

In this Issue:

- // Community and Partnership in British Columbia
- // Collaborating in the Capital
- // Strategic Plan Renewal — Update
- // Discussing NSSE

CIRPA Fostering Community and Collegiality

President's Message



**Cameron Tilson,
CIRPA President**

It's hard to believe that summer is upon us already. I trust you will take advantage of some well-earned time off and get away for some relaxation – I know I will!

The past few months have been very busy on many fronts. As you know, our strategic planning process has been underway since the beginning of the year and I am very pleased to report that we are on track to present a planning document for approval at the Ottawa conference. Board members spent 1½ days (in addition to our spring business meeting) hammering out a draft based on members' feedback. Just under 50% of the membership responded to the planning survey in March, a great response which I

believe aptly demonstrates the level of commitment members feel toward the association. At the time of writing, a second call for input from members is in the field which will help us prioritize and finalize the specific directions CIRPA will pursue over the next five years.

I would like take this opportunity to thank all who took the time to provide us with their thoughts and insight – it was extremely helpful. One thing that came through loud and clear is the high value members place on the sense of community and collegiality that is fostered by CIRPA. Interestingly, "Community" is one of the themes of this edition of the newsletter – was it a coincidence? More about the theme later.

Our other important initiative, of course, is planning for CIRPA 19 in Ottawa. Our conference co-chairs, Tony Eder and Caroline Lachance, and their committee members are preparing an outstanding program. I am also very pleased to report that a record number of proposals were received. I hope you will make plans to attend our premier professional development and networking opportunity in the nation's capital.

We have also been very busy with planning a much needed overhaul of CIRPA's website and public image. Member-at-Large Anna Burke has been spearheading these efforts and is

planning to roll out the "goodies" around the time of the Ottawa conference. Board members were given a preview at the spring meeting and believe me, everything looks very impressive!

Now back to the theme: As I mentioned above, the theme of the summer 2010 newsletter is "community and partnership". For me, this means being able to pick up the phone to ask a colleague at another institution for help or advice. Or on other occasions when it's necessary to cast an even wider net, it's easy to toss a question out to the entire membership via the listserv. I have done this on numerous occasions when struggling with a problem, looking for new solutions or simply seeking data that is not published. And I know that many others frequently do the same thing through connections that were originally made at the annual conference. Thus, being a member of the CIRPA community permits this to happen and it is something I believe we all value tremendously. In fact, it was through the foresight and efforts of a "community" of professionals from several institutions across the country in the late 1980s that CIRPA was rooted; thus, our community's roots are very deep indeed!

I'll close by wishing you all a very pleasant summer and look forward to seeing you in Ottawa!

Conference Update: Collaborating in the Capital

Caroline Lachance and Tony Eder, conference co-chairs.



CIRPA's 19th Annual Conference is taking place October 24-26th in Ottawa, Ontario. All conference activities will take place at the downtown Ottawa Marriott Hotel, located at 100 Kent Street.

This year's theme is "Collaborating in the Capital - Issues and Strategies for Co-operation in Higher Education Research". The conference website (<http://www.cirpa-acpri.ca/Ottawa2010/>) is where you will find a brochure, information about the venue and how to book a room, and information about our keynote speakers and the pre-conference workshops. A link to register will be appearing shortly on the site, as well as the conference schedule.

We're pleased to announce that our keynote speakers are as follows:

- Paul Davidson, President of AUCC
- David Trick, co-author of "Academic Transformation: The Forces Reshaping Higher Education"
- Chris Waddell, noted political journalist and Carte Chair in Business and Financial Journalism at Carleton University

Pre-conference workshops (Oct 23rd and 24th) are as follows:

- SCUP Planning Institute (Oct 23rd)
- Translating Strategy to a Balanced Scorecard
- Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) 101
- Cubology 101 - Selected Mysteries of the Multi-dimensional Data-verse
- GIS Applications in IR
- Advanced PowerPoint with Animated Excel Charts
- Introduction to IR for Newcomers

We have received a record number of paper proposals this year and so will feature four concurrent tracks throughout the two days of the conference as well as three panel sessions. CIRPA's AGM will be held Tuesday morning at 7:30.

Year after year we hear that the conference and the opportunity to network with colleagues are the most valuable aspects of CIRPA membership. To make this a most memorable event, we've secured the stunning Canadian Museum of Civilization for our social evening on Monday, October 25th.

Announcements will be made on the listserv - once open, we encourage everyone to register quickly to take advantage of the early-bird rates. We also encourage everyone to book their rooms early at the hotel.

Finally, the conference would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors. Those confirmed so far include:

- Xplorance (Platinum sponsor)
- SAS
- Beyond 2020
- Insightrix
- Higher Education Strategy Associates

Sponsors will be at booths in the main foyer area of the conference and will also have opportunities to discuss their products and services in conference sessions. We encourage everyone attending to engage with our sponsors.

Finally, we wish everyone an enjoyable summer and look forward to record attendance numbers in the Fall - see you all in Ottawa!

Examples of Community and Partnership in British Columbia - Speaking with Jan O'Brien

Jan O'Brien, Manager of Institutional Research at Okanagan College, took a moment to share her reflections on the B.C. IRP community. Thanks for sharing these examples!

Q: How has your relationship with people in other IR offices helped you over time?

A: I have had a tremendous amount of mentorship from others in IR in B.C. and across the country. It is always great to be able to talk "IR" with people and bounce ideas off them.

Q: Can you think of a recent example where IRP people have partnered together successfully, or when someone at another office has helped you with a project?

A: We have several examples of successful partnership here in B.C. Thompson Rivers University set up a consortium of users for Vovici survey software – this has been extra work for their office, organizing, negotiating, and invoicing everyone, and has enabled us to use a secure means of surveying students that ensures student data doesn't leave Canada. I am grateful that they do it! I have been happy to share our work in Qlikview with Langara College in Vancouver and Dalhousie University. Kwantlen Polytechnic University has taken on the treasury function for our B.C. IR groups. The B.C. Student Outcomes Forum is another example of coordination and cooperation in the Central Data Warehouse (CDW) sector. We have case-level data for the province for almost all of the outcomes surveys. Another example is the CDW pivot tables – all institutions submit data and have access to the provincial CDW and the pivot tables. The CDW is also populated by data from the Ministry of Education. Lastly, the Student Transitions Project (STP), which studies student transitions from the K-12 system to the public post-secondary system is a project that is in cooperation with IR, B.C. Council on Admissions and Transfer, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, etc.

Q: Does your office partner with IRP offices on a regular basis, and if so, what do you do together?

A: In addition to the above, the B.C. IR Directors' group gets together once a quarter to go over updates and issues and works as an interface to the ministry.

Editor's note: to learn more about the software and projects Jan mentioned, try these links:

B.C. Council on Admissions and Transfer: <http://www.bccat.bc.ca/about.cfm>

B.C. Student Outcomes Surveys: <http://outcomes.bestats.gov.bc.ca/>

Central Data Warehouse: <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/datawarehouse/welcome.htm>

Student Transitions Project: http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/

Qlikview: <http://www.qlikview.com/>

Vovici: <http://www.vovici.com/>

2010 CIRPA Election

Jeff Donnelly, Chair, Nominations Committee, CIRPA/ACPRI

The 2010 "election season" has come to conclusion. This year, five elected positions were contested. Three of these positions (Secretary and two Members at Large) are elected to the Executive Committee and two positions were on the Nominations Committee.

Nominations opened on March 15, 2010 and in compliance with Association bylaws, remained open for three weeks until April 2, 2010. When nominations closed there was one candidate nominated for Secretary, four candidates nominated for Member at Large (MAL) and three candidates nominated to the Nominations Committee. Voting commenced on May 3, 2010 and remained open until May 28, 2010. All voting was done electronically over the CIRPA website. In all, 74 votes were

cast with six incomplete ballots.

Elected were:

- To the position of secretary, Kate McGovern, University of Regina, by acclamation. Kate is re-elected to her second term in the role of Secretary.

- To the positions of MAL: Anna Burke of Nova Scotia Community College and Luc Simon of Laval University. Anna is elected to her second term as MAL and Luc is elected to his first term in the role of MAL.

- To the Nominations Committee: Jim Doran of University of Alberta and Chris Conway of Queen's University. Jim will serve his second term on the nominations committee while Chris is elected to his first term.

My thanks to all those who voted and my particular thanks to all those who ran for a position. A warm welcome to our new executive members, who will begin their terms at the AGM in October.

New Emeriti

Emeritus status is granted to retirees who have served the association in a significant or exemplary way. Some examples include (but are not limited to): serving on the Executive, organizing a conference, or contributing to advancement of the profession through presentations, workshops, etc. Emeritus membership is open to any individual who is retired and had been an active member of the Association for a minimum of five years immediately preceding retirement. Emeritus status may be granted by the Board of Directors to other retired members with less than five years service before retirement on the recommendation of three or more regular members. Emeritus members are not eligible to hold elected office and do not have the right to vote at member meetings.

The CIRPA Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Joan Bessey, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and Lise Tremblay, Concordia University and McGill University, were both recommended and approved for Emeritus Status at the 2010 spring Executive meeting.

CIRPA members approved for Emeritus status in previous years are:

- Jim Goho, Red River College
- David Holmes, Carleton University
- Derek Jamieson, University of Guelph
- Alison McNeill-Hordern, Brandon University
- Doug Shale, University of Calgary
- Walter Wattamaniuk, Simon Fraser University
- J.E. Wicks, Statistics Canada
- Jacques Turcotte, University of Laval

Editor's Pick: Featured Article

Leimer, C. (2009). Taking a broader view: Using institutional research's natural qualities for transformation. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 2009(143), 85-93. doi:10.1002/ir.307

Abstract: By more widely applying its natural characteristics, institutional research can help foster a broad organizational view among campus constituents, connect people and ideas, facilitate collaboration, and stimulate organizational learning that leads to cultural transformation.

In this accessible chapter, Christina Leimer (Director of Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning at California State University, Fresno) explains how institutional research can function outside of the traditionally isolating 'tower' structures of higher education. She describes several characteristics of IR departments (collaboration, an institutional focus, the ability to negotiate systemic obstacles, etc.) and explains how these factors allow institutional researchers to effect organizational change. Specific topics are addressed in the Fostering Broad Educational View, Prompting Connections and Collaboration, Stimulating Organizational Learning, and How Best to Use Institutional Research's Natural Qualities subsections. The article also includes a lengthy bibliography, for anyone wishing to learn more about the field of IR and its structure, function, purpose and possibilities.

The PSIS Definitions and Codesets Review Working Group: an Example of Successful Partnering Between Statistics Canada, IRP and Other Members of the Postsecondary Education Community

Chantal Vaillancourt, Survey Manager, PSIS, Statistics Canada

From October 2008 to April 2010, the Postsecondary Information System (PSIS) team from Statistics Canada partnered with some 30-plus members of the postsecondary education community across the nation in order to revise PSIS program-based codesets and definitions.

This partnership formed the "PSIS Definitions and Codesets Review Working Group". In this working group, there were several Institutional Researchers (IR) and other members of the postsecondary education community such as: representatives from the Offices of Registrars, Ministries of Education and other secondary education interest groups. The first working group meeting occurred at the CIRPA 2008 conference in Quebec city.

As a result of this working group, PSIS will be able to accurately portray enrolments and graduates by the types of programs and credentials found in today's public postsecondary education system, thus moving away from "institution type" view. Data reported under these revised codesets and definitions will allow greater comparability both the national and international level. In addition, the working group, with the help of other IR and Registrar personnel across the country provided the background necessary to develop a Reporting Guide. This guide, which serves as a companion tool to the revised codesets and definitions in order to reduce the response burden, will also help ensure comparability of the data and will provide users of PSIS data with documentation that will help to understand the data.

The PSIS team at Statistics Canada would like to take this opportunity to thank all those whose efforts have made this partnership a success. For additional information on the revisions, please visit the PSIS website at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/concepts/psis-siep/description22-eng.htm>.

UPDATE: Strategic Plan Renewal

Jackie Schach

The strategic plan renewal process is continuing, and will produce a final draft for all members to consider before the AGM takes place at our annual conference in Ottawa on October 24-26, 2010. Read on to find out how what we've learned in the process complements the theme of this month's newsletter – community and partnerships.

The Executive Committee has completed the second phase of the strategic plan renewal process as they have reviewed the results of the most recent on-line survey. Thank you to all CIRPA members who took the opportunity to participate and share their views. Fewer people logged on to this survey compared to the one conducted in March, but those who did were thorough, thoughtful and creative in their replies. Their ideas helped the Executive Committee consider how to improve the working draft of the Strategic Plan 2010-2015 to ensure it serves the association and its members well into the future.

Respondents strongly endorsed the over-arching concepts proposed as the 'pillars' for achieving CIRPA's mission to promote effective planning and institutional research in support of informed decision-making in Canadian post secondary education. The draft strategic plan is built upon the idea that this mission will be realized because CIRPA will focus on delivering results from two goals:

1. Advancing the practice of institutional research and planning and;
2. Facilitating collaboration within and beyond the organization.

The second statement (and its unqualified support by survey respondents) underscores the value CIRPA puts on building community and partnerships. In addition, as noted in our overview of the results of the March survey, members describing what should "never change" about CIRPA wrote about their positive experiences at the annual conference or about the camaraderie and collegiality that characterizes CIRPA overall – strengths that surely are by-products of the quality of community and partnerships that exists within

and beyond the organization.

Further evidence of the central place community and partnerships serve for CIRPA also emerged during key informant interviews. Outcomes from the interviews generated the following list of qualities the association should build upon and sustain:

- Community and collegiality
- Partnerships and collaboration
- National scope
- Diverse membership
- Learning that informs practice

The next stage of the strategic plan drafting process will be to consider how these important concepts can be converted to action plans and priorities. Survey participants reacted to some initial ideas from the Executive Committee and also offered their own 'take' on how best to achieve these ends. Some sample comments include:

-Connecting with AIR and other AIR affiliates might allow us to use their economies of scale to achieve our desired results for professional development.

-Exposure to other institutional research and planning expertise is intrinsically good, and it is something we should pursue.

-If we achieve all that this plan lays out for us, a strong sense of community will be a key outcome of our effective work together ... and will allow us to remain effective into the future.

The Executive Committee will continue work on the draft strategic plan over the summer months. All CIRPA members will see the product of that work early in the fall, allowing plenty of time for review and feedback before the document comes forward for approval at the October 26 AGM. After all, since community and partnerships will be a cornerstone of the plan, engaging those communities and partners in its development is a critical lever of the ultimate success of that plan.

Nation-Wide Partnerships: Discussing the Canadian National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Data Analysis Consortium with Chris Conway

Chris Conway is the Director of Institutional Research and Planning at Queen's University. He agreed to speak to us about the Canadian NSSE Data Analysis Consortium, a research project being conducted by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) for which he is lead researcher. Some of you may remember the presentation given by Chris and Richard Wiggers of HEQCO at last year's CIRPA conference in Banff.

Q: Can you give us a brief description of the national NSSE project?

The project involved assembling record-level NSSE files, augmented with student records system and other variables, from 44 institutions across Canada. Its first goal was to present results institution-by-institution at the academic program level and to generate reports for various student subgroups. The second was to examine variation in engagement – at the student record level and institutional level – to measure the role that student characteristics, academic program mix and institutional characteristics play in determining engagement levels.

Q: Why did the HEQCO determine that a national NSSE consortium was a priority?

HEQCO sees NSSE as a key quality measure that we need to understand more fully to increase its use in accountability and institutional management. The academic program-level and student subgroup reports provide a new dimension to the latter; the exploration of engagement variation is a key issue in the former.

Q: How were participating institutions recruited to the study?

We asked institutions to give a preliminary indication of interest based on a general outline. The response was strong, with 90% of potential participants signing on. Then we developed a detailed project plan, disclosure protocol and coding/data submission manual and asked institutions to make a formal commitment at that point. Virtually all of them did.

Q: Approximately how many institutions are participating? How big is the dataset?

Forty-four institutions submitted data. The file contains about 70,000 NSSE responses with about 120 survey response items and 30 additional fields obtained from student records systems and other sources.

Q: Can you give us a general idea of the protocol everyone had to sign? I'm sure some institutions were reluctant to share all that data.

The protocol is in two parts – one describing HEQCO's rights and responsibilities as the repository for the data and the primary analyst; the other outlining each institution's rights and responsibilities as to how they will use and report on the results and findings. Essentially, all participants agreed not to use the results for promotional or ranking purposes or to the detriment of any other institution, and to mask institutional identities when presenting the results in external forums. I think there was some initial nervousness sharing the data at this detailed level, but the protocol seems to have allayed any concerns and is working well.

Q: What has your experience been like, as you worked to create a national community for this project?

Entirely positive. There was already a lot of interest in NSSE and in advancing its use, and this project just tapped into that. Several initial decisions were made with a steering committee drawn from volunteers of some of the participating institutions, and HEQCO's interest and support made everything run smoothly.

Q: What were some of the challenges associated with creating a research community of this scale?

There weren't really any major challenges. Developing a coding scheme for everyone's diverse academic programs, developing the protocol, and deciding which additional fields were widely available and which to append to the NSSE record were all key steps in the process.

Q: What is the current status of the project?

The program-level and student subgroup reports were distributed to participants several months ago. They were produced using SAS-ODS and VB macros by Sara Montgomery in the Queen's OIRP office. The regression analyses are complete, and all of the credit goes to Huizi Zhao at HEQCO. I'm working on the final report now, and hope to have a draft to participants by the end of July.

Q: What will Canadian IRP gain as a result of this study?

Academic unit heads and service providers generally want customized data for their own program or "clientele". We can give them reports now, and will have an opportunity to work with the units over the longer term as they (and we) learn how best to respond to the results with engagement improvement efforts. As NSSE becomes increasingly embedded in institutional operations, IRP offices will likely be involved not just as data providers, but as active participants in planning and decision-making. I'm working with several academic units at Queen's to incorporate program-level results into departmental planning activity.

Q: What's next for you?

Who knows? There's always a project waiting around the next corner.

Editor's note: for more information on the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, see <http://www.heqco.ca/>.

CIRPA Executive

President (Term 2009-2011)

Cameron Tilson, Concordia University
ctilson@alcor.concordia.ca

Vice-President (Term 2009-2011)

Peter Seto, Mount Royal University
pseto@mtroyal.ca

Treasurer (Term 2009-2011)

Caroline Lachance, Association of Universities and College of Canada (AUCC)
clachance@aucc.ca

Secretary (Term 2008-2010)

Kate McGovern, University of Regina
kate.mcgovern@uregina.ca

2010 Conference - Ottawa, Ontario

Caroline Lachance, Association of Universities and College of Canada (AUCC), Conference Co-Chair
clachance@aucc.ca

Tony Eder, University of Victoria, Conference Co-Chair
teder@uvic.ca

Members at Large

Anna Burke, Nova Scotia Community College (Term 2008-10)
anna.burke@nscc.ca

Elizabeth Lane, Dalhousie University (Term 2008-10)
elizabeth.lane@dal.ca

Mardere Joubert, Portage College (Term 2009-11)

mardere.joubert@portagecollege.ca

Sharon Schultz, Keyano College (Term 2009-11)

Sharon.Shultz@keyano.ca

Nominations Committee

Jeff Donnelly, Chair , Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) (Term 2009-10)

jeffd@nait.ca

Heather Friesen, Thompson Rivers University (Term 2008-10)

hfriesen@tru.ca

Jim Doran, University of Alberta (Term 2008-10)

jim.doran@ualberta.ca

Shauna Lehtimaki, Laurentian University (Term 2009-11)

SJ_Lehtimaki@laurentian.ca

Jan O'Brien, Okanagan College (Term 2009-11)

jobrien@okanagan.bc.ca

Newsletter Co-Editors

Kristen Hamilton, Thompson Rivers University
Khamilton@tru.ca

Joan Bessey, formerly of Memorial University

jbessey@mun.ca