



The Electronic Newsletter of the Association for Institutional Research (e-AIR)

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Serving Institutional Research Professionals and Those Engaged in Management
Research, Policy Analysis & Planning Since October 22, 1986

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The newsletter welcomes news items related to management research, policy analysis and planning; persons changing jobs or retiring; requests for help or suggestions from readers; announcements of professional meetings and conferences; comments about recent publications; abstracts of papers which authors are willing to share; job announcements; philosophical and/or humorous thoughts; and more. This online publication is available free to anyone interested in institutional research.

To submit articles, requests or information for consideration and inclusion in the newsletter, please contact Marne Einarson, Editor, at: (mke3@cornell.edu).

Persons seeking jobs in institutional research, planning, or policy analysis should check the [AIR web page](#) every few days for new positions.

***Subscribe, change your subscription address,
or unsubscribe***

For further information regarding the Association for Institutional Research, contact Randy Swing, Executive Director, AIR, Suite 211, 1435 Piedmont Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32308; Telephone: 850-385-4155, Fax: 850-385-5180 or via e-mail: (rswing@airweb.org).

Announcements & Information

AIR Alert #38 Released

AIR Alert #38: Department of Education Issues Net Price Calculator Template is now posted on the AIR Web site. You can access it via this [direct link](#) or via the [main AIR Web page](#). Please distribute the information to colleagues on your campus or within your organization who may benefit.

As a reminder, the AIR Net Price Calculator Resource Center provides additional information including detailed links, a discussion board, articles, presentations, and other resources on this topic. *Access this [resource](#).*

Higher Education Data Policy Committee

National Survey of Learning Outcomes Assessment

Your chief academic officer was invited to participate in a survey about program-level assessment conducted by the National Institute for Learning Outcome Assessment (NILOA). Each officer received an invitation to identify three people on their campuses representing randomly selected programs that could answer the short, five minute survey. *Access the [NILOA Web site](#) to participate.*

After obtaining contact information, NILOA directly asks program coordinators to voluntarily participate in this research. The questionnaire takes about 15 minutes and inquires about tools and approaches programs are using to assess student learning. The goal is to learn what various programs are doing in regard to student learning outcomes assessment, not what the programs represent in terms of institutional performance.

Stan Ikenberry (Illinois) and I are leading this project, which includes all accredited two- and four-year colleges and universities in the United States. Your institution's participation in the survey is voluntary, and the responses will remain confidential, but results may be useful to all of us. We appreciate any support you can provide in facilitating your institution's involvement in this survey. Please consider contacting your chief academic officer to determine whether your institution has responded. As a gesture of appreciation for your participation, we will send your institution an advance report of the survey results prior to any public release of the data.

You can direct any questions about the survey to the NILOA Project Manager, Staci Provezis at sprovez2@illinois.edu. Visit the [learning outcomes assessment](#) Web site for more information on NILOA.

Many thanks,

George D. Kuh
Chancellor's Professor and Director
Center for Postsecondary Research
Indiana University
kuh@indiana.edu

AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey 2009-10

While the “Additions and Corrections” supplement to our AAUP “Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession” will not be published until July, data corrections for that listing are now closed. As data are revised in our database, however, they usually become available for use in peer comparison reports within two business days. These data revisions form the baseline for next year’s data entry. If you need assistance in making corrections, please [let us know](#).

Our 2009-10 report is available on our [Web site](#), where you can also obtain information about the various [custom reports and data sets](#) available.

As we move into summer mode, our focus will be on updating our survey contact records. If you know that the survey contact person(s) for your institution has changed or will be changing, please send us an e-mail at aaupfcs@aaup.org.

Thank you.

AAUP Research Office

John Curtis, Director of Research and Public Policy

Michael Kinsella, Research Assistant

aaupfcs@aaup.org

Survey Web Site: <https://research.aaup.org>

Changing Scene

This portion of the newsletter is devoted to keeping you informed about changes among our colleagues such as moves to new positions and/or institutions, newly hired colleagues, professional recognition honors, retirements, deaths, etc. To include an announcement in "The Changing Scene," send a note with the key facts to Marne Einarson (mke3@cornell.edu).

John Novak has been appointed Assistant Vice Chancellor for the newly created Office of Institutional Effectiveness at Indiana University-Northwest. As AVC for Institutional Effectiveness and Research, he is charged with evaluating, facilitating, and streamlining the university's assessment and data-collection activities in support of accreditation and continuous-improvement goals. John began his career in IR as an analyst with Eastern Michigan University in 1997, and he moved back to Indiana in 2004 when he was hired as director of Indiana University-South Bend's first permanent institutional research office. John returns home, to Lake County, Indiana, to serve the Northwest campus of Indiana University after being away for 16 years.

Scott Baumler, Director of Institutional Research at Grinnell College, is moving on to become the Dean of Admissions at Mount Mercy College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He began his work at Mount Mercy on May 17, 2010. Baumler has served on the Steering Committee for the Association for Institutional Research in the Upper Midwest, been a member of AIR's U.S. News Advisory Committee, and worked with the *Enhancing the Student Experience* proposal review committee for AIR Forums.

Jim Eck has been appointed the new Vice President for academic life at Louisburg College in Louisburg, NC, effective June 1. Jim comes to Louisburg from Rollins College in Winter Park, FL, where he served as the associate vice president for academic affairs, acting dean of the Rollins Evening Program, and associate professor of statistics. Jim holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in psychology from Ball State University, an M.B.A. from Stamford University, and a Ph.D. in higher education from the University of Georgia.

Linda Thomas, administrative aide in Planning and Institutional Research at Illinois State University is retiring on May 31st after 37 years of service to the University. A retirement reception is planned for May 25th, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Bone Student Center Atrium. Congratulatory notes may be sent to Linda at llthomas@ilstu.edu.

IR In The Know

IR in the Know: May 2010

(irintheknow@airweb.org)

Digest of Education Statistics, 2009

The 45th in a series of publications initiated in 1962, the [Digest's](#) primary purpose is to provide statistical information covering the broad field of American education from prekindergarten through graduate school. The [Digest](#) contains data on a variety of topics, including the number of schools and colleges, teachers, enrollments, and graduates, in addition to educational attainment, finances, and federal funds for education, libraries, and international comparisons.

Campus Legal Information Clearinghouse – NACUBO Award Winner

Colleges and universities must comply with more than 200 federal statutes. To address this challenge, the Catholic University of America (CUA) has created a Web-based preventive law-compliance program, and made it available to the entire higher education community. The initiative, known as Compliance Partners, is an outgrowth of earlier work centered on the university's own needs, and addresses areas such as affirmative action, FERPA, HIPPA, ADA compliance, copyrights, and student life. The [comprehensive site](#) and its expanded reach recently earned Compliance Partners recognition as NACUBO's 2009 innovation Award recipient.

U.S. Plans New Rules on Student Privacy

[U.S. Education Department announced in the Federal Register](#) its intent to revise the rules to carry out the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, with two goals in mind. One would be to "strengthen enforcement" of the law, commonly known as FERPA; the other would be to "clarify" how states can use information from statewide longitudinal data systems to inform policy decisions without running afoul of the student privacy law. Regulations could be controversial - see the article [the Obama administration risks running afoul](#) of federal law.

Bachelor's Degree Recipients with High Levels of Student Debt

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center has issued a [new report on 2007-08 bachelor's degree recipients with high levels of debt](#) (more than \$30,500). While about two-thirds of all recipients graduated with some student debt, 17 percent of four-year college graduates were in the high-debt category. The frequency of high debt is higher for independent students than for dependent students. Among dependent students, high debt levels are not correlated with family income, but middle-income students from each sector are somewhat more likely than either lower- or higher-income students to have accumulated as much as \$30,500 in debt.

Understanding Transfer Admissions

The National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) included a supplement on its annual Admission Trends survey to learn more about how colleges evaluate candidates in the transfer admission process, as well as acceptance and yield rates. The [survey](#), based on fall 2006 data, found that the postsecondary GPA is the most important factor for transfer admission, although factors vary to some extent based on institutional characteristics such as public vs. private, enrollment size, and transfer selectivity.

The Commission on the Future of Graduate Education

The Commission on the Future of Graduate Education in the United States, a joint effort of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and Educational Testing Service (ETS), recently released a major research report in support of its goal to create a national conversation on how to increase graduate degree attainment by all segments of the country's population. The report outlines research findings and recommendations to universities, industry, and policymakers, and is a result of the Commission's charge to oversee a research effort to examine the political, demographic, socioeconomic, educational, and financial trends that impact participation in graduate education. The assumption underlying this work was that the global competitiveness of the U. S. and capacity for innovation hinges fundamentally on a strong system of graduate education. The 18-member Commission includes university presidents, graduate deans, provosts, industry leaders, and higher education scholars. *Read the full [report](#).*

Publications

NCES Publications

Getting Ready for College: Financial Concerns and Preparation Among the High School Senior Class of 2003–04

These Issue Tables draw on data from the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:02) to examine the extent to which parents and students were concerned about college affordability and financial aid availability. The tables also examine whether parents made financial preparations to pay for their children's education and whether students applying to college also applied for financial aid and, if not, their reasons for not applying. The tables present estimates for all students and by a wide range of student, family, and high school characteristics. *View the [full report](#).*

Other Publications

NILOA Occasional Paper

Hutchings, P. (2010, April). **Opening doors to faculty involvement in assessment.** NILOA Occasional Paper No.4). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment.

Much of what has been done in the name of assessment has failed to induce large numbers of faculty to systematically collect and use evidence of student learning to improve teaching and enhance student performance. Pat Hutchings, a senior associate at The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, examines the dynamics behind this reality, including the mixed origins of assessment, coming both from within and outside academe, and the more formidable obstacles that stem from the culture and organization of higher education itself. She then describes six ways to bring the purposes of assessment and the regular work of faculty closer together, which may make faculty involvement more likely and assessment more useful. [View the paper.](#)

Staci Provezis, Project Manager
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[Web site](#)

Meetings and Events



AIR 2010 Forum Sponsors and Exhibitors

AIR is pleased to present the 2010 Annual Forum sponsors and exhibitors. Be sure to visit the Exhibit Hall and take time to learn more about the products and services being showcased. Sponsor product demonstrations will be held throughout the morning on Monday and Tuesday during the Forum, highlighting the latest tools and technology available to improve the effectiveness and performance of your office and institution. Use the [My Schedule](#) tool to review the sponsor demonstrations offered. For more information about AIR's notable line up of sponsors and exhibitors, visit the [Forum Web site](#).

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Exhibitors

Academic Management Systems ~ Apperson Education Products ~ College Board
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National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics
Noel-Levitz ~ Nuventive, LLC. ~ SmarterServices ~ SPSS, an IBM Company
StudentVoice ~ Synch-Solutions ~ TaskStream

From Your Local Arrangements Committee - Chicago Street Smarts

Kathryn Talley, TCS Education System (ktalley@tcsedsystem.org)

Follow these tips from a long-time Chicago resident while enjoying your stay in the Windy City:

1. Don't be afraid to use public transportation. If you're confused about where to go or what to do, simply ask the attendant at each rapid transit station. If you're planning to go by bus, ask the driver if his route goes by your destination prior to boarding. Once on the bus, if you're not familiar with the route, stay close to the front and request that the driver alert you when you've reached your destination.
2. That said, try walking whenever possible! With its grid system, Chicago is a great walking city and many attractions are within walking distance of the Chicago Sheraton Hotel & Towers. Addresses are numbered outward from baselines at State Street, which runs north and south, and Madison Street, which runs east and west.
3. Apply the same "be aware of your surroundings" advice as you would in any big city. For example, don't advertise the fact that you're from out of town. A simple rule: Do not wear conference attendee information (such as a badge) when you exit the host hotel.
4. If someone on the sidewalk tries to hand you a circular/newspaper, don't reach out and take it just to be polite. If you do, the person handing you the item may request money for what you've "accepted."
5. When in doubt, ask! Chicagoans are friendly people and will generally go out of their way to assist visitors.

AIR Charles F. Elton Best Paper Award, AIR Professional File, IR Applications and the ERIC Collection - Now Open

AIR's Charles F. Elton Best Paper Award is presented for the paper that best exemplifies the standards of excellence established by the award's namesake and that makes a significant contribution to the field of IR. The award recipient is recognized at the next Forum. AIR's Professional File and IR Applications are AIR-refereed journals published online. The ERIC Collection is a select anthology of archival papers available on the Web through ERIC.

To be considered for the Charles F. Elton Best Paper Award, e-mail your papers in Word or PDF format to bestpaper@airweb.org. To be considered for the Professional, IR Applications, or ERIC Collection e-mail your submissions to papers@airweb.org and indicate the publication(s) to which you are submitting. If not specified, your paper(s) will be considered for all three publications.

Submissions will **close at midnight EDT, Friday, June 11, 2010**. Authors will be notified of the final dispositions of their submissions as soon as possible.

Research in Higher Education (RIHE) Manuscript Submission (*at the Forum*)

Submitted papers will be reviewed for possible inclusion in a special AIR Forum edition of RIHE. Theory, methodology, and quality are considered, as well as significance of the paper as a contribution to IR literature.

To be considered, deposit three (3) good-quality copies of the complete manuscript, including one (1) camera-ready original copy and a CD containing the document (in Word format) in the designated box located at the Registration Desk, Convention Registration, **no later than noon on Tuesday, June 1, 2010**.

IR Colleagues in Catholic Higher Education Convene at AIR Forum

Are you looking for colleagues to work on research that promotes and sustains Catholic higher education? Look no further... the **Catholic Higher Education Research Cooperative (CHERC)** is for you. Find out more at the AIR Forum in Chicago when institutional researchers in Catholic Higher Education gather for an **Affiliate Group meeting on Monday, May 31 from 7:30-8:15 a.m.**, where you can learn about membership and share your research.



The CHERC organization grew out of more than a decade of convivial gatherings of institutional researchers and other interested parties in Catholic higher education at national and regional conferences, including our annual spring Forum. As the CHERC name suggests, our now formally-organized group continues that strong focus on research in Catholic higher education. Currently CHERC has 58 institutional members. We share mutual research interests with the leadership of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) in Washington, D.C., with whom the CHERC Board has regular contact.

Benefits of CHERC Membership

- The CHERC Forum - held every spring!
- Members-only access to CHERC Web site posts on current research in Catholic higher education.
- An active listserv where institutional researchers at member schools share knowledge.
- Ongoing contact in Special Interest Groups (SIGs) at regional and IR conferences and as an AIR Affiliate Group of.
- Opportunities to take part in targeted collaborative research with other CHERC members.
- Sharing instruments, question sets, and tools relevant to research in Catholic higher education.
- Examining the impact of Catholic higher education and sharing new research outcomes.

Please join us at the 2010 AIR Forum on May 31, during the Special Interest Group meeting time. We look forward to meeting you then! If you can't attend, be sure to check out our [Web site](#).

Erin Ebersole
Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment
Immaculata University
eebersole@immaculata.edu

Call for Abstracts -

Australasian Association for Institutional Research Conference

November 10 – 12, 2010

Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, Geelong, Victoria

The 2010 Forum theme “Has institutional research come of age in Australasia?” will focus on strategic priorities in the higher education sector and include sub-streams focusing on:

- The equity agenda in higher education - 2010 and beyond
- Supporting models for academic standards
- Improving participation and retention of students
- Improving TAFE pathways and partnerships

The deadline for abstract submission is June 28, 2010.

For more information on submitting abstracts, conference details, and registration, visit our [Web site](#).



Professional Development

AIR Foundations I Institute



Cleveland, Ohio

July 13 – 17, 2010

Registration is open for the 2010 Foundations I Institute.

Foundations I Institute: The Practice of Institutional Research is specifically designed for new professionals in the field of institutional research (IR). The Institute provides a broad overview of IR in postsecondary education along with hands-on practice of core IR skills.

Early Bird Discount - Register by May 31 to save \$50 off regular registration.

The five-day, face-to-face Institute is led by instructors selected for their practical knowledge and expertise. Participants customize their experience by selecting three six-hour modules, in addition to the required Overview module. Content areas covered include statistics for IR, survey design and administration, data management, and use of national data sets.

Visit www.airweb.org/2010Foundations1 for information on Institute modules, faculty, and the agenda. **The Institute is limited to 130 participants and fills quickly, so register today.**

VSA Regional Workshops

The Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) will conduct three regional workshops this summer focusing on how to use the test results from the CAAP, CLA, or ETS Proficiency Profile (formerly MAPP), to inform institutional decision-making and improve learning outcomes. The workshops will be held:

June 8-9 in Baltimore, MD

July 8-9 in St. Louis, MO

August 23-24 in Sacramento, CA

Guest speakers include Charles Blach, director of inquiries for the Wabash National Study and Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, principal investigators for the Social Science Research Council-CLA Longitudinal Project. University leaders will share their experiences using learning outcomes data on their own campuses and representatives from ACT, ETS, and CLA will participate.

Institutional researchers as well as faculty and staff involved in assessment, teaching/learning evaluation, and student development are encouraged to attend. Funding for the regional workshops is available through a grant from Lumina Foundation for Education. Workshop registration and additional information can be found on the VSA [Web site](#).

Registration is free for representatives from VSA participating institutions. Individuals from non-VSA institutions are also welcome to attend for a registration fee of \$300 per person. More than 200 individuals from 120 institutions participated in last year's workshops that focused on effective practices for test administration.

The VSA is a voluntary initiative developed by the higher education community to meet the following objectives:

- Provide a useful tool for students during the college search process
- Assemble and disseminate information that is transparent, comparable, and understandable
- Demonstrate institutional accountability and stewardship to the public
- Support institutions in the measurement of educational outcomes and facilitate the identification and implementation of effective practices as part of institutional improvement efforts.

Sponsoring associations – the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities – collectively represent over 520 public institutions that enroll 7.5 million students and award 70 percent of bachelor's degrees in the U.S. each year.

Christine Keller
VSA Executive Director
ckeller@aplu.org

HERI Diversity Research Institute

On August 4-6 the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) will hold the third annual Diversity Research Institute, which provides two full days of training for building a framework to assess the institutional climate for diversity, campus diversity practices, and student outcomes on your campus. Participants will engage in problem solving around equity research methods and discuss critical policy analysis.

Participants will be introduced to the latest diversity research and will have the opportunity to learn about the importance of campus climate and its impact on student outcomes, as well as evidence on the educational benefits of diversity. Additionally, participants will be introduced to best practices in assessing the climate and diversity at their institution and how to use data to create effective change.

What is the difference between incremental change and institutional transformation? The Institute will expose participants to strategies that can put institutions on a path toward supporting and enhancing diversity and civic engagement initiatives on campus. The sessions are ideally suited for campuses engaging in strategic planning around diversity and student outcomes, assessment to improve their retention rates, and efforts to enhance teaching and learning. Campuses benefit from bringing teams that will be engaged in change efforts to improve diverse learning environments.

HERI will have a host of surveys that can assist institutions in assessing their campus climate and student outcomes. The Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) Survey is the most recent survey developed by HERI and is designed specifically to assess climate, institutional practices, and important student outcomes. Participants will be introduced to the DLE and the best ways to use it to learn more about their students' experiences and how their diverse learning environments work. For more information and to register, please visit the [Web site](#).

Sylvia Hurtado
Professor
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Career Opportunities

AIR Job Listing Summary

Missy Wiggins, AIR Office (mwiggins@airweb.org)

Persons seeking jobs in institutional research, planning, or policy analysis should check the [AIR Job Listings web page](#) every few days for new positions. Employers can submit job ads free of charge by using the online submission form found on the [AIR Job Openings page](#). For any questions about job ads, please contact Missy Wiggins by [email](#) or phone (850-385-4155 ext. 103).

[RESEARCH ANALYST III - California State University--Fresno](#) Fresno, **CA**

Deadline Date: May 26, 2010

[DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH - Regis University](#) Denver, **CO**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[STATISTICAL & RESEARCH ANALYST III - Aiken Technical College](#) Aiken, **SC**

Deadline Date: June 11, 2010

[ADMINISTRATOR II/ ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & REPORTING - University of Oklahoma](#) Norman, **OK**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT - Pitzer College](#) Claremont, **CA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH - American University of Afghanistan](#) Kabul, Afghanistan

Deadline Date: June 20, 2010

[COORDINATOR OF PLANNING & ASSESSMENT - Forsyth Tech Community College](#) Winston-Salem, **NC**

Deadline Date: June 2, 2010

[RESEARCH ANALYST - Adelphi University](#) Garden City, **NY**

Deadline Date: June 15, 2010

[VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC STRATEGIES - Oregon University System](#) Portland, **OR**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[DIRECTOR OF ASSESSMENT - Framingham State College](#) Framingham, **MA**

Deadline Date: June 15, 2010

[INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ASSISTANT - Gannon University](#) Erie, **PA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCHER - Madonna University](#) Livonia, **MI**

Deadline Date: June 15, 2010

[DEAN PLANNING, RESEARCH & INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT - Anne Arundel Community College](#), Arnold, **MD**

Deadline Date: June 6, 2010

[DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT - Drake University](#) Des Moines, **IA**

Deadline Date: Review begins June 7; will continue until filled

[DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH PLANNING & ASSESSMENT](#) - Dominican College, Orangeburg, **NY**

Deadline Date: June 18, 2010

[SENIOR RESEARCH ASSOCIATE - Institute of Ismaili Studies](#) Department of Shi'i Studies, London, England

Deadline Date:

[ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH - TCS Education System](#) Chicago, **IL**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH - University of California](#) Davis, **CA**

Deadline Date: July 26, 2010

[GRADUATE PROGRAM & TRAINING MANAGER - Tufts Medical Center](#) Boston **MA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[EVALUATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATE - Tufts Medical Center](#) Boston **MA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR RESEARCH - Minnesota State Colleges & Universities](#) St. Paul, **MN**

Deadline Date: Review of applications will begin on May 24, 2010 and continue until the position is filled.

[SENIOR RESEARCH ANALYST FINANCIAL AID - Pace University](#), New York, **NY**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[SENIOR RESEARCH ANALYST - St. Olaf College](#) Northfield, **MN**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT - University of New England](#) Biddeford, **ME**

Deadline Date: May 31, 2010

[INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ANALYST - Columbia College](#) Columbia, **MO**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[ASSESSMENT DIRECTOR - Apollo Group](#) Phoenix, **AZ**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[STATISTICAL ANALYST FOR ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT - Seattle University](#) Seattle, **WA**

Deadline Date: Open Until Filled

[Research Assistant](#) Research Assistant

Deadline Date:

[ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS - Pfeiffer University](#) Misenheimer, **NC**

Deadline Date: June 1, 2010

Technical Tips from the Field

Using Excel 2007 Conditional Formatting

Gayle Fink (gfink@bowiestate.edu)

This corner of the newsletter is reserved for readers to share practical tips, techniques and shortcuts that can make a difference in our work. Send your tips to Gayle Fink (gfink@bowiestate.edu).

While I was filling out the U.S. News & World Report main survey recently, I was reminded of how quickly I could answer the “top 5 degrees” question using the conditional formatting feature in Excel. Conditional formatting saves time by helping us tell the “data story” without creating different formulas. Below is a simple way of using conditional formatting to get the top 5 Bachelor’s degrees from the CDS.

1. Start Excel 2007 and open your institution’s CDS (assuming that it is in Excel).
2. Highlight the cells with the Bachelor’s degree percentages.
3. On the **Home** tab, click **Conditional Formatting** and then click **Top/Bottom Rules** and then **Top 10 Items**.

The screenshot shows Microsoft Excel 2007 with the following data table:

J1	Category	Diploma/Certificates	Associate	Bachelor's	CIP 2000 Categories to Include
J1	Agriculture				1
J1	Natural resources/environmental science				3
J1	Architecture				4
J1	Area and ethnic studies				5
J1	Communications/journalism				9
J1	Communication technologies			14	10
J1	Computer and information sciences			5	11
J1	Personal and culinary services				12
J1	Education			8	13
J1	Engineering				14
J1	Engineering technologies				15
J1	Foreign languages and literature				16
J1	Family and consumer sciences			3	19
J1	Law/legal studies			3	22
J1	English				23
J1	Liberal arts/general studies				24
J1	Library science				25

The Conditional Formatting menu is open, showing the path: Conditional Formatting > Top/Bottom Rules > Top 10 Items... The 'Top 10 Items...' option is highlighted.

4. A dialogue box appears with the top 10 defaulted. Adjust this to the top five and change the conditional formatting color if you like. Here are your top five without doing a lot of work.

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with a 'Top 10 Items' dialog box open. The dialog box is configured to format the top 5 items with 'Light Red Fill with Dark Red Text'. The spreadsheet data is as follows:

Rank	Category	Value (E)	Value (F)
11	J1 Communication technologies	14	10
12	J1 Computer and information science	5	11
13	J1 Personal and culinary services		12
14	J1 Education	8	13
15	J1 Engineering		14
16	J1 Engineering technologies		15
17	J1 Foreign languages and literature		16
18	J1 Family and consumer sciences	3	19
19	J1 Law/legal studies	3	22
20	J1 English		23
21	J1 Liberal arts/general studies		24
22	J1 Library science		25
23	J1 Biological/life sciences	4	26
24	J1 Mathematics	1	27
25	J1 Military science and technologies		29
26	J1 Interdisciplinary studies		30
27	J1 Parks and recreation		31
28	J1 Philosophy and religious studies		38
29	J1 Theology and religious vocations		39
30	J1 Physical sciences		40
31	J1 Science technologies		41
32	J1 Psychology	9	42
33	J1 Security and protective services		43
34	J1 Public administration and social services	4	44
35	J1 Social sciences	15	45
36	J1 Construction trades		46
37	J1 Mechanic and repair technologies		47
38	J1 Precision production		48
39	J1 Transportation and materials moving		49
40	J1 Visual and performing arts	3	50
41	J1 Health professions and related sciences	4	51
42	J1 Business/marketing	24	52
43	J1 History	3	54
44	J1 Other		

Parting Thoughts

Christy England-Siegerdt, Associate Director of Policy, Planning & Research at the Washington Higher Education sent in the following contribution for *Parting Thoughts*.

If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?

~ Albert Einstein (1879-1955), theoretical physicist, philosopher and recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physics

Thanks for the apropos quote, Christy! To keep the theme going, here are a few more quotations from Dr. Einstein:

Information is not knowledge.

If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.

Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.

Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.

Do you have a favorite quote? Something that resonates, inspires, or simply brings a smile to your face? Send it in to Marne Einarson (mke3@cornell.edu) for the June issue of *Parting Thoughts*.