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## Great Sessions and Workshops in Store at 2008 CIRPA Conference

### *Message from the Conference Chair*



**Rob Schultz, CIRPA Conference Chair**

The number of proposals for CIRPA 2008 has never been stronger! Unfortunately, the review team had to turn away nearly a third of the submitted proposals. If the facilities would have allowed, we easily could have added another tract for the conference.

The penultimate program for CIRPA 2008 is complete and posted on the website. Final program details regarding the specific presentation times may not be available until closer to the start of the conference.

We have also been able to secure 5 excellent pre-conference workshops. Anna Burke has offered to host the Newcomers workshop. This workshop continues to receive rave reviews-so if you're new to institutional research, this is a MUST ATTEND workshop...and it's FREE (nice membership benefit!). Our President, Jeff Donnelly, will be hosting a statistical workshop that will illustrate some basic statistical methodology. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Institute folks will be back with an add-on to the workshop from last year. This year's NSSE workshop is intended to build on last year, but attendance at the 2007 workshop is not a prerequisite. Finally, SAS will be hosting two workshops, the first is an introduction to

Enterprise Guide (their GUI interface) and the second a full day on Enterprise Miner (data mining).

Statistics Canada will have a strong presence at the CIRPA 2008. They will be demonstrating and looking for input and advice regarding the Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS). Topics will include everything from the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) to refined data submission requirements. Please watch for the post-conference special interest group on Wednesday October 29th for PSIS Definitions and Codesets Review Working Group.

The program committee is looking for volunteers to facilitate sessions; we need about 35 volunteers for this activity. Facilitating a session is a great way to meet the presenter(s) and to advance your own understanding of the topic. We are also looking for a volunteer to coordinate the evaluations for the conference. New for 2008 is a Monday Luncheon Table Topics session. You are encouraged to submit topics for discussion and then on Monday meet at the table with your topic of interest. We are looking for volunteers to capture the essence of the discussion so that the information can be posted on the web site. Lunch is provided as part of your registration fee. Please contact Robert.Schultz@usask.ca if you are interested in volunteering for any of these activities or if you have suggestions for table topics.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at CIRPA 2008!

Rob.

## Happy 10th Anniversary CIRPA Newsletter!

*Laurie Smith, Associate Registrar, Systems and Records, NorQuest College*

As the co-editor of the CIRPA newsletter I am delighted to celebrate this 10th anniversary issue. However, the celebration is somewhat bittersweet - I recently accepted a position as Associate Registrar, Systems and Records at NorQuest College. As a consequence of my new appointment I'll be retiring my red pen and closing my "grammar" book in my role as CIRPA co-editor. It took me ages to decide not to continue - I so enjoyed it, but upon reflection, I realized that the newsletter team had accomplished most of the goals that we set for ourselves including:

- o setting out themes for each issue a year in advance,
- o establishing (and sticking to!) a production cycle and publication timeline,
- o establishing the newsletter as the key communication tool for CIRPA executive,
- o encouraging participation by, and learning about new CIRPA members via the newsletter in our "CIRPA Newbie" section,
- o refreshing the layout and presentation,
- o actively soliciting interest in the newsletter, and developing a list of potential contributors; and,
- o generally encouraging (and sometimes coercing!) quality newsletter contributions from CIRPA members.

As one of my first professional development activities as an Associate Registrar I attended the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) conference in Halifax in June of this year. The conference was excellent, and I was struck by how similar the conversations were to those I have heard at past CIRPA conferences. (However, when a Registrar presenting at the ARUCC conference said "I wish our institutional researchers were more curious" I

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## Thoughts on the Tenth Anniversary of the CIRPA Newsletter

*Brian Christie, Associate Vice-President (Resource Planning), University of Regina*

When Elizabeth Lane contacted me with a request to write a piece for the tenth anniversary of the CIRPA newsletter, old codger that I am getting to be, my thoughts went back far more than ten years to the very beginnings of CIRPA. It makes sense, at least to me: no CIRPA, no CIRPA newsletter.

I recalled the "First Canadian Institutional Research and Planning Conference" that Joseph Lloyd-Jones (UOttawa) organized in Ottawa in November 1991. Lise Tremblay (Concordia), John Cousineau (BC Research Council), Thelma Lussier (Manitoba) and I were the program committee. It was a great success (the conference proceedings that Joseph put together run over 400 pages) and the participants were so excited that it was decided to do it again. So sixteen months later we gathered, this time in Vancouver, and again the program, organized by Barrie Dubray (USask) and his committee, was wide-ranging and packed with contributions from folks from across the country. With these two successes, those gathered in Vancouver decided to investigate creating a more permanent organization to ensure the continuation of such events and provide other services to the Canadian IR community. I agreed to chair a team that included Lise and Jeffrey Holmes (SSHRC). Jeff's experience as Executive Director of the Association of Atlantic Universities was invaluable. We drafted a constitution and laid out a process for incorporation. Then in August 1994 at our third national conference which we hosted in Halifax, the proposal was accepted and the first executive was elected. CIRPA was born. Barrie as president and the other executive members worked hard to make our dream a reality. One important step was the publication of the first CIRPA newsletter in October 1998. Those of us who were there at the beginning take great pride in seeing this organization continuing to thrive and grow. It has been the work of many hands over the years.

My contribution to the program of those first two conferences was to cajole four of my staff (Michael O'Sullivan, Shawna

Burgess, Susan Nasser and Pat Lindley) to put together a total of three papers that described some recent work in the Office of Institutional Analysis and Planning at Dalhousie. I think the programs of those early conferences were so rich because we all had a backlog of finished work that we could document and share. Our Dalhousie presentations looked at gender salary equity analysis, faculty flow modeling, academic unit reviews, and strategic planning techniques: all issues that are with us today, although some perhaps not with emphasis they had back then. Looking at the programs of those early conferences, we talked a lot about processes and tools, and evaluation and accountability. But also, as now, about students: surveys of satisfaction, retention, and recruitment. In those days, I think we worked more closely with the academic community - the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (CSSHE) group. I attended their conferences regularly and presented on issues like accountability and my part in the national project that Glen Jones (OISE) was leading to produce a history of post-war Canadian higher education (published in 1997).

Today, with the increased number of universities and colleges, our community is larger and the issues more diverse. We have better data management tools - the discussion has moved from creating on-line fact books and data warehousing to scorecards, dashboards and using wikis and software tools to distribute information. With the majority of university students now female, the access discussion has turned to Aboriginal populations and first generation students. The Millennium Scholarship Foundation and Statistics Canada deserve great credit for the wealth of research we can now access on factors affecting student accessibility and pathways; not that evidence-based decision-making has much influence on the politicians who think freezing or limiting tuition increases under the guise of accessibility will win votes. Student satisfaction surveys have been augmented by NSSE and the engagement issue: can this concept be used to increase student success? We still struggle to find effective mechanisms for connecting budgets and resource allocations to strategic plans and priorities and to measure and document outcomes.

This summer I attended the first United Kingdom institutional research conference in Southampton. I came away with two obser-

ations. The Executive Director of AIR gave a plenary address in which he recounted the development of institutional research and IR organizations from the early days of AIR to new groups around the world. He didn't even mention Canada or CIRPA; it was that attitude at AIR conferences in the 1980s, and more particularly the lack of relevance of many AIR sessions to the Canadian experience, that convinced many of us that it was time to follow the Europeans (EAIR) and create our own association and conferences.

The other UK development is more substantive, and paradoxical to my previous observation. A major theme at the UK conference was the use of marketing tools such as predictive modeling to inform student aid awards, the use of GIS tools to identify boundary markets for enhanced recruiting, and mystery shoppers to assess the quality of student services. The Brits are examining American university experiences and their own private sector practices as they move into a more competitive era and towards the end of tuition controls in 2011. With our own enrolment management challenges, at least in some parts of the country, this topic is one that we too will be exploring (and debating the related ethical issues, as well).

The first CIRPA newsletter that was published electronically and is available on the CIRPA website (March 2000) reported on the results of a survey of the members. A variety of issues and concerns were identified by the respondents and categorized under several headings. Leading the list under "CIRPA-specific issues" was the question, "Can we sustain a Canadian-based organization such as CIRPA?" The answer so far is a clear "Yes!" The newsletter has played an important part in that success. Our thanks to the editors who have volunteered their time and energy over the years to this endeavour and to the various contributors who have provided lively and informative material for us to read.

## CIRPA Members Interview

*This issue we interview with Kathleen Bigsby, Director, Institutional Analysis & Planning, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Surrey, British Columbia*

### How did CIRPA come about?

In 1991, Institutional Researchers & Planners from across the country got together in Ottawa - I was there and remember the reaction from others. Those of us from BC colleges & universities knew and worked with each other, mostly because of our post-secondary education system structure required that interaction. I was surprised to find out about the differences in other provinces.

Representatives at CIRPA were mostly from universities with a few colleges which I recall were primarily from BC and Alberta. For a variety of reasons, colleges were slower to join.

At that first conference Stuart Smith was a guest speaker. He was a former faculty member and politician who had just completed a report for AUCC on Canadian university education. I recall there was a lively discussion and his conclusions and recommendations were controversial. In essence, his main message was that teaching is an important part of a faculty member's job and that Canadian universities had forgotten their social contract to teach our children in return for the opportunity to conduct their research. It made for a lively discussion

At those first conferences, I learned much about Canadian post-secondary education and how it is different in different parts of the country. Just think of what those differences imply. This was a valuable lesson because I could now frame the data that I saw provincially and nationally. For example, Statistics Canada numbers showed university participation in BC and Alberta much lower than other provinces. It turned out they were not including university transfer students at colleges. Now they do.

**In your opinion, why was the creation of CIRPA important to you as a practitioner?**

The biggest benefit was understanding the different post-secondary systems across the country.

Another benefit was knowing who to call. If I had a question or needed to know about something, I now knew who to call. In IR, we don't publish publicly mostly since we're too busy so if you want to know what is going on you have to talk to somebody - now we send emails:o)

### What was CIRPA and Institutional Research?

Initially CIRPA was very university-driven. A big focus during the time I was on the executive was to increase College and Cegep participation. It was a bit of a Catch 22 in that we needed to offer papers that appealed to the College and Cegep

sector but we needed members who could make those presentations. Slowly

“ Our questions have not changed much but the way we answer them has. ”

membership started to even out.

### How has CIRPA changed over the years?

As I mentioned, the university and college involvement in CIRPA became more balanced and this also helped us get bigger. It is also interesting that during the first 10 years there was a strong presence from Statistics Canada which was then lost for a number of years. This past year that connection seems to be coming back. Another interesting change is a greater balance of female and male participation in CIRPA.

### How has Institutional Research changed over the years

Our questions have not changed much but the way we answer them has. Better technology allows us to collect and work with bigger data sets. Our major themes take different shapes but the essence is always there - Quality of Education, Effectiveness of Institutions, Costs, Funding. Maybe we are paying more attention to the student experience now than fifteen years ago.

We are less isolated as practitioners. There's more access to IR information. We have this newsletter, our conferences, Internet, email and other venues to learn what is happening provincially, nationally

### Happy 10th Anniversary

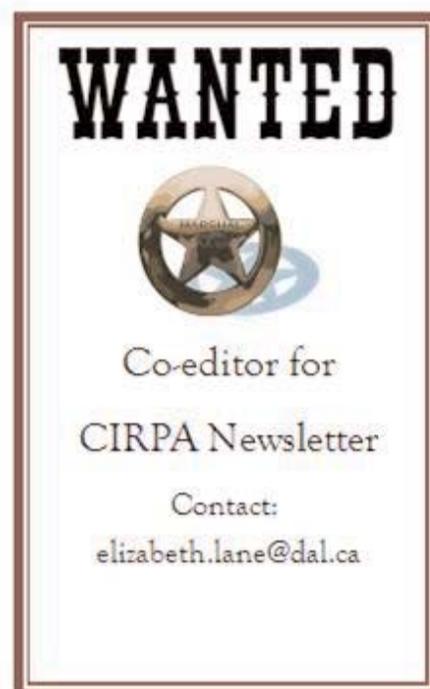
### CIRPA Newsletter!

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had a bit of a reaction). The topics discussed at ARUCC were very familiar - they highlighted how various units at Post-Secondary Institutions are concerned with effectively tracking, recording, reporting, reflecting on, and responding to student, and institutional activities, to provide quality educational programs and services to Canadian students. My thoughts as outgoing co-editor? Perhaps, a longer term goal for the CIRPA newsletter would be to develop it as a communication link between disciplines within Canadian post-secondary.

Of course, this type of publication doesn't happen in a vacuum. I feel privileged to have worked with Kelly Risbey, Liz Lane, Dawn MacDonald, Sharon Shultz, Kathy Arnie, Brett Holmes, and our translators who contributed their time, expertise and enthusiasm to the newsletter; the CIRPA members who contributed quality articles on a variety of topics, and the CIRPA executive for their ongoing support of the newsletter.

Good luck on the next 10 years!



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## From My Perspective:

*Averlyn Pedro, Co-ordinator of Institutional Research and Analysis, University of New Brunswick*

Anniversaries are ideal opportunities to reflect and assess endeavours. What have we become? Where are we going? What is the nature of the practice in various settings?

I take this opportunity to comment briefly on the changes I have perceived in the association, since 1991 when I first had an inkling of attempts to form a national institutional researcher body. This was shortly after my arrival in fall 1990 at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax. My predecessor, Judith Murray had moved over to Saint Mary's University and was an early advocate of a national institutional research body as well as a lead player among Atlantic institutional researchers. There were rumblings of forming a national organization then, and this soon materialized in 1991 when the first national conference of institutional researchers was held in Ottawa.

It was enthusiastically embraced and well attended. There continued to be subsequent support, through willing participation and contributions of the participating members at forums. The vitality of the Atlantic group of institutional researchers provided support to the founding institutional researchers' core through the efforts of researchers such as Judith Murray, Denise MacDonnell, Linda Nichol, Brian Christie, Paul Chancey and Joan Bessey. This background participation contributed to planning that materialized in a sustainable association.

Prior to 1996, the overriding interest of

institutional researchers was related to issues of institutional interest such as student enrolment, retention and persistence, attrition, completion rates of students, transfer students and increasing enrolment at the graduate level as well as the development of accountability frameworks, economic impact and contributions of universities to their communities. A number of student surveys were conducted to support planning initiatives and improve quality of services.

Maclean's surveys were prominent on the landscape as well as academic program and faculty issues, such as assessing faculty teaching load, fostering faculty cooperation in program review and faculty support for particular academic programs such as distance education.

Institutional researchers maintained an interest in reporting on tools, techniques and methods they had developed or adapted for their particular use and shared with the membership a number of research issues as case study reports. There was also interest in planning and in financial/funding issues. Many of these early institutional researchers reported directly to the president.

I was absent from the Canadian institutional research scene from 1997 to 2001, during which time I moved to Dalhousie University that was conducting business in the Middle East. I noted from the reports and newsletters that there was increasing organizational development activity in the association. However, for me it was dor-

mant period, since my time was spent leading a research team in evidence-based clinical research.

On my return to institutional research in Canada in 2001-2002, I noted the changes that had occurred in the association. The conference proceedings indicated a change in the nature of themes that were pursued in paper sessions and reports. In 2002, there was still strong leadership. The past treasurer when I left (Thelma Lussier) was then president and the association was showing signs of growth. There was a larger membership represented by more types of institutions. Institutional researchers were reporting with greater emphasis on, topics such as student access, student experiences, quality and public accountability, institutional effectiveness and performance measures, strategic planning initiatives, student and learning outcomes, and improvement of internal efficiencies.

Strikingly absent were for example, theoretical studies and studies addressing the needs of the student composition mix. However, the traditional emphasis on data collection and student enrolment was still forefront.

From my perspective, the Canadian Association of Institutional Researchers and Planners has flourished as a community through which institutional researchers have been able to interact, share information and give shape to constructive processes that have benefited members and institutions.

## **CIRPA Members Q&A**

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and internationally.

Since most people fall in to this profession, training was often informal. and People in the profession required not only data skills but also people skills - the political savvy to do the job well. I'm now seeing more formal training opportunities available for IR practitioners although it tends to focus more on the technical than the "intelligence" aspect of the job..

### **Where do you see Institutional Research going in the next 10 years?**

I'm not sure. We're experiencing considerable turnover as the people who were involved in starting CIRPA are retiring. I

think those major themes will remain the same but likely with a different twist as new people come into the profession and the organization.

We've talked about developing closer relationships to similar organizations like CAUBO and that would expand our ways of thinking about our roles.

Slowly we are getting better national data through common definitions and this will be a monumental change for the future. Getting decent data is so important. I attend the European AIR conference occasionally. It's excellent, but when they talk about common data for UNESCO and the EU from dozens of countries, while we're still struggling getting national data. I want to put a paper bag

over my head. Good national data about postsecondary education has to be a priority for Canada.

### **What do you like about CIRPA?**

I like it all - the conferences, the people, the ideas. At the conferences I often learn tidbits that change my perspective. It's very useful. I also like that the conferences move around the country. I've gained knowledge about my own country and better understand the work situations of my colleagues across the country. Institutional researchers are willing to share information, ideas. I know that I could call any of them and they would give the best information they could. We're very communal and much richer for it. I would hate to see us get stuffy and formal.

## Tourist activities organized by Octopus DMC

### Saturday, October 25th

#### Amerindian tradition - Wendake

**Depart 13h**

They were here way before us and left us with a great history to discover! Visit the traditional Huron site "ONHOUA CHETEK8E" and you will discover the beliefs, customs, and way of life of our people, from times past to the present. "KoeY KoeY Ataro" (Hello my friend!). Huron guides call out upon your arrival. It is their way of welcoming you to their territory.

#### Typical evening/dinner at the Sugar Shack

**Depart 18h**

At the sugar shack, everything is tradition. It is French Canadian's soul and tradition at its purest. Located on the Island of Orleans, the sugar shack we are suggesting will have you and your delegates discover and enjoy an even as we "Québécois" like to spend them: casual clothing, typical music and dance, hearty meal coated with a generous helping of maple syrup, multiple maple products, and hot maple toffee on snow of course!

### Wednesday, October 29th

#### Discover Quebec, a historical city

**Depart 9h or 13h**

A must-do tour! For 400 years, the sun has risen and set over the cradle of French civilization in North America: Quebec City. Experience the European charm of Quebec City, visit the Upper and Lower Town districts, and discover the Latin Quarter, the

Ramparts, the main churches. Quebec City is a taste of Europe right here in North America.

#### Island of Orleans Tour

**Depart 13h**

The island is one of the earliest French settlements in North America. Its extensive shoreline offered fertile soils, which were less arduous to clear. Its forests abounded with game, and the St. Lawrence with fish. The river also protected the settlers from Iroquois raids.

Take in the exceptional Saint Lawrence River landscape, to go to l'Auberge la Goéliche for exceptional pictures of Quebec. Visit the Manoir Mauvide Genest; a Quebec interpretation site on the seigniorial regime of New France as well as the Domaine Steinbach; a bio-certified farm the estate features a duck and goose husbandry, a vinegar factory, and an interpretation centre.

Reservations must be received before **September 25 2008**. After that date, an extra 5\$ per activity will be charged

Registration Forms are available here:

[http://www.acpri-cirpa2008.ulaval.ca/sgc/lang/en\\_CA/pid/12568](http://www.acpri-cirpa2008.ulaval.ca/sgc/lang/en_CA/pid/12568)

## CIRPA Elections

### Some history...

At a gathering of western offices of institutional researchers in 1989 a proposal was put forward to think about forming a national association. The March 1993 gathering in Vancouver consisted mostly of western practitioners, but also a reasonable number of practitioners from other parts of central and eastern Canada. Considerable discussion entailed around the benefits of forming a national organization. A decision was made at this conference to proceed with formalizing a national organization and a committee was formed to start the formalization process. A committee was selected to develop the organization and the first election and interim constitution was undertaken in Halifax in August 1994. In its deliberations, the first executive determined that it wanted an executive model that provided 2 year terms for each executive member. This model was adopted and remains in effect to today.

CIRPA has maintained its original focus to elect an executive that is representative of the composition of its membership. 'In preparing a slate of candidates for election, the Nominating Committee shall attempt to ensure the individuals are representative of the geographical and organizational diversity of the Association's membership (i.e., Western, Prairie, Central, Eastern Regions and universities, colleges, government agencies and other representative groups holding membership in the Association)' Complete information pertaining to the regulations of the election process and specific duties and responsibilities of the nominating committee can be found in Article 8 of the

Constitution and Article IX of the Bylaws.

In short, the Nominating Committee is charged with the responsibility to oversee the election process and to ensure a strong slate of candidates to operate the association is put forward to the membership. The unfortunate consequence of an election process is that all candidates put forward are amply able to fulfill the duties of the elected positions, but not all candidates can be elected. To this end, the executive and the nominating committee remain interested in working with members that offer their services to the association.

CIRPA has a 'green' policy to conduct as much of its business electronically as possible. Elections, after that first year (1994), were mostly conducted electronically, i.e., CIRPA used a blended approach of email and fax to accept and validate voter eligibility. However, in 2008 the association was able to implement an election process (through the services of the AIR web provider) which validates that the voter is a 'Regular' member in good standing. The technology also permits the inclusion of a short biography and a picture of each candidate, sets firm time lines for voting, ensures voter anonymity and confidentiality and permits the voter to switch back and forth between both official languages before they actually submit their vote. Once the voter has submitted their vote, the 'system' locks them out so that they can only cast one ballot.

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## CIRPA Executive

### President (Term 2007-2008)

Jeff Donnelly, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)  
[jeffd@nait.ca](mailto:jeffd@nait.ca)

### Vice-President (Term 2007-2009)

Cameron Tilson, Concordia University  
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### Treasurer (Term 2007-2009)

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### Secretary (Term 2006-2008)

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### 2008 Conference Co-Chairs, Quebec City, PC

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Micheline Moore, Université de Laval

### Members at Large

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Peter Seto, Mount Royal College (Term 2007-09)  
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Elizabeth Lane, Dalhousie University (Term 2006-08)  
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## CIRPA Elections

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Results of the 2008 election are:

#### Secretary

Kate McGovern University of Regina

#### Membres hors cadre (MHC) / Member at Large (MAL)

Anna Burke Nova Scotia Community College

Elizabeth (Liz) Lane Dalhousie University

#### Nominations Committee

Jim Doran University of Alberta

Heather Friesen Thompson Rivers University

The President, Jeff Donnelly, NAIT, Vice-President, Cameron Tilson, Concordia University and Treasurer, Ian Calvert, Carleton University, are serving the 2nd year of their 2 year terms.

The executive is a very important role for any organization. There is a great shared learning experience and value to both the individual and the organization when you volunteer to the association. Remember, few people are ever asked to be a leader-it takes your initiative to demonstrate leadership.

Respectfully,

Robert Schultz, Chair, Nominating Committee