



President's Message - Matthew Campbell, 2017-18

Happy 2018, SAIR colleagues! It is hard to believe it has already been four months since we gathered in Fort Worth for SAIR's 44th annual conference. Since then, maybe you've had the opportunity to incorporate into your repertoire a suggestion or two from our keynote speaker and Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Stephen Doig? Following his address, many of you commented on the similarities between data journalism and our own industry, and also on how the tips from his presentation were applicable to your work back home. This, of course, was precisely the goal.

SAIR 44 featured two notable changes from previous conferences: we revamped the session evaluation and introduced the Table-Topic Luncheon. The session evaluation is truly a critical component of any professional conference. For conference planners we need a mechanism to provide feedback on what topics resonate with attendees, while the presenter needs feedback on what worked and what did not. In the future, should SAIR also move to an online conference program, it should be possible to seamlessly incorporate session evaluations into the user experience. In the meantime thank you to all who have embraced the new format.



For a new conference program chair, an often-heard criticism from attendees—and I've said it many times myself in fact—is the lack of time to find and network with others interested in similar issues. For conference newcomers this difficulty can be especially pronounced. The Table-Topic Luncheon was created to provide space and structure to facilitate making new connections. We chose a range of popular topics and designated certain tables for their discussion. To even my own surprise the most frequent feedback in the conference evaluations was that there simply wasn't enough designated tables! Consider this well and truly noted! We'll look to expand this in the future.

Also with regard to networking opportunities, thank you Sherri Caraballo and the Texas Wesleyan Jazz Ensemble for setting just the right tone for our Monday night rooftop dinner. The idea for the evening was to create an atmosphere conducive to making new friends and catching up with existing ones. Judging by the sellout crowd that then hung out for hours, the low-key jazz ensemble against the Fort Worth skyline did just that.

To state the obvious, SAIR is a huge region. We cover 15 states and nearly 1,500 post-secondary institutions. A benefit of a regional organization like SAIR is proximity, but hop in the car and you'll see 2,000+ miles on the drive from El Paso in the east to Elk Mills in the west. It is no surprise, then, that our colleagues from Maryland chose not to carpool to Fort Worth for SAIR 44! Of course many of our colleagues from Texas did carpool and these numbers highlight why it is important for a SAIR conference to move throughout the region: at SAIR 44 we had over 70 attendees from Texas and over 40 attendees from the Dallas/Fort Worth metro area alone. With low travel costs and a low registration fee, several institutions were able to send their entire "IR" shop. Best of all, many of these people were newcomers to SAIR. That is transformative, and fantastic!

On a personal note, my sincere thanks to those who offered so much support throughout the 2017 conference cycle. When you assume the role of program chair you find that the need for help is great and SAIR is full of people who answer the phone every. single. time. I am grateful for your presence, guidance, and strength.

SAIR is a 100% volunteer organization. Every activity, event and publication done by SAIR, is done by a volunteer. Every SAIR session and every SAIR award is coordinated by a volunteer who was helped by many more. From the SAIR Board to the eleven conference chairs and their supporting cast, it takes over 60 volunteers to put on a SAIR conference. Sixty colleagues helping others. That being said, we should always seek to do better at helping each other, and your SAIR board for 2018 is already doing just that. If you have any questions or concerns or you see something I can do to improve our organization, please do not hesitate to contact me at (334) 844-4765 or matthew@auburn.edu.

All the best in 2018,
Matthew Campbell, SAIR President

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Awards and Recognition - Maren Hess, Member-at-Large, 2016-18

SAIR

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION
FOR
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
<http://sair.org/about-sair/>

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Wendy Kallina
Kennesaw State University, GA

Laverne Macon-Jamison
Livingstone College, NC

SAIR annually recognizes members for their contributions to the organization. The Distinguished Member Award seeks to celebrate the unique and long lasting impact

Distinguished Member Award



SAIR members make to the organization and the IR community at large. Denise Gardner was acknowledged for her contributions to institutional research during the annual Awards and Recognition Breakfast in October 2017.

In addition, a number of awards, including the best Electronic Fact Book, Best Fact Book, Best Mini Fact Book and the Best IR Website are given in recognition of outstanding work in the IR field. These recipients are noted below.

SAIR acknowledged winners in four media categories during the **annual Awards and Recognition Breakfast in October 2017**. The winners of these 2017 Awards were:

2017 Best Electronic Fact Book

First Place – University of Kentucky
Second Place – Radford University
Third Place – North Carolina State University

2017 Best Fact Book

First Place – Georgia College
Second Place – Spelman College
Third Place – Texas Tech University



2017 Best Mini Fact Book

First Place – Spelman College
Second Place – Georgia College
Third Place – Radford University

2017 Best Institutional Research Website

First Place – Florida State University
Second Place – Radford University
Third Place – University of Kentucky



SAIR 2017 Best Paper Award - After the 2017 SAIR conference, SAIR members submitted presentation papers which were evaluated by a committee of reviewers. **Congratulations to Dr. Ti Yan, Higher Education Consortia, University of Delaware, for winning SAIR's 2017 Best Paper Award.** Dr. Yan will have the opportunity to present her paper, "Program-level Peer Selection in Benchmarking Costs of Instruction," at the AIR Forum in Orlando, FL in May 2018. To defray travel-related costs to AIR, she will receive a total of \$1,000 (\$500 from SAIR and \$500 from AIR as part of the AIR Matching Travel Grants Program). In addition, a plaque recognizing the SAIR Best Paper Award will be presented to her at the SAIR Conference in Norfolk in October 2018. The Best Paper Award Committee was chaired by Maren Hess and assisted by Shama Akhtar (Bowie State University), Adam Shick (Wake Forest University), Dr. Suzanne Simpson (University of Alabama in Huntsville), and Serena Yan (Huston-Tillotson University). Thanks to all who submitted papers and congratulations again to Dr. Yan!

Lisa Lord, Past President, 2017-18

In this final year of my three-year term of service as Vice-President, President, and now Past President, I find myself pondering how quickly this time has passed. At the end of year two, I was honored to be inducted into the Dinosaurs Club, the group of past SAIR Presidents.

I have two primary duties to fulfill this year. I am responsible for coordinating the 2018 election and compiling a slate of officers for the following positions: Vice President/2019 Program Chair (three-year term), Secretary (two-year term), two Members-at-Large (two-year term), and Nominating Committee (5 members). I am fortunate to work with a very SAIR-experienced Nominating Committee: Andrew Brady (Florida State University), Sandi Bramblett (Georgia Institute of Technology), Denise Gardner (University of Tennessee), Michelle Hall (Southeastern Louisiana University), and Jill Triplett (Spelman College). The Call for Nominations will be sent in a few weeks so please feel free to reach out to the Nominating Committee members with any questions or interest you have. Serving on the SAIR Board is a fun and rewarding experience!



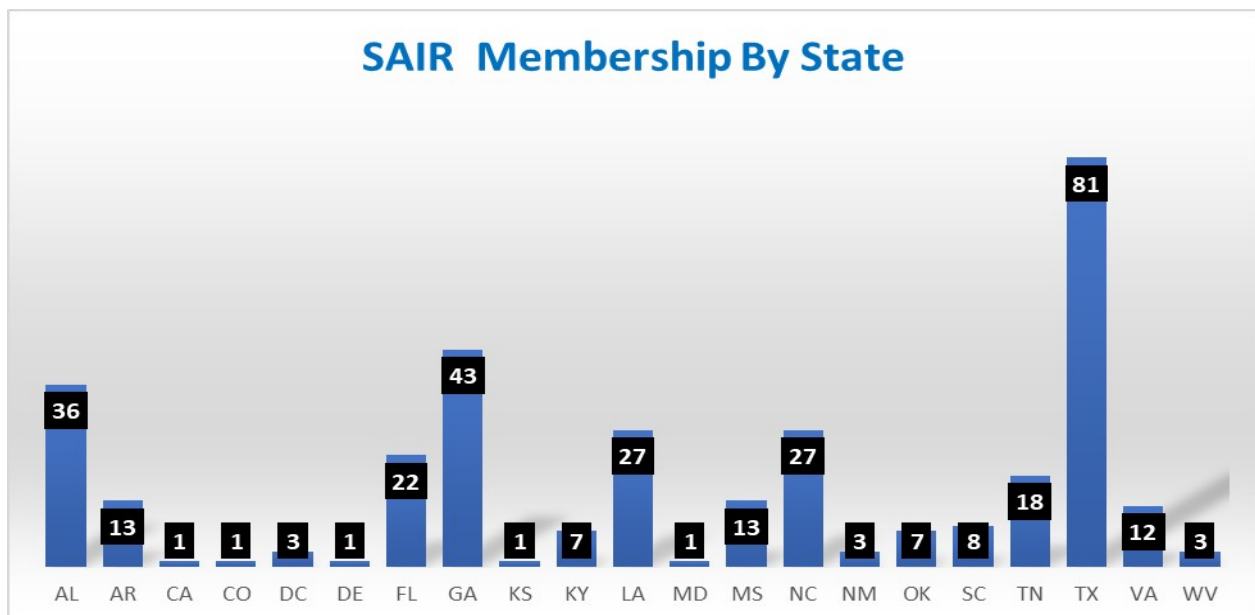
My second responsibility is to select a site for the 2021 SAIR Conference. If you have any questions about the upcoming election process or 2021 conference location, please feel free to contact me at lisa@louisiana.edu or [\(337\) 482-6977](tel:337-482-6977). I hope you have a great Spring semester!



SAIR Past Presidents welcome Lisa Lord at the Dinosaurs' Breakfast

Left to right: Denise Gardner, Glenn James, John Kalb, Gerry Dizinno, Michelle Hall, Lisa Lord (wearing the official boa), Sara Gravitt, Kathleen Morley, Cara Mia Braswell, Jim Purcell, Bernie Braun, and Sandi Bramblett

Membership Update - Lynne Crosby, Treasurer, 2017-19



As of January 30, 2018, there are a total of 328 members. ****NOTE** majority of memberships are paid at annual Fall Conference.

Professional Development—Rick Burnette, Member-at-Large, 2016-2018

The Hot New Trend: Pre-Conference Workshops

Did you know that we offered more pre-conference workshops at the October 2017 SAIR meeting in Ft. Worth than any previous meetings we've have in recent memory? Now, granted my memory isn't what it used to be, so I digress, but we also had great attendance at those sessions and we experienced a much higher percentage of SAIR attendees who took advantage of these concentrated learning opportunities. While the Ft. Worth weather may have been cool, I like to think we provided a very warm welcome to our attendees.



Our 23 pre-conference workshops also included three all-day workshops in addition to the first-time attendees workshop. I am especially grateful to those presenters who gave these six-hour deep dives into the hot technologies of Tableau, Power BI and predictive analytics – Marc Turner, Marcus Brewer and Melissa Hunter, and Bart Swecker and Craig Rudick. Will Miller was also dedicated enough to conduct two separate sessions. These individuals, and all our presenters, made great contributions to us and our profession.



Please take a moment to review the learning opportunities we provided and the people who provided them at http://www.louisianau.com/sair17/sair_program_list_workshop.php. Our attendees shared with us great feedback on these sessions. We hope to take that information, as well as your suggestions, to ignite our plans for an even better, more well-attended pre-conference slate for our 2018 meeting in Norfolk.

Please let me know which topics we may have missed in our last sessions and which ones you might like to present with an expert perspective. These workshops cannot happen without the support of our members. I encourage you think about what you might be able contribute to our association to make our profession even better and to start planning now if you wish to submit a proposal to deliver one of these presentations later this year. If you would like to present, or simply identify a talented presenter from your peers, please let me know. You are also welcome to send me topics and brief descriptions of workshops you would find interesting to attend. Professional training is one way that we can reduce burn-out.

I was thrilled by the popularity of these sessions and hope that we will continue to keep this trend a hot one! The weather may still be cool, but I hope that this information may have helped to warm you up to the idea of attending a pre-conference workshop this fall.

You may fire your suggestion to me directly at rburnette@admin.fsu.edu or if you are feeling lucky you can try to catch me via phone via my "Hot Line" at 850.644.1532 (note: $p < 0.13$). Temp=110°



Newcomers and Travel Grants - Wendy Kallina, Member-at-Large 2017-2019

Newcomers - In the coming months, watch for opportunities on LinkedIn to start connecting or reconnect with your colleagues, and to welcome our newcomers. I remember my first SAIR in New Orleans (2010). At the time, I had no idea that my SAIR colleagues would become so important to my professional growth. I am delighted at the prospect of starting our outreach to new attendees and members prior to the conference and nurturing those networks between conferences.



Grant Recipients - Each year, up to eight SAIR travel grants of \$300 and conference fee waivers are awarded to both active members and newcomers. The **2017 SAIR Travel Grant awards** went to the following: Katherine Bearden (Centenary College, LA), Jamir Chowdhury (SOWELA Technical Community College, LA); Alicia Dean (Morehouse College, GA); DiYanna Jiles (Spelman College, GA); Darriona Lee (Northshore Technical Community College, LA); Laura Modlin (SOWELA Technical Community College, LA); and Emily Wilkins (Auburn University, Auburn).

The **Bill Fendley Newcomer's Travel Grant** is a great opportunity for a returning newcomer, or "SAIR sophomore." Phillip Brodeur (Auburn University, Montgomery) was the 2017 recipient. There were no applications for the Larry G. Jones Graduate Student Travel Grant for 2017. This grant, which includes a conference fee waiver and \$500 towards travel expenses, is for graduate students who have a scholarly paper that has been accepted to present at SAIR. Please **let your students know about this opportunity** to significantly reduce the cost of attending a great conference.



Something in the AIR!

The **Association for Institutional Research (AIR)** is the world's largest professional organization for institutional researchers. AIR provides educational resources, best practices, and professional-development opportunities for its more than 4,000 members. To learn more, visit www.airweb.org.



The 2018 AIR Forum will be held in the SAIR region!

Please plan to participate for inspirational speakers, workshops, concurrent sessions, networking, and so much more in Orlando, Florida. Registration will open soon. For more information, visit <http://forum.airweb.org/2018/pages/home>

AIR Elections! Be on the lookout...if you are a member of AIR, you have received a ballot to elect the newest members of the AIR Board of Directors including a vice president and three members-at-large and three members of the Nominations and Elections Committee.



Sponsors and Exhibitors Laverne Macon-Jamison, Member-at-Large, 2017-19

The SAIR board and members are extremely appreciative for the support of our **amazing sponsors and exhibitors**. Your contributions and support of the **2017 SAIR conference**, allowed our association to provide a quality conference at an affordable cost for our members. Additionally, our members were able to network and gain exposure to new technologies and products to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of their offices.



2017 Sponsors and Exhibitors

PLATINUM

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GOLD

Equifax

National Student Clearinghouse

SAS

Scantron

US News Academic Insights

EXHIBITOR

Association for Institutional Research (AIR)

Campus Labs

Rapid Insight

NSF

SmartEvals

Nuventive

Taskstream-Tk20

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)

Vice President and 2018 Program Chair Julie Fulgham, 2017-18



October 6 – 9, 2018

[Norfolk Waterside Marriott](#)

235 East Main Street, Norfolk, VA

Great plans are underway for the SAIR 2018 Conference in beautiful Mermaid City...Norfolk, VA.

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On-site, Pre-Conference Workshops
Table-Topic Luncheon
Panel Discussions
Concurrent Sessions
Exhibitor Displays & Demonstrations
Awards: Best Paper / Best Factbook / Best Website

Waterside District
Norfolk Botanical Garden
Cannonball Trail
Nauticus and Battleship Wisconsin
Chrysler Museum of Art
100's of Restaurants
Mermaids on Parade/Mermaids Trail
Awesome Outdoor Entertainment

TRAVEL GRANTS AVAILABLE!

Call for Proposals Coming Soon.....

.....Make your plans early to attend SAIR 2018!!!



SAIR Board of Directors

Planning Meeting February 2018, Battleship Wisconsin

A WORD FROM SAIR AFFILIATES...Updates on Spring Conferences



The **32nd Annual ALAIR Conference** will be held on **April 12-13, 2018** in Orange Beach, AL. The conference theme is "Learning from the Experts".

Florida Association for Institutional Research held its Spring 2018 Conference at Holiday Inn Harbourside, Indian Rocks Beach, FL, January 22-23. Big Data, Data Visualization, and IPEDS Training sessions were among topics reviewed.



Georgia Association of Institutional Research, Planning, Assessment, and Quality will hold its **2018 conference, GAIRPAQ 2018: Taking Action on Data**, on Wednesday, **April 25th, 2018** from 7:00 am-4:00 pm at Middle Georgia State University in Macon, GA.

The **Kentucky Association for Institutional Research 2018 Annual Conference: The Power of Data and People Connection**, is scheduled for **March 15-16, 2018**, at the Council on Postsecondary Education Offices, Frankfort, KY.



The **Maryland AIR (MdAIR) 2018 Spring Institute** is scheduled for **April 27, 2018**, Carroll Community College, Westminster, MD. Save the date if you will be in that area!!

The **2017 Mississippi Association for Institutional Research** is slated for Tupelo, MS, **April 4th - 6th, 2018** at the BancorpSouth Conference Center, 387 East Main Street, Tupelo.



The **North Carolina for Institutional Research 2018 Annual Conference** will be held **April 15-18, 2018**, Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort, Cherokee, NC. The theme is Institutional Researchers: We Leave Nothing to Chance.

The **SCAIR 2017 Annual Conference, Strength in Numbers**, was held January 29-30, 2018 at the Springhill Suites by Marriott in downtown Columbia, SC. Presentations may be viewed at <http://www.sc-air.org/2017-conference.html>. Topics of discussion included data-mining approaches and policy analysis models.

The **31st TENNAIR Conference** was held August 7-9, 2017 at the Doubletree Hotel in Murfreesboro. The theme was "Research that Drives Action".



"Data's a Beach" was the conference theme for **TAIR's spring conference** held **February 11, 2018 – February 14, 2018**, Corpus Christi, Texas. The conference topics can be viewed at http://texas-air.org/conference/2018/Trifold_2018.pdf.

The **Virginia Association for Management Analysis and Planning** met at **Liberty University**, Lynchburg, VA on **October 27, 2017**. Session tracks were focused on: SCHEV Undergraduate Core Competencies, Analytic/IR-Roles, Assessment and Compliance/IE-Roles, and Best Practices or Innovation in Higher Education.



Reflections from the 2017 SAIR Program Chair, Matthew Campbell

In Fort Worth at SAIR's 44th annual conference we heard Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and chair of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University, Stephen Doig. Professor Doig commented that he found it slightly ironic to be the keynote speaker at conference offering sessions on Markov chain modeling and factor analysis, but I noted a fair number in the audience who nodded knowingly at his slide referencing his own use of VISICALC and Paradox—myself included!

As one would expect from an industry that is “all data, all the time,” there has been some truly world-class analytical talent to develop from within our profession. There is even a great AIR poster about how we crunch data for breakfast.

But sometimes maybe we struggle with conveying the meaning of our data;

maybe the presentation of our research isn't as impactful as our research? Not that my own research has been impactful but I certainly recognize in myself that I'm much more adept at doing it than explaining it.



Leading data journalists collect and organize data as well as us, but they are then able to go to the next level by presenting that data in very effective ways. See <http://fivethirtyeight.com/> and <https://pudding.cool/> for leading-edge examples of using data visualizations to connect with the reader.

Technology has made possible many fancy visualizations to facilitate our consumption of data, but as Professor Doig highlighted, there is one glaring limitation to data. Data can answer many questions but it cannot answer the most crucial one: “why?”

Culminating in the work that went on to earn the Pulitzer Prize, (What Went Wrong, Miami Herald, 12/20/92) then reporter Doig and his team compiled data from numerous reports to find patterns in damage wrought by Hurricane Andrew. In doing, they discovered some areas that experienced less of Andrew's force actually fared far worse than areas directly hit. Doig and team spent 4 months collecting datasets on wind variables and damage reports on 60,000 houses, but it wasn't until they examined construction date that the lede began to write itself. Further investigation into building codes, inspections, personnel records, and political donations and the “why” behind all the data—the root of the story—was revealed.

For us, a group who use data to inform, “What Went Wrong” is a fascinating study in the use of data and data visualizations, even 25 years on. However, I highly encourage you to read it not because it is based on data but because it goes on to explain the *why* behind the data. I wonder if in 2018 we can't aim to do that a bit more?

Matthew Campbell
SAIR President



Select 2018 Conference Pictures; ALL [Pictures](#) from SAIR 2017 are available on SAIR.org. Continuing THANKS to our Conference Photographer /Volunteer extraordinaire, Sandi Bramblett!!





THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!



Source: Matthew Campbell