, September 30, 1:45PM-2:30PM in Peachtree**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Jared C. Avery, *Dallas Theological Seminary*  
Stacey Davis, *Dallas Theological Seminary*  
Roderick Willis, II, *Dallas Theological Seminary*  
Kevin Gandy, *Dallas Theological Seminary*

The presentation provides exploratory insight into graduate students' perspectives on artificial intelligence (AI). The rapid adoption of technology has led many institutions to assess (and reassess) the traditional educational experience for students and explore methods of regulating its usage. With a particular focus on examining students' views on AI within academic and social settings, this presentation aims to offer conference participants a nuanced understanding of the varied experiences and viewpoints of seminary students regarding AI. The presenters intend to inform future strategies and policies concerning the integration of AI in graduate-level institutions from this conversation.



## Monday, September 30

### **Session D7: Equity-Focused Design Choices for Data Visualizations** **Monday, September 30, 1:45PM-2:30PM in Ansley**

#### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Samantha Bradley, *University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

This presentation will share dissertation research exploring how data visualizations can be designed in ways that support diversity, equity, and inclusion. A survey experiment was conducted to compare data visualizations created with "equity-focused" design choices to visualizations created with "traditional" design choices. The experiment examined how the equity-focused designs were perceived and how they performed in comparison to the traditional designs. Results from this study will help to inform the field of institutional research of how we can balance calls for equity and cultural responsiveness in higher education with our responsibility to conduct rigorous quantitative work for university stakeholders.

### **Session D8: Creating and Managing a University-Wide Survey Calendar: Practical Steps Using Excel, Data Analysis Tools, and Tableau** **Monday, September 30, 1:45PM-2:30PM in Tuxedo**

#### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Garam Chu, *Emory University*

This session will guide participants through creating a university-wide survey calendar and interactive dashboards using statistical and data visualization tools like Excel, SPSS, Stata, R, and Tableau. Participants will directly engage in compiling, cleaning, and visualizing data, working alongside the instructor to create a finished product. The session will include practical tips for managing surveys at the institutional level, with a specific focus on creating a survey calendar. This focus provides a concrete example, helping participants understand the tools and processes while inspiring them to apply these techniques to various data and goals.

### **Session D9: Applying Predictive Modeling to Determine the Section Cancellation Deadline in 2023 Spring** **Monday, September 30, 1:45PM-2:30PM in Habersham**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Daniel Le, *Dallas College*  
Jeremy Monteath-Valdez, *Dallas College*

All institutions try to implement the schedule that meets the student needs, but also acknowledge other potential barriers such as faculty preferences/shortages, location/time conflicts. In addition, each institution establishes deadlines to cancel those empty or low – enrolled sections sometimes before the semester starts. Determine the perfect deadline to cancel a section such that it gives enough time for the department to move students, for the scheduling department to process the cancellation, but still make sure to give enough time for some potential growth section to survive becomes a critical practice which can be assisted by the predictive modelling.



**Session D10: Implementing and Assessing a "Globally Focused" Campus-wide Initiative: An Update on Troy University's Quality Enhancement Program (QEP)**  
**Monday, September 30, 1:45PM-2:30PM in Ballroom E**

**Track: Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Presented by: Richard Ledet, *Troy University*  
Johanna Alberich, *Troy University*  
Stephen Carmody, *Troy University*

As part of reaffirmation processes and efforts aimed at reinforcing its ability to serve as an "International Institution," Troy University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) involves two independent but complementary campus-wide initiatives designed to promote global scholarship among students and intercultural competence among employees. This presentation describes the initiative and implementation approaches, and the assessment strategy being utilized by the university's Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE). "Lessons Learned" are shared, along with an update on progress made, up to this point.

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## Monday, September 30

### **Session E1: Effective Uses of Academic Scheduling & Data Analytics Power BI Scheduling Dashboards**

**Monday, September 30, 2:45PM-3:30PM in Habersham**

#### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Jeremy Monteath-Valdez, *Dallas College*  
Daniel Le, *Dallas College*

Scheduling departments focus on creating an optimized student-centric schedule while facing some barriers such as balancing room availability, time blocks, faculty shortages, credit hours, etc. Within Dallas College, the Academic Scheduling & Data Analytics team has established a comprehensive SharePoint site that provides interactive section-level data dashboards to overcome those barriers by assisting in supporting data-driven decisions in the areas of schedule readiness, enrollment trends, book adoptions, and faculty load. This presentation will go through the various dashboards the department has created to showcase the effective uses of these tools.

### **Session E2: Decoding Data: Leveraging AI to Unlock Actionable Insights**

**Monday, September 30, 2:45PM-3:30PM in Ballroom D**

#### **Track: Sponsor Session**

Presented by: John Berry, *SAS*  
Jacqueline Montileone, *SAS*

Join us for an enlightening session where we delve into the latest advancements in AI for institutional research, combined with the foundational principles of data governance and collaboration. This session will provide an opportunity to understand how AI models can extract actionable insights for higher education institutions, enhancing their innovation and strategic decision-making. Attendees will also understand how they can look under the hood of these models in order to provide transparency and increase trust. Whether you're a data scientist or simply an AI enthusiast, this session will equip you with the knowledge to leverage AI for educational excellence and institutional growth.

### **Session E3: Our Data Governance Journey: Finally Moving Forward**

**Monday, September 30, 2:45PM-3:30PM in Peachtree**

#### **Track: Leadership and Management**

Presented by: Denise C. Gardner, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*  
Caroline Mann, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*  
Jim Lenio, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

Like many institutions, our large public university has launched many versions of data governance initiatives with varying levels of success. This session will explore different structures and definitions of data governance, and factors that lead to success (and failure). We will discuss our most recent initiative, IR's leading role, and why we think it is succeeding. We will encourage audience members to share their journeys so that we all can learn from each other.

**Session E4: Sharing for Support: A Facilitated Discussion of IR/IE Professionals on Research and Programs to Support Male Student Success**  
**Monday, September 30, 2:45PM-3:30PM in Ansley**

**Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Samantha Nix, *Florida State University*  
Logan A Poland, *Florida State University*  
Cassandra R. Kepple, *College Board*  
Jekson de Andrade Silva, *Florida State University*

At SAIR 2023 we presented research examining differences in graduation rates between male and female students. Session attendees all expressed interest in sharing insights from their institutions and continuing the discussion. In this workshare session, we seek to facilitate a more comprehensive discussion on this topic. After a short presentation framing the problem, we will open the floor to participants to share their experiences. We will close the conversation with a summary of the conversation for participants to derive meaning and to support the development of an AIR 2025 panel proposal on the same topic.

**Session E5: Pass the Books. Hold the Oil, Coal, Natural Gas, and Crops? A Further Investigation into the Link between State Reliance Upon Natural Resources, Higher Education, and Economic Growth**  
**Monday, September 30, 2:45PM-3:30PM in Chastain**

**Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Emily Erwin, *Louisiana State University*  
Jim Purcell, *Alabama Commission on Higher Education*  
Stephanie Dolan, *Alabama Commission on Higher Education*

This presentation will (1) explain the economic theory of "Dutch Disease" (a disproportionate economic reliance upon natural resources) and its effect on educational attainment; (2) explore the link between natural resource dependency and higher education funding across states in the U.S.; (3) explore the link between natural resource dependency and higher education attainment in the U.S.; and (4) investigate whether human capital development, vis-à-vis higher education attainment, may offset established negative effects of natural resource dependency, such as anemic economic growth. The presentation will also include recommendations for public policy.

**Session E6: The Matrix Reloaded: R Functions for Markov Chain-based Enrollment and Tuition Projections**  
**Monday, September 30, 2:45PM-3:30PM in Tuxedo**

**Track: Technology and Innovation**

Presented by: Zhen Zhang, *University of Georgia*  
Andrew Westbrook, *University of Georgia*

Markov Chains are a flexible and powerful way to project enrollment and tuition revenue using limited data but lack support in mainstream platforms, especially for the higher education use case. Inspired by a 2018 SAIR paper, UGA OIR has written a set of R functions that run multi-year projections with one line of code. Transition matrices generated can also be fed into the "markovchain" R package for use in sequential Markov Chain projections. This presentation will explain Markov Chains from the ground-up, discuss UGA's use case, and introduce using the functions, including the required input data.

## Monday, September 30

### **Session E7: Increasing Relevancy of State Longitudinal Data Systems to Institutional Researchers** **Monday, September 30, 2:45PM-3:30PM in East Paces**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: MJ Kim, *Southern Regional Education Board*  
Susan Lounsbury, *Southern Regional Education Board*

States invest substantial resources in creating State Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS), yet the extent to which institutional researchers are involved in the development of and utilize these systems remains unclear. This session aims to provide an overview of existing SLDSs in southern states and facilitate dialogue among attendees to better understand the sources of data available through SLDSs, how these data are defined, who has access to these data, and what research questions are or might be answered by an analysis of these data. Attendees will gain insights into optimizing the use of SLDSs to advance their research objectives.

### **Session E8: Accreditation Monitoring Report: How an R1 Institution Is Working Its Way Back to Compliance with Student Learning Outcomes** **Monday, September 30, 2:45PM-3:30PM in West Paces**

#### **Track: Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Presented by: Melanie Jenkins-Simpson, *The University of Alabama in Huntsville*  
Misty McFadden, *The University of Alabama in Huntsville*

This session will cover how one R1 institution fell into non-compliance with SACSCOC on standard 8.2a student learning outcomes and how the institution worked to move towards compliance. The session will cover step by step how the office communicated and worked through issues across the campus to work with colleges and departments to review, address, and revise student learning outcomes to reach a state of compliance.

### **Session E9: The Evolving Data Ecosystem at the University of Tennessee: Data Visualization and Dynamic Dashboards** **Monday, September 30, 2:45PM-3:30PM in Buckhead II**

#### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Brian Hester, *The University of Tennessee System*  
Jorge Perez, *The University of Tennessee System*

This presentation explores the evolution of the University of Tennessee System's Institutional Effectiveness (IE) team in enhancing data reporting from basic Excel tables to dynamic, interactive dashboards. Over four years, the IE team transitioned from simple visual representations to comprehensive, engaging infographics and online dashboards. These advancements facilitate strategic decision-making by providing stakeholders with real-time, accessible data visualizations. Participants will learn about the challenges and technological innovations that transformed the IE team's approach to data presentation, highlighting the impact of these changes on institutional effectiveness and decision-making processes.

### **Session E10: How to Make IPEDS Average Net Price More Accurate and Transparent** **Monday, September 30, 2:45PM-3:30PM in Ballroom E**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: John Ingram, *La Roche University*

This year, NCES is considering how to improve the process of calculating the IPEDS Student Average Net Price (ANP). In this session, I will review my new report, commissioned by NCES, that questions if a widely used tuition estimator uses data that is transparent and timely — or outdated and confusing. It shows how the way colleges explain costs and financial aid — the ANP — can be improved to truly benefit the students it is designed to help.

**Afternoon Coffee Break with Exhibitors**

Monday, September 30, 3:30pm-4:00pm Grand Ballroom Pre-Function

*Visit with conference exhibitors for a coffee break.*



**Session F1: Transforming the Institutional Research Office: Using Dashboards to Support Data-Driven Decisions at Virginia State University**  
**Monday, September 30, 4:00PM-4:45PM in Chastain**

**Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Rohit Murarka, *Virginia State University*  
Veronica Shuford, *Virginia State University*  
Tanya Harris, *Virginia State University*

The Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at Virginia State University has been trying to promote the culture of data-driven decision making among the constituents. To do this, it has recently launched dashboards repository that serves as a one stop shop to get the relevant information that would help the campus constituents make important decisions

**Session F2: Stepping in and Stepping up: Leading in the Interim**  
**Monday, September 30, 4:00PM-4:45PM in Peachtree**

**Track: Leadership and Management**

Presented by: Jason Wang, *Georgia Institute of Technology*  
Ben Bond, *Georgia State University*

Changes in leadership can lead to disruptions to offices that might range from complete turnover of staff to a minor inconvenience to operations. We often see institutions appoint an acting or interim leader to “keep the ship afloat”, providing a temporary fix for a complicated challenge. In this interactive session, a panel of institutional research (IR) leaders will discuss their recent experience serving as the interim leader for their respective IR offices. The discussion will address topics covering succession planning, leading through uncertainty, key challenges and successes, and lessons learned. Audience participation and Q&A will be encouraged throughout the session.



## Monday, September 30

### **Session F3: Data-informed Growth Strategies with an Academic Program Evaluation System** **Monday, September 30, 4:00PM-4:45PM in Ballroom D**

#### **Track: Sponsor Session**

Presented by: Juanel Oriach, *Gray Decision Intelligence*  
Ralph Garcia, *Gray Decision Intelligence*

As an institutional researcher or decision-maker, acquiring precise data and evaluating the impact of academic programs can be daunting. This interactive session with Gray Decision Intelligence introduces the Program Evaluation System (PES), which tracks academic programs' external markets and internal economics to support your strategic initiatives. Learn how PES can streamline reporting, increase efficiency, and help you make data-driven decisions for institutional success.

### **Session F4: Using the Boston Consulting Group Matrix to Determine Academic Program Market Placement** **Monday, September 30, 4:00PM-4:45PM in Ballroom E**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Andrew L. Luna, *Virginia Military Institute*  
Jodi Carrier, *Austin Peay State University*

As traditional students are expected to fall nationwide within the next few years, there will be increasing competition among higher education institutions to sustain its current academic programs while offering new programs to meet student demand. Through this competition, it becomes important for higher education administrators to determine which academic programs are successful and which are not. This paper uses the Boston Consulting Group Matrix to identify both market growth and market share of academic programs. This analysis can be helpful to understand where the institution stands and how it can strategize for future growth and success.

### **Session F5: Institutional Effectiveness should be about more than Student Success Outcomes** **Monday, September 30, 4:00PM-4:45PM in Buckhead II**

#### **Track: Leadership and Management**

Presented by: Alex Wagner, *Emory University*

The Association for Institutional Research (AIR), EDUCAUSE, and the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) released a joint statement in 2019 stressing an urgent need to use data and analytics in higher education to make better strategic decisions. The COVID-19 crisis only increased that sense of urgency because of the dramatic decline in revenue and simultaneous increase in costs for many higher education institutions. While one focus of the joined statement was on enhancing student success outcomes it can be easily applied to broader Institutional Effectiveness categories. This presentation will highlight two examples for such broader applications.

## **Session F6: Enhancing Career Outcomes: Collaboration, Strategies, and Tools** **Monday, September 30, 4:00PM-4:45PM in Ansley**

### **Track: Best Practices in Reporting**

Presented by: Diane Farrell, *University of North Georgia*  
Linda Rowland, *University of North Georgia*

As college students prepare to enter the workforce, equipping them with effective career data and tools is crucial to their success. We will explore strategies implemented by UNG for collaboration and practical resources to enhance faculty, staff, and students' career knowledge and readiness. Our efforts have positively impacted students and the relationship between Career Services and Institutional Research. Attendees will gain insights into tools (Steppingblocks and Qualtrics), strategies, and collaboration efforts to improve student outcomes. Attendees will better understand career development in higher education, explore effective resources for career readiness, and learn strategies to expand collaboration efforts to benefit students.

## **Session F7: R to the Rescue: Standardizing IR Operations Using R** **Monday, September 30, 4:00PM-4:45PM in Tuxedo**

### **Track: Technology and Innovation**

Presented by: Chris Kao, *Flagler College*

In this session, we will show how a small IR team can benefit from using R and Quarto, to consolidate and streamline its analytics platforms and reporting tools. We will demonstrate the versatility of R and Quarto by showing how both can be used to produce operation manuals, presentation slide decks, data analytics/machine learning tools, as well as data visualization and dashboards. All can be achieved free and freely.

## **Session F8: Utilizing Academic Program Review to Build Capacity for IE Work** **Monday, September 30, 4:00PM-4:45PM in East Paces**

### **Track: Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Presented by: Molly Hall, *Virginia Tech*  
Bethany Bodo, *Virginia Tech*

Members of the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) unit at Virginia Tech (VT) will share the university's Academic Program Review (APR) process and how APR may be leveraged to build capacity for IE work. Three key features of VT's APR process are (1) utilization of internal peer reviewers (i.e., faculty/administrators employed by VT), (2) continuous administrative support provided by IE, and (3) encouraging units to use data available in VT's DataCommons. This approach has provided IE with an important avenue for building relationships with faculty members and unit leaders across campus and fostering participation in the academic program assessment process.

## **Session F9: From Reflection to Action: Emory University's Shift to Real-Time Student Success Reporting** **Monday, September 30, 4:00PM-4:45PM in West Paces**

### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Elizabeth C. Alexander, *Emory University*  
Smrit Ingrole, *Emory University*  
Yaniel Sargeant, *Emory University*  
Justin Shepherd, *Emory University*  
Melissa Tarrant, *Emory University*

At Emory, we are attempting to shift from traditional, retrospective student success reports toward using real-time, dynamic dashboards. Through this presentation, we will outline our collaborative approach with our colleagues in the Office for Undergraduate Education (OUE), in using several sources of available data to enhance their response to students. Specifically, we will describe how we combine snapshot data, survey responses, and administrative materials to provide our partners in OUE with actionable insights.

## Monday, September 30

### **Session F10: Making Outcomes Data Accessible to the University Community** **Monday, September 30, 4:00PM-4:45PM in Buckhead I**

#### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Joy Mordica, *Vanderbilt University*  
Jennifer K. Doersam, *Vanderbilt University*

Our IR Office collects outcomes data for bachelors graduates, doctoral alumni, and postdoctoral fellows. It can be challenging to share this data with our campus community. While these datasets are obtained very differently, we leverage Tableau to present both effectively to our internal campus community, as well as publicly for our undergraduate "first destinations." While the data collection, datasets, and dashboard development are centralized in IR, Tableau allows representatives from across campus to access it safely and maximize its strategic value. Allowing self-service answers to a wide variety of questions also reduces the need for ad hoc queries.

### **Session F11: High School Coursework and College Success: A Comparison of ACT Scores and High School Coursework as Indicators of Academic Achievement in Students' Second Fall Semester** **Monday, September 30, 4:00PM-4:45PM in Habersham**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Jesse D Lowe, *University of Alabama at Birmingham*

To circumvent the spread of COVID-19, many universities discontinued ACT submissions as a mandatory prerequisite for admittance. This causes a potential dilemma as ACT scores are frequently used to determine whether students are college ready, and to assign merit-based scholarships. In response, this report compares the viability of replacing ACT scores with high school coursework measures as predictors of student success. Utilizing high school transcripts of first-time, full-time students; results indicate Math, Science, and History coursework coupled with AP and Honors credits predict retention with a 3.0 GPA at a 77.8% rate of accuracy.

#### **State Special Interest Groups**

**Monday, September 30, 5:00pm—5:30pm**

#### **Alabama Association for Institutional Research (ALAIR) in Chastain**

Convened by Michelle Tin, *University of Alabama*

#### **Louisiana Association for Institutional Research (LAIR) in Ballroom D**

Convened by Steven Brouillete, *Louisiana State University*

#### **North Carolina Association for Institutional Research (NCAIR) in Ballroom E**

Convened by Holly Rewerts, *Campbell University*

#### **Virginia Association for Institutional Research (VAIR) in West Paces**

Chris Orem, *James Madison University*



**SAIR Conference Breakfast**

Tuesday, October 1, 8:00am-9:00am in Buckhead

*All SAIR conference attendees are welcomed to drop in to this continental breakfast.*

**SUG Breakfast and Meeting**

Tuesday, October 1, 8:00am-10:30am in East Paces

Convened by: Matthew Campbell, *Auburn University*

*This meal is open to all SUG members only.*

**Session G1: Visualizing Course Grade Patterns  
Tuesday, October 1, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Tuxedo**

**Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Julia Thompson, *Auburn University*  
Danielle Navarrete, *Auburn University*

What patterns in course grades can be found in your data? Do students who make a C in one course generally succeed in another? Should one course become a prerequisite to others? Is AP Credit an indicator of the same level of student success as the course it replaces? A Sankey chart can visualize how grade values flow from one course to another. We will present a script written in SQL that can be used to extract data from Banner in a surprisingly simple format. We will demonstrate visualizations on large and small sets of data.

**Session G2: Establish. Maintain. Nourish.: Insights on Creating Sustainable Data Partnerships  
Tuesday, October 1, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Ansley**

**Track: Leadership and Management**

Presented by: Cassandra R. Kepple, *College Board*  
Heather Epstein-Diaz, *Florida State University*  
Kari Roberts, *Florida State University*

Collaboration is a key aspect of our jobs as IR professionals. Between our reporting duties, data governance responsibilities, and service for multiple institutional stakeholders, we must establish, maintain, and nourish partnerships at multiple levels. Through these partnerships and ongoing collaborations, we can successfully fulfill our IR roles. While these partnerships are a core aspect of our jobs, the path to creating and maintaining them is not always clear. In this presentation, we will share perspectives on the data partnership life cycle from three IR and assessment professionals, offering insights on each phase and recommendations for different types of partnerships.

**Session G3: Evolving Role of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at Virginia State University  
Tuesday, October 1, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Peachtree**

**Track: Leadership and Management**

Presented by: Rohit Murarka, *Virginia State University*  
Veronica Shuford, *Virginia State University*  
Tanya Harris, *Virginia State University*

With the innovations occurring in higher education, institutions need to adapt themselves quickly. This involves not only adopting new technologies but also changing the functionality of the various offices. This presentation will talk about the role of the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office at Virginia State University and how it has evolved over the years to adapt to new technologies and functionalities while developing new partnerships across campus to tackle the challenges faced at a HBCU and in higher education.

## Tuesday, October 1

**Session G4: Student Horizon Database: An Interactive Tool Designed to Help Prospective Students Make Informed Education and Career Decisions**  
Tuesday, October 1, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Vinings

### Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence

Presented by: Jim Hood, *Alabama Commission on Higher Education*

The Alabama legislature passed the Students' Right to Know Act in 2023 which charged the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) with developing the Student Horizon Database. The legislation required Horizon to be an online interactive tool designed to provide prospective students with financial and academic information to help them make informed decisions about their education and future career paths. This session explores the Horizon requirements outlined in the legislation and the ACHE agency's response. Horizon allows parents, students, and other stakeholders to make comparisons among Alabama's public community colleges, public and private universities, and opportunities with the armed forces:

**Session G5: From SAS to SQL: Transforming and Modernizing an Institution's Benchmark Processes**  
Tuesday, October 1, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Woodruff

### Track: Best Practices in Reporting

Presented by: Geoffrey Koch, *University of Miami*  
Shayna Quiceno, *University of Miami*  
David Becher, *University of Miami*

Benchmark data serves as the gold standard for reporting at many institutions. This data is used in a variety of ways because it is trusted and vetted; however, the process to create this data can be time consuming and resource intensive. One private institution is undergoing a transformation by modernizing their legacy benchmark data collection process. By utilizing the institution's data warehouse, the institution will improve the time of delivery from ~3 weeks to 1 day. This presentation will share the strategic and technical paths taken while discussing pitfalls to avoid for other institutions looking to improve their benchmarking processes.

**Session G6: Practice Makes Perfect: Creating a Dashboard to Monitor Community of Practice Outcomes for Faculty and Student Success**  
Tuesday, October 1, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Chastain

### Track: Data Analytics and Visualization

Presented by: Kelsey Mattingly, *The University of Texas at San Antonio*

The Student Experience Project (SEP) was recently launched at UTSA as a community of practice initiative for faculty to learn and adopt pedagogical strategies to improve student success. In collaboration with stakeholders, we developed a dashboard to support monitoring of outcomes for participating faculty and courses, including DFW rates, students' percent attempted hours earned, and student persistence to the next term. This presentation will address various complexities of reporting faculty and student success outcomes for similar faculty training initiatives, including connecting participation data with institutional data, identifying proper comparison groups, and visualizing data across multiple units of analysis.

**Session G7: Systematic Approaches to Linking Program Offerings to Occupations**  
Tuesday, October 1, 9:00AM-9:45AM in West Paces

### Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence

Presented by: Carrie Henderson, *TSG Advisors - Education*

With the rapidly evolving landscape of the labor market and the increasing importance of ensuring that educational offerings align with workforce needs, having strategies in place to assess the demand for degrees and credentials is crucial. During this session, participants will hear strategies for utilizing data, particularly through CIP to SOC crosswalks, to highlight the importance of connecting educational programs to specific occupations. By understanding these connections, institutions can better gauge the relevance and potential impact of their offerings on the workforce. This session will also underscore the need to evaluate credentials to ensure ongoing alignment with workforce needs.

**Session G8: Outcome-Driven Assessment: Shifting Focus from Metrics to Meaning for Impactful Change**  
**Tuesday, October 1, 9:00AM-9:45AM in Habersham**

**Track: Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Presented by: Naima Wells, *Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University*

This presentation explores the advantages of focusing assessment efforts on educational outcomes rather than the measures used to assess them. Emphasizing outcomes enables institutions to craft more compelling narratives and implement impactful changes. By discussing both direct and indirect assessment methods, the session will highlight how this approach not only aligns with institutional goals but also enhances the transparency and relevance of assessment practices. Attendees will learn strategies for prioritizing outcomes to foster deeper understanding and improvement in student learning.

**Session H1: IR/IE Staff with “Student Success” in Their Title: A Panel**  
**Tuesday, October 1, 10:00AM-10:45AM in Habersham**

**Track: Leadership and Management**

Presented by: Samantha Nix, *Florida State University*  
Kimberly Meints, *Oklahoma State University*

Between 2018 and 2019, respondents to the AIR National Survey of IR Offices indicated extraordinary growth in identified contributions to student success. As performance-based funding metrics, ranking systems, and score cards rely on data from IR/IE offices, staff functions in these offices have become more directly involved in the work of student success on college campuses. We will host a panel of staff from several different types of institutions who have “student success” in their titles and explore the nature and implications of their work as it relates to this emerging topic.

**Session H2: Using Interactive Dashboards and Mapping Tools to Advocate for the Importance of Global Engagement**  
**Tuesday, October 1, 10:00AM-10:45AM in West Paces**

**Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Natalie Cruz, *Emory University*  
Jafet Baca Obando, *Emory University*

Emory’s Global Engagement Map, first published in 2017, was recently revamped with more interactive filters and examples that vividly tell the global story of Emory. It also has been used as a tool for advocacy, including in presentations to campus stakeholders and international partners. Global Engagement is often overlooked in institutional research conversations but is a vital component of a university’s branding, faculty research, and student experience. This presentation will focus on the data strategy and interactive map within the Office of Global Strategy and Initiatives at Emory University and encourage other universities to consider creating a similar global map.

**Session H3: The Opt-Out Graduation Application: Making 4-Year Graduation Standard**  
**Tuesday, October 1, 10:00AM-10:45AM in Chastain**

**Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Bethany Doyle, *Emory University*  
Arielle Chism, *Emory University*

Historically, Emory University has followed an opt-in graduation application process, in which a student must declare their intent to graduate to trigger graduation clearance. As Emory strives to improve the 4-year graduation rate, we have proposed an “opt-out” graduation model that requires confirmation only if the student wishes to extend their graduation. In this talk, we will review case studies of institutions that follow an opt-out model, focusing on practical application for Emory’s College of Arts and Sciences. Finally, we will discuss our own efforts at data collection within the College to ease this transition.



## Tuesday, October 1

### **Session H4: SAIR Newcomers Workshop Class of 2009: Looking Back and Moving Forward** Tuesday, October 1, 10:00AM-10:45AM in Morningside

#### **Track: Leadership and Management**

Presented by: Emily Erwin, *Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine*  
Eric Atchison, *Arkansas State University System*  
Rick Burnette, *Florida State University*

This session is considered an extension of the Newcomer's Workshop (although attendance at the workshop is not required to join us) and will provide perspectives from four seasoned institutional researchers across a wide array of experiences. Speakers will provide a thematic summary of some of the key decision points in their careers and offer advice to attendees for moving forward. Attendees will have the chance to ask the panel questions and engage in a constructive dialog to better understand their role.

### **Session H5: Collaboration in the Institution: Challenges and Successes of IR/IE Professionals** Tuesday, October 1, 10:00AM-10:45AM in Woodruff

#### **Track: Leadership and Management**

Presented by: Amber Rountree, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*  
Rachel Whitman Rotch, *Auburn University*

Eager to kickstart collaborative research across your campus? Curious about cross-institutional partnerships? This session explores the challenges and nuances of collaboration within Institutional Research and Effectiveness through 1) preliminary results from a survey of southern IR/IE professionals, 2) lessons learned from the presenters' multi-institutional research collaboration, and 3) invited audience participation. Attend to celebrate your successes, crowdsource solutions for your challenges, and share key aspects of effective collaboration!

### **Session H6: Using Market Basket Analysis to Explore Course Combinations That Lead to Failure** Tuesday, October 1, 10:00AM-10:45AM in Peachtree

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Fikrewold Bitew, *The University of Texas at San Antonio*

Understanding the factors contributing to student course failure is paramount for designing effective interventions and support mechanisms. This study employs Market Basket Analysis (MBA) to identify problematic course combinations among first-time, full-time students by analyzing enrollment data and academic records. The study's focus is to uncover patterns in course taking leading to academic difficulties and to pinpoint high-risk course combinations. Ultimately, leveraging MBA promises to enhance student success rates and elevate educational quality through targeted interventions.

### **Session H7: Beyond the Classroom: "Professionalism in Practice"** Tuesday, October 1, 10:00AM-10:45AM in Vinings

#### **Track: Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Presented by: Cynthia Senior, *The University of Mississippi Medical Center*  
Jeanna D. Wilkes, *The University of Mississippi Medical Center*

The UMMC QEP, "Professionalism in Practice," aligned with SACSCOC accreditation standards, enhances student professionalism in clinical and laboratory environments using Canvas LMS and assessment tools, which ensure that students are well-prepared to meet the demands of the health science professions. This presentation will delve into the formation of this QEP.

**Session H8: Assembling a Dashboard of University Housing Applications**  
**Tuesday, October 1, 10:00AM-10:45AM in Tuxedo**

**Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Martin I. Gallegos, *The University of Texas at San Antonio*

Attendees will be guided on how to assemble a dashboard tracking university housing applications for an upcoming fall semester. Attendees will be shown how to gather data with SQL code from Banner tables to create dashboard tables and graphs for tracking housing application data. This includes contact information, admission decisions, orientation signups, and registration holds. Tables and graphs from a sample Microsoft Power BI dashboard will be presented; e.g., a funnel demonstrating the number and percent of newly admitted housing applicants unregistered for fall courses. Use cases will be provided for tracking new incoming students' and currently enrolled students' applications.

**Session H9: The Alabama Commission on Higher Education FAFSA Completion Initiative**  
**Tuesday, October 1, 10:00AM-10:45AM in Ansley**

**Track: Best Practices in Reporting**

Presented by: Stephanie C. Dolan, *Alabama Commission on Higher Education*  
Jessie Lynn Nichols, *Alabama Commission on Higher Education*

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) established the FAFSA initiative to increase completion rates among Alabama's high schools and inform high school graduates of various aid opportunities at the state's colleges and universities. To help schools improve their completion rates, ACHE's FAFSA Completion Portal produces informative reports to be shared with designated high school personnel. Recently, ACHE developed a crosswalk matrix algorithm to notify Alabama students about specific aid programs at the state and federal levels relevant to them. Hence, the FAFSA initiative promotes early interventions to advance Alabama students' access to postsecondary aid opportunities.



## Tuesday, October 1

### **Session I1: Fixing the Leaky Pipeline to Degree Completion** **Tuesday, October 1, 11:00AM-11:45AM in West Paces**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Melissa Tarrant, *Emory University*  
Merideth Ray, *Emory University*

Timely degree completion is a priority for higher education institutions across the country. There are many, many reasons students stop out and delay graduation beyond the traditional four-year timeline, or drop out and never complete their degree. At Emory, we began using data to help us find where the holes are in the pipeline to degree progression and completion. We explored data regarding students who had been academically suspended, were behind on credit hour completion (30 credits per academic year), students with low GPAs or GPA declines from their prior semester GPA, students who responded to a first-semester student survey, and students who took a Leave of Absence or Withdrew during a semester. This data-informed approach has led to policy changes, new programs, and new outreach strategies to help students stay on track to graduate on time.

### **Session I2: Digital Accessibility in PDF Publications** **Tuesday, October 1, 11:00AM-11:45AM in Peachtree**

#### **Track: Best Practices in Reporting**

Presented by: Gene Cilluffo, *Florida State University*  
Cassandra R. Kepple, *College Board*

In the growing world of dashboarding in IR, PDF publications, such as reports or Fact Books, are not always getting the love they need to be most impactful. Uploading or otherwise sharing digital versions of PDF publications can increase their reach, however, this presents new digital accessibility challenges. This presentation will cover an introduction to Universal Design, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, and other accessibility guidelines. The majority of the time will be spent reviewing digital accessibility in Microsoft Word and Adobe PDF documents through example files. We will also demonstrate how to check ease of navigation using a free screen reading software, NVDA.

### **Session I3: Establishing A Data Identity: How to Build and Implement an Analytics Creator Toolkit at Your Institution** **Tuesday, October 1, 11:00AM-11:45AM in Vinings**

#### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Lacey Oellerich, *Augusta University*  
Holly Goodson Rubio, *Augusta University*

This session is intended to inform audiences on the strategy behind building and implementing an analytics identity at your institution. The session will highlight the process Augusta University used to establish a set of design standards and creator toolkit that includes elements such as a style guide, color palette, icons, dashboard/communications/start guide templates, analytics project checklist and more. The intended audience is Institutional Research professionals looking to establish or further develop their own analytics brand.

### **Session I4: College Affordability in the South: Results of SREB's State Affordability Profiles** **Tuesday, October 1, 11:00AM-11:45AM in Ansley**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Susan Lounsbury, *Southern Regional Education Board*  
MJ Kim, *Southern Regional Education Board*

In 2024, SREB resumed production of its College Affordability Profiles. Last released in January 2021, those Profiles used data collected prior to the pandemic. This presentation will discuss the 2024 findings and compare them with the results of earlier Profiles. Since state policymakers and postsecondary system staff are the primary audiences for the Profiles, the presenters will also engage session participants in a discussion of how the Profiles can better describe what postsecondary institutions are doing to make college more affordable.

### **Session 15: Market Research and Strategic Planning with IPEDS Data** **Tuesday, October 1, 11:00AM-11:45AM in Habersham**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Sarah Gallimore, *University of North Texas Health Science Center*

Academic leaders often face the challenge of making data-informed strategic program decisions. Questions such as, "Do we need more graduates in this program within my region?", "Should this program be online or residential?", "How are my current programs performing?", "How should I allocate resources to my existing programs?", and "What marketing advantages do my existing programs offer?" are common considerations. This presentation will demonstrate how IPEDS data can address these academic program planning questions and guide attendees in effectively extracting relevant data from the IPEDS database. Participants will learn how to make meaningful recommendations for decision-making and develop similar tools for use at their institutions.

### **Session 16: Financial Aid--The Other F Word: A Case Study in Reporting Financial Aid and Scholarship** **Tuesday, October 1, 11:00AM-11:45AM in Morningside**

#### **Track: Data Analytics and Visualization**

Presented by: Alison Joseph, *Western Carolina University*  
Carl Cortright, *Western Carolina University*

This presentation will focus on the approach to financial aid reporting and the kinds of views/visualizations that might be useful in thinking about financial aid and scholarship. There will be a discussion of potential audiences/offices that may benefit, and the tools/filters/visualizations that support those audiences. Attendees will be exposed to ideas and visualizations that may be a good starting point for replication at their own institutions, as well as key elements for requirements gathering during the development process. Financial aid data is notoriously difficult to query and report. This session will help demystify the data and reporting!

### **Session 17: Data Working Groups: Fostering University-Wide Engagement and Insight** **Tuesday, October 1, 11:00AM-11:45AM in Woodruff**

#### **Track: Policy and Decision Intelligence**

Presented by: Stuart Miller, *Auburn University*  
Anna Claire Stinson, *Auburn University*  
Rachel Whitman Rotch, *Auburn University*  
Charlie Wilder, *Auburn University*

To enhance data-driven decision-making, the Office of Academic Insight at Auburn University has established data working groups across various functional areas. These groups facilitate data sharing, foster stakeholder engagement, address data-related issues, and lay the groundwork for future university partnerships. This collaborative approach ensures a cohesive strategy for leveraging data to support academic excellence. Join us as we showcase three examples of collaboration and equip you with the knowledge to replicate this on your own campus.

### **Session 18: Data Champions: Data Literacy for the Higher Education Campus Community** **Tuesday, October 1, 11:00AM-11:45AM in Chastain**

#### **Track: Technology and Innovation**

Presented by: Chelsea Townsend, *The University of Southern Mississippi*

This session will explore how The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) is empowering our campus community to become data champions. As data is a crucial component of USM's daily decision-making, there have been noticeable instances of misunderstandings and misinterpretations of institutional data. The institution needed a tool that would educate its faculty and staff about institutional data. In this session, USM will discuss how their institution is bridging the data literacy gap through the program's development, implementation, and structure along with assessment data to date.

## Tuesday, October 1

### **Session I9: Assessment Triage Providing More Support with Fewer Resources Tuesday, October 1, 11:00AM-11:45AM in Tuxedo**

#### **Track: Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Presented by: Lauren Bryant, *Virginia Tech*  
Nikki Connors, *Virginia Tech*

The assessment triage process rapidly improved our overall assessment process. The triage process allowed professionals in our unit to refine their approach to reviewing reports and providing feedback and identified units needing one-on-one coaching. This presentation will focus on how the triage process was applied to academic program assessment, how it streamlined report reviews, and how it allowed for targeted support. We will highlight case studies where programs scoring low on the triage scale were coached and how their practices improved over multiple cycles.

#### **SAIR Board Post-Conference Meeting**

Tuesday, October 1, 12:00pm-3:00pm in Arden

Convened by: James Hunt, *Florida State University*





## Academic Insights

Booth 9

Academic Insights is a market intelligence tool that houses 30+ years of historical U.S. News & World Report rankings. Containing both published and unpublished data, the platform provides raw data and visualizations tools to help process and track changes in thousands of metrics across various program areas. Institutional researchers, campus leadership and policymakers utilize Academic Insights to help make informed, data driven decisions, assess program area performance, and implement academic peer benchmarking on college, university, and high school campuses across the country.

**Contact:** Jessica Locklear

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## Gray Decision Intelligence

Booth 5

Gray Decision Intelligence offers a cutting-edge Program Evaluation System (PES) that helps colleges and universities generate revenue, reduce costs, and strategically manage their academic programs. PES is the only complete system that provides rich, accurate data on student demand, employment, competition, and program financials for over 1,500 academic programs. With PES Predict Program Size, institutions can use AI-driven insights to estimate enrollment, identify the best programs to launch or grow, and create 10-year financial forecasts. Discover the future of data-informed decisions with Gray Decision Intelligence.

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## HelioCampus

Booth 1

HelioCampus clients are uniquely positioned to rise to the occasion of today's high stakes moment, armed with leading EdTech solutions. Our Institutional Performance Management solutions drive enrollments, control expenses, and enhance learning outcomes. With our Data Analytics platform, institutions gain insights across campus, supported by expert services for scalable data solutions. Additionally, our Assessment & Credentialing solution ensures accreditation, assesses outcomes, and improves student experiences through unified assessment platforms. Learn more about how HelioCampus is helping institutions & leaders across the country deliver on their missions at [heliocampus.com](https://heliocampus.com).

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# SAIR 50th Anniversary: Looking Back, Moving Forward

## Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium

Booth 6

The Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) is a community of colleges and universities committed to sharing data, knowledge, and expertise to advance undergraduate liberal arts education, inclusive excellence, and student success. HEDS offers a variety of surveys, data exchanges, webinars, consulting services, face-to-face workshops, and a professional development program to support these goals.

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**Phone:** 765-361-6585

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## Lumina

No Booth

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis that is committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all. We envision a system that is easy to navigate, delivers fair results, and meets the nation's need for talent through a broad range of credentials.

**Contact:** Christopher Mullin

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## Qualtrics

Booth 7

The XM for Higher Education solution includes a suite of templates, dashboards and workflows that enable you to understand and optimize student experience, faculty and staff experience, operational excellence, alumni engagement, institutional reputation, innovation and strategic improvement, and stakeholder management. Experience management (XM) is designed to help you make data-driven decisions to impact key outcomes in every area of education. Qualtrics is trusted by over 3,000 universities in 90 countries.

**Contact:** Sean Williams

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**Phone:** 904-439-3220

**URL:** <https://www.qualtrics.com/education/higher-ed/>

### SAS

**Booth 10**

With over 3,000 education customers in more than 56 countries, SAS is a trusted partner and adviser with deep roots in academia and more than four decades of higher education expertise. SAS helps institutions quickly bring together disparate data to increase efficiency in analyzing data and identifying trends. SAS combines AI, visualizations, advanced analytics, and data governance and management to provide insight in key areas for higher education. SAS' powerful analytics helps uncover patterns and trends to attract the right students, maximize retention, increase graduation, and sustain strong relationships throughout the student life cycle.

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### SmartEvals

**Booth 3**

SmartEvals is an online course evaluation software company that believes in bringing out the best in people. We do this by understanding our customers' decision-making needs and offering them tools that enhance their data analysis. At SmartEvals, we go beyond software – we create environments that empower and educate. Our systems not only elevate teaching standards but also help individuals achieve their goals.

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### SREB

**Booth 4**

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) is one of four regional education compacts in the U.S. The SREB region includes 16 states across the southeastern part of the country. SREB works with states to improve education by providing policymakers with reliable data to make informed policy. We also provide educators with opportunities to convene and engage in the exchange of ideas. This booth will provide information on the postsecondary programs and services offered by SREB and printed publications will be available if possible.

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## SAIR 50th Anniversary: Looking Back, Moving Forward

### Steppingblocks

Booth 2

Steppingblocks provides graduate outcomes, alumni analytics, and national career trends to universities and research organizations in the United States. We utilize artificial intelligence and machine learning to create a database of 150+ million workforce profiles with demographic, salary, and skills data. Our advanced collection method of publicly available information enables us to build granular career and educational histories without sensitive information from the schools, providing a turnkey implementation. With funding from two National Science Foundation Grants we developed our Graduate Insights platform which is now an enterprise solution that turns Institutional Research teams into an alumni outcomes and analytics hub servicing the entire institution while promoting student success and equity outcomes in higher education.

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**URL:** <https://www.steppingblocks.com>

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### Xitracs

Booth 8

Xitracs™ by Concord USA is an easy to use, on-demand online platform that allows you to perform your institution's assessment, planning, accreditation, and credentialing activities in a more streamlined and cost-effective manner.

**Contact:** Cheryl Frangipane

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**Thank you to all of these sponsors for their contributions to SAIR!**





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# DISCOVER D.C.'S ORIGINAL OLD TOWN.



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