

Southern AIR

Spring 2001

Volume 23, Issue 2

SAIR 2001: DON'T MISS IT!

Preparations are proceeding rapidly for SAIR '01. Our Call for Participation was greeted with typically enthusiastic response, and we received a wide variety of intriguing proposals for papers, presentations, panels, and demonstrations. A great deal of hard work goes into the review process, and it's heartening to have such a strong slate to send to the reviewers.

An outstanding selection of pre-conference workshops is being constructed, in hopes of providing additional value to our members. Popular offerings from past years will return, of course, but new subjects are being added as well. One that looks to be a big draw deals with the process of assessing the equity of faculty salaries. We will also offer a full schedule of the more informal Table Topics, where you can share experiences with others on a common topic of interest.

In addition to various presentations by your colleagues, guest speakers will provide food for thought. Sunday night's opening address will be presented by Joseph M. Stevenson, vice president for academic affairs at Jackson State University. Dr. Stevenson is an authority in the application of knowledge management techniques in higher education, and was recently featured in *Knowledge* magazine. Speaker at Monday's general session will be James T. Rogers, executive director of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Given the recent proposed changes in the SACS *Criteria* and the conference's focus on assessment, you can expect a relevant address and a rousing discussion.

Add in a beachfront special event, the "Miracle Strip" and its sugar-white beaches, excellent restaurants and the splendid Edgewater Beach Resort, and there's almost too much to fit into four days. Make your plans now to attend. Registration materials will be mailed around the first of August, but you can review preliminary information and make reservations on the conference website at www.ir.fsu.edu/sair. If you have any questions, contact Sam Lowther, program chair, at lowthgs@auburn.edu or 334-844-4765. ☺



AIR FORUM REPORT

By Bill Fendley

The annual AIR Forum was held in Long Beach, California, June 3-6, 2001. According to the latest count, 1,278 people were registered— the largest number ever to register for an AIR Forum. Unofficially, 308 (nearly one-quarter) of the registrants were from SAIR states (including Washington, D.C.). Holding to tradition, the Forum provided a full and varied program for institutional researchers and planners. As well, fifteen vendors participated. For the Monday night event, Forum attendees toured the Queen Mary and enjoyed entertainment by AIR members, in addition to a fine sit-down dinner, music, and dancing afterwards.

It was evident in the program book that SAIR members were very involved, representing the Association well. Besides the SAIR members presenting, many helped plan the Forum: Michael Middaugh, Myrtes Dunn Green, Cornelia Wills, Glenn James, Hannelore Delbridge, Robert Gottesman, and Harriott Calhoun. A number of others served on the program track and peer review committees. Accolades to all! †

(continued on page 3)

S A I R

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Association for
Institutional Research
<http://www.sair.org>

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Please submit materials for the
next issue of *Southern AIR* by the
end of July 2001.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from Harriott Calhoun

Greetings, SAIR members. I am just back from the AIR Forum in Long Beach, California, where I saw many of you. The SAIR Special Interest Group (SIG) was held at our usual time slot on Monday morning at 8:00 and, as always, SAIR had a substantial delegation attending the AIR Forum. In addition to all those involved in planning the Forum and participating on the program, two of our members are currently serving on the AIR Board of Directors: Mike Middaugh (University of Delaware), now Past-President, and Myrtes Dunn Green (Stillman College, AL), Membership Committee Chair. I am a member of the AIR Nominating Committee, which Mike Middaugh chairs, and I urge you to consider your SAIR colleagues and respond when the AIR Call for Nominations is extended. Congratulations to SAIR members Larry Jones (University of Georgia), named an AIR Distinguished Member, and Mary Sapp (University of Miami), awarded the AIR Outstanding Service Award. We are indeed proud of our SAIR colleagues. An article by Bill Fendley (University of Alabama) elsewhere in this issue of *Southern AIR* provides more information on the AIR Forum.

Your SAIR Board has been busy on your behalf this year. Our winter Board meeting was held January 21, at Edgewater Beach Resort, Panama City, which is the SAIR 2001 conference site. It was a tough assignment to go to the beach in January, but your dedicated Board was willing to meet the challenge. A good time was had by all, and we were impressed with the quality of both the meeting and sleeping rooms. With the excellent facilities, great location, and outstanding program content that the SAIR Conference 2001 will provide, I hope that you are already making your plans to be there. I am also pleased to tell you that the Board has voted to accept the invitation from our colleagues in Louisiana to host SAIR 2002 in Baton Rouge. Negotiations on the contract have not been completed, but plans are moving along well. Bernie Braun (Louisiana State University) will chair the Local Arrangements Committee. Sensitive to the fact that our 2001 and 2002 conference sites are in the middle-southern part of our region, Past-President Gerry Dizinno (St. Mary's University, TX) is pursuing possibilities for moving west (somewhere in Texas) and east (Greenville, SC) for the 2003 and 2005 conference locations. Because of the warm invitation and enthusiastic support extended from our friends in Mississippi AIR, the Board anticipates holding the 2004 conference in Biloxi, MS. Our thanks to members Jim Hood (Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning) and Julie Fulgham (Mississippi State University) for presenting the proposal for Biloxi.

On the recommendation of SAIR Treasurer Hannelore Delbridge (University of Alabama) and in consultation with the Board, I appointed a Financial Task Force on May 14, 2001, to function as an advisory and resource group in reviewing and recommending financial policies and practices for consideration by the Board. Members of the Task Force are Hanne Delbridge as Chair, with Bob ?

(continued on page 3)



AIR FORUM (from page 1)

At the awards luncheon on Wednesday, five people received AIR awards: Tony Broh, the Presidential Award for Service; David Most, the Chas. I. Brown Best Dissertation Award; Larry G. Jones (University of Georgia), the Distinguished Member Award; Mary M. Sapp (University of Miami), the Outstanding Service Award; and Fred Volkwein, the Sidney Suslow Award. Of course, SAIR is very proud of Larry and Mary, two of its 'crown-jewels.' Myrtes Dunn Green, AIR Board of Directors (Membership Committee Chair) and illustrious SAIR member, presented the awards to Larry and Mary. Next time you see Larry and Mary, give them your congratulations and commend them on their very fine achievements.

To all you SAIR members who were unable to attend the Long Beach Forum, we missed you and hope you will be able to attend next year's Forum in Toronto, Canada. Remember, the exchange rate is expected to be quite favorable, making for a great opportunity for less. You may want to note on your calendar that the Toronto Forum will be held at the Sheraton Centre, June 2-5, 2002.

[As an aside, it was reported to me that the Rocky Mountain AIR contingency has replaced the SAIR contingency as THE BEST PARTY/DANCING GROUP at the Forum. Do we want this to happen? What are we going to do about it? Perhaps we need a "special session" at SAIR in Panama City to plan our "comeback" in Toronto!] ♦

AIR award winners Mary Sapp (U. of Miami) and Larry Jones (U. Ga.)

President's Message (from page 2)

Kuhn (Louisiana State University), Debbie Dailey (Georgetown University), Tim Sanford (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Bill Fendley (University of Alabama), and Immediate Past-Treasurer Rene Toups (University of New Orleans). These members are former SAIR Treasurers and/or SAIR Presidents, so they bring both relevant experience and strong SAIR commitment to the job of advising the Board on financial matters.

Since the Annual Business Meeting, the Board has:

- Approved the policy that "Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible to be placed on the ballot for any position during the year in which they serve on the Nominating Committee."
- Approved the nomination of Sarah D. Carrigan (University of North Carolina at Greensboro) for the AIR Train-the-Trainer Program, including \$100 travel stipend to present a workshop at SAIR 2001.

This is a long message, but there are good things happening for SAIR about which I want you to be aware. Additionally, there is a separate article in this newsletter that gives you my update on the proposed changes to the SACS accreditation requirements.

Wishing each of you a happy summer,
Harriott

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Ballots for the election of SAIR Board Members and the 2001-02 Nominating Committee will be sent out in July. SAIR has been fortunate to have leadership during our 26+ year history that make it a (the!) leading regional IR organization, and a source of leadership for IR nationally. You'll be impressed by the qualifications of our candidates. Look for the ballots in your mailboxes and participate in perhaps the most important aspect of your SAIR membership.

Gerry Dizinno,
Chair, Nominating Committee and Past President, SAIR

UPDATE: SACS ACCREDITATION REVIEW PROJECT

by Harriott Calhoun

In the Winter 2000-2001 *Southern AIR*, I expressed to you my concern about the lack of reference to institutional research in the draft requirements that were presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) by the Accreditation Review Project Committee in December, 2000. I urged you and others from your respective institutions to submit comments asking that the new requirements refer to (1) the role of the institutional research function in support of planning and evaluation, (2) the necessity of providing adequate resources for institutional research, and (3) the importance of assigning responsibility and accountability for the planning and assessment processes that demonstrate institutional effectiveness.

To date there has been one small concession in that the words "and research" have been added to Core Requirement 5. While one could certainly have hoped for more explicit reference to the role of institutional research, the addition of "and research" may prove to be extremely important in the future. Core Requirement 5 now reads, "The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide planning, evaluation, and research processes that incorporate systematic review of programs and services"

At their meeting in May, 2001, the Accreditation Review Project Committees made a number of substantive changes to the proposed "Principles for Accreditation." The revised proposal will be forwarded to the 77-member elected Commission on Colleges for review and approval on June 21, and to the membership for a final vote at the College Delegate Assembly's business session at 1:30 p.m. on December 11, 2001. The proposed "Principles for Accreditation" will be posted to the SACS-COC web page (sacscoc.org) in August and printed copies sent in October.

Go frequently to the web site to check for updates and changes in the proposal, selecting "Accreditation Review Project" from the index. Our efforts have reaped only modest results so far, but it behooves us to be alert to every opportunity for making our case regarding support for institutional research. ♦

MAKING YOUR PAPER COMPETITIVE

By Eleanor Nault and Jim Purcell

The SAIR "best paper" is selected from papers presented at the annual conference. The author(s) of the best paper are given: public recognition for their work, a SAIR plaque, an automatic presentation slot at the AIR Forum, and travel expense assistance to attend the AIR Forum. Wouldn't it be great if you had to tell your supervisor that you have been awarded for having the best paper at SAIR and as a result will have to present your paper in Toronto, Canada the site of the 2002 AIR Forum?

Several things must occur in order for you to be successful in the SAIR Best Paper competition. First and foremost, you must submit your paper for review. Many quality papers lose out just because they were not submitted for review. Second, your paper must be reviewed higher on five six-point-scale criteria by a select group of your peers.

If you would like to be seriously considered for the honor of Best Paper, here are a few hints. The suggestions are drawn directly from the rating criteria used by SAIR reviewers:

1. Standard professional format. A compilation of handouts threaded together with presenter notes does not qualify as a paper. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological †

(continued on page 6)

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING HUMAN: A review of *The Social Life of Information*

by John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid

Reviewed by Gerry Dizinno, Ph.D., Past President, SAIR

Information. Isn't that what it's all about? If we could just: a) get to all of the information we need, then; b) organize it efficiently, and finally; c) distribute it efficiently, we surely would be on the road to enlightenment. Wouldn't we? The authors of this engaging book see the quest for information without considering the human contexts – social and cultural – within which that information operates, as leading to what they call “tunnel design.”

Tunnel design – in the authors' words an “information only diet” – leads to the creation of technologies that produce as many or more problems than they solve. On the other hand there are the technological innovations that seem to stay with us, regardless of newer, prettier, quicker, sexier, faster, more efficient technologies designed to solve the same problems. Why do they hang around? What is it about certain technological solutions that lead to disaster, and what is it about others that make them so compatible and comfortable for us to use?

Using examples from education and the business world the authors suggest that the reason for both the failure of some technologies and the success of others is how they fit in with our basic human nature. While they do not mention mechanisms, per se, it would be remiss of me (with a Ph.D. emphasizing Psychobiology) not to remind us that we each exist in the context of millions of years of evolutionary development, thousands of years of social and cultural development, and decades of socialization and psychological development. It shouldn't be surprising, then, that technological innovations that fail to take into account all of these humanizing conditions will fail.

Perhaps we've heard these same critiques before. What distinguishes this book, however, from others is that here we have two eminent researchers, with a plethora of examples. They do not offer solutions, but provide evidence that all of our future efforts at developing technological solutions need to take into account the way that human beings communicate best, work best, and solve problems.

If a technology fails, who or what is at fault? Seely Brown and Duguid suggest that the fault does not lie with the people who are asked to use technology, but with the technology itself.

Our argument . . . is that technology design has not taken adequate account of work and its demands but instead has aimed at an idealized image of individuals and information . . . this idealized view cannot come about until not society, but design adjusts. (p. 85)

Technology that focuses only on information, or more accurately only on information that can be easily digitized, will not provide the kind of understanding that is necessary for us to succeed in education or business. The authors present an anecdote about one of their (Duguid's) efforts at researching a 250-year old business by visiting its archives. Dusty, uncomfortable, and annoyed at the time, Duguid reports that he “longed for a digital system that would hold the information from the letters and leave the paper and dust behind.” Another researcher came in and began to deeply sniff each letter. Duguid asked him what he was doing, and the researcher told him he was trying to pick up small whiffs of vinegar. Why? Because he was researching the spread of cholera in the areas served by the business. Vinegar was used during these times to halt the spread of that disease. Thus, he could follow the outbreak of the disease by smelling vinegar and noting from where the letter was sent. Duguid reports that he now had a different perspective on the research he was doing. “Now cheery letters telling customers and creditors that all was well, business thriving, and the future rosy read a little differently if a whiff of vinegar came off the page. Then the correspondent's cheeriness might be an act to prevent a collapse of business confidence – unaware that he or she would be betrayed by a scent of vinegar.”†

(continued on page 6)

BOOK REVIEW

(from page 5)

So, what does this say for institutional research or institutional researchers? Do we need to smell the data? Not necessarily (I do know of some data that stinks, though), but there are some aspects of information, and the context that surrounds it, that can't be digitized. Information technologies and educational technologies need to be developed that take advantage of the rich, human context in which they will be used. Whether it's distance learning or some other aspect of educational technology, or information technology systems on campuses, the authors would agree (I think) that we must *let what we need to learn, in the context in which we best learn it*, drive the technology. Information technologies and educational technologies that don't do this persist in sending us down that "tunnel" the authors warn against early in the book. And, isn't this what many institutional researchers have been telling others in higher education for decades? Perhaps we haven't used these words or provided as many rich examples, though. So, give this book to your academic vice president, your president, and perhaps most importantly to your CIO or the equivalent – and then hope they read it. ☺

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AIR Foundations Institute
July 7-11, 2001
Los Angeles, CA

AIR Enrollment Mgt. Institute
July 28-31, 2001
Charlotte, NC

AIR Applied Statistics Institute

COMPETITIVE PAPERS (from page 4)

Association provides one design for articles. This design includes an abstract, introduction, method, and results. All of this information is essential in providing a substantive explanation for the research that is being reported.

2. Review of Literature. Include in the introduction a discussion of relevant literature and ensure that all references are accurately listed in both the text and the reference section. References that are 10 years or older may be included as classical research pieces but should not be reported alone. Literature that is more recent is essential to maintain the researcher's credibility.
3. Tables. Reference all tables in the text. Enhancing the description of the findings by inserting tables does not relieve the researcher of the need to provide a critical interpretation of the data.
4. Relevance of Topic. The results of the research can answer the question "So what?" Is this topic of significance or interest to the audience? Do the conclusions reflect the research questions? Collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data is only part of developing a worthy paper. If the topic is not significant to the readers, the topic is not sufficient for "Best Paper."
5. Knowledge of Topic. The writer must manifest an understanding of the topic.
6. Coverage of Topic. The coverage of the topic is well done when the reader can say "I can do this!" Is the paper written so that replication is possible? "Covering a topic" includes the methodology, analysis and interpretation of implications.
7. Clarity. The organization of a paper is only part of the presentation. How well the material is communicated and the style in which it is communicated is important. Not folksy, not flippant, not condescending.
8. Overall Quality. Would I be proud to say that my professional organization recognized this paper?

Now that you know the criteria for a well-written scholarly paper, accept the challenge to prepare a paper worthy of being named SAIR Best Paper. ☺

[Note: Recipients of the 2000 SAIR Best Paper Award were Joseph Hoey and Denise Gardner of Georgia Tech.]

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR SAIR SERVICE AWARDS

SAIR has established three awards to recognize the contributions of members to the Southern Association or to the field of institutional research. SAIR members are invited to nominate deserving colleagues for one of the following awards and recognitions.

The James R. Montgomery Outstanding Service Award

This award is given to an individual who has made a significant contribution to SAIR over an extended period of time. Nominees must have been a SAIR member for over five years and cannot be a member of, or a candidate for, the Board of Directors during the year nominated. In addition, two of the following criteria must be met:

- 1) has been a member of the Board of Directors or a chair of either a conference or a presidentially appointed committee;
- 2) has been an officer of, or a recognized leader in the establishment of, a state or special interest group which has been associated with SAIR;
- 3) has made a professional contribution to SAIR by being actively involved in a combination of the following:
 - a) has presented contributed papers at a SAIR conference;
 - b) has organized, offered or acted as a primary participant in workshops at the SAIR annual conference or at workshops sponsored by an affiliated SAIR organization or group;
 - c) has contributed in some other specific significant way that has advanced the professionalism of SAIR.

SAIR Special Recognition Unsung Hero/Heroine Award

This award recognizes the ongoing contributions of a member to SAIR and to the field of institutional research and planning in the broadest sense. This award honors individuals whose effort and initiative might not otherwise receive public recognition. The types of effort to be considered include management assignments, innovative projects or ideas, development of new initiatives, or other ongoing service to SAIR, *other than as an elected officer*. [For purposes of this award, "officer" is defined as President, Secretary or Treasurer.]

All members of SAIR are eligible to receive the award with the following exceptions:

- 1) A person who has previously won the award.
- 2) Officers of SAIR shall not be eligible until five years have passed since completion of their most recent term of office.

Distinguished Membership Award

Distinguished Membership may be awarded to members or former members who have made distinguished contributions to institutional research. This award is a meaningful recognition of significant effort in the field of institutional research. Distinguished Membership status is retained for the lifetime of the individual. (Persons retiring from active service in institutional research may be recognized through the award of emeritus membership rather than with the Distinguished Membership Award.)

A member or former member nominated for Distinguished Membership should meet the following qualifications:

- 1) Has been an active and contributing member of SAIR.
- 2) Has contributed substantially to the field of institutional research over an extended period of time, either in the practice of institutional research or in a supporting role (e.g. faculty, college president).
- 3) Has influenced higher education policies and practice through work or research.

To nominate someone for one of the above awards, prepare a letter of nomination addressing the qualifications specified above, provide appropriate documentation, and transmit to:

**Jim Purcell, Director
Office of Planning and Policy Analysis
Georgia College and State University
Campus Box 52
Milledgeville, GA 31061**

Call Jim at 478/445-6353 or e-mail jpurcell@mail.gcsu.edu with any questions related to these awards. Nominations may be made at any time throughout the year, but should be received by August 15 in order to be considered for the current year.

SAIR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION, *October 2000 to October 2001*

Name: _____

Position: _____

Institution: _____

Department Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Internet/E-mail Address: _____

Membership Type:

Regular (\$20) _____ Student (\$10) _____ Emeritus (free) _____

Please use this form or pass it on to an interested colleague. The completed form and check should be mailed to:

**Hannelore Delbridge
SAIR
University of Alabama
Box 870166
312 East Annex
Tuscaloosa, AL
35487-0166**

Membership Types:

Student Membership: For those who are actively pursuing a graduate degree and are not employed full-time.

Regular Membership: For those professionals working in institutional research or a related field.

Emeritus Membership: For those who have retired and have been an active member of SAIR for at least five years immediately preceding retirement.

Southern AIR

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