



CIRPA NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2014 VOLUME 15 NUMBER 1

President's Message

Greetings CIRPA Members! I hope this academic year has been interesting and finds all of you in good health – physically, mentally, and statistically.

To start off, I would like to thank Jennifer Murray for recruiting and guiding our newsletter editors, Elisa Allegro and Emily Roscoe. This edition of the newsletter includes an introduction to Elisa and Emily – read on and find out more about them. My first volunteer work with CIRPA was as a newsletter editor, so I value their behind the scenes work on communicating events, activities, and other items of interest to our membership. Thanks Elisa and Emily!

The last week of May 2014 saw a number of Canadians (n=32) participating at the Association of Institutional Research (AIR) Forum in Orlando, Florida. This was my first international IR conference and my first impressions were that institutional researchers and planners are experiencing similar pressures around the globe, and that there are many dedicated and passionate IR professionals all over the world. It was also reaffirming to know that our work in Canada is often at or ahead of the curve. AIR's 2014 Forum was their biggest conference to date, with approximately 2000 delegates. With 22 concurrent

sessions, setting a schedule was a challenge. It was the first conference I have attended that used a conference app, and I found it very helpful. I was also happy to learn how to use mobile software of this type, since CIRPA is currently developing our own app for the October 2014 conference.

You will be pleased to know that CIRPA's October 2014 conference is being co-hosted by McMaster University and Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario. Co-chairs John Dube and Carmelinda Del Conte are hard at work, preparing a fabulous professional development experience for you. More information is outlined in this newsletter and on our website. We look forward to seeing you in Hamilton in October.

Last but not least, this newsletter includes information about last year's winners of the Best Practice Award and the Outstanding Service Award. So as you read, remember that nominations are open for these awards until June 30, 2014.

May your research and data be accurate and your outcomes measurable. See you in October in Hamilton!

Sharon

(see page #2 "Getting to Know the Board of Directors" for more information on Sharon Shultz and other members of the Board)



CIRPA Board of Directors

Top (left to right): Brian Beacham, Sonia Richard, Mike Krywy, Jamie Graham
Bottom (left to right): Jennifer Murray, Miranda Pearson, Sharon Shultz, Luc Simon

CIRPA online resources:



[CIRPA website](#)



[LinkedIn Group](#)

2014 CIRPA Conference

The 23rd Annual Conference for the Canadian Institutional Research and Planning Association will be co-hosted by McMaster University and Mohawk College, and will take place in Hamilton, Ontario from October 26–28 at the Sheraton Hamilton Hotel.

Click here for more information on:

[Post-Secondary Education at a Turning Point: Adapting to Meet New Challenges](#)
[The Sheraton Hamilton Hotel](#)



Getting to Know the CIRPA Board of Directors

The current members of Board of Directors were asked a series of four questions. Read below and see how they replied to:

Q1: What do you love most about your job?

Q2: What is the best advice you have received or given about working in Institutional Research/Planning?

Q3: What has been your most positive experience with CIRPA?

Q4: How would you explain what you do for a living to someone who is not familiar with Institutional Research/Planning?



Sharon Shultz, President (Term 2013-2015)

Keyano College

Sharon.Shultz@keyano.ca

A1: Playing with the data to formulate a story.

A2: It takes a lot of effort to push data and information and it may never be used. There is value in waiting for data and information to be requested.

A3: The support through networking and best practices I have learned through conference presentations and conversations.

A4: It is a profession that is truly multidisciplinary. Our peers have such varied educational and work backgrounds that often it seems like the commonality is our curiosity about the data we collect and how it can help to inform decision makers and planners in our institutions.



Mike Krywy, Vice-President (Term 2013-2015)

Red River College
mkrywy@rrc.mb.ca

A1: The day-to-day variety, including projects that connect me with people from across the college.

A2: Keep your head up and your stick on the ice.

A3: It's hard to choose a favourite, but I fondly remember my first conference in Quebec City when Peter Seto, Tony Skorjanc, and I wandered down an alley to seek out a small nightclub, where a bunch of young musicians were playing. They performed an amazing cover of Pink Floyd's "The Wall", and the lead singer's head was only inches below this very low ceiling that looked like the

ceiling of a cave. At that point I realized that IR folks could be both geeky and fun, and that I was in good company.

A4: I usually say I'm a "problem solver" since it's an easily understood term that makes me seem super-important. For those who want a bit more, I usually throw in exciting terms like "number cruncher", "blogger", or "project manager". I usually avoid saying I create surveys since most people dislike them or "statistician" as many people have painful math memories of their own and resent all math-types forever and ever.



Jamie Graham, Treasurer (Term 2013-2015)

Nipissing University
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A1: In our shop, we become involved at the earliest stages of Academic Program Planning. It is at this stage that we are able to offer suggestions, some of which are accepted! The other aspect of the job I enjoy is the opportunity to interact with Academics, Staff, senior Administration and the Board. The only downside with this job, when compared to other positions I have served in at Nipissing, is that I do not have the same contact with students.

A2: The best advice I was given along the way was "Don't assume you have all the answers; there are too many others willing to provide them!" While some-

what facetious, the lesson I took away was to remain flexible, listen to others, and always look to learn new ways and methods to analyze situations.

A3: As we are a small shop, the exchange of ideas among colleagues at the CIRPA conference is where we gain immensely from the experience.

A4: When I am at a social gathering and someone asks "What do you do?" I explain that in a previous role at Nipissing, I was the Director of Finance where I counted dollars coming into and going out of the institution. Now I count heads of those attending Nipissing and the bums in class seats.



Miranda Pearson, Secretary (Term 2012-2014)

University of Regina
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A1: I love the puzzle solving aspect of my job – whether it's figuring out the best way to extract something from the student information system, how to summarize data in a meaningful way, or why that one student isn't being categorized properly in a report.

A2: IR is an extremely diverse field, with people from a variety of educational and experiential backgrounds. Don't worry if you feel like you don't have the typical qualifications, because there is not a standard IR path. Each individual's different approaches and ways of thinking all bring value to an IR team (lessons learned from CIRPA newcomers' workshop).

A3: Being involved with the CIRPA Board and with the 2013 conference planning really helped me to develop connections with some amazing people from across the country. I am quite introverted, so taking on these extra responsibilities helped to push me to get to know and network with more people.

(Miranda Pearson - con't)

A4: Well, I'd tell you but then I'd have to kill you...just kidding! Being an IR analyst is not quite as sexy or adventurous as being a CIA analyst! Basically we do research on the functioning of the institution. I focus mostly on student data, whether that is studying student demographic characteristics, enrolment trends, retention and completion rates, or any other request that might come our way.



John Dube, 2014 Conference Co-Chair

McMaster University
jdube@mcmaster.ca

A1: That's easy, my co-workers. McMaster's Office of Institutional Research and Analysis is a close group that does some fantastic work.

A2: Understand your audience.

A3: I have truly enjoyed my role as Program Chair for the upcoming 2014 CIRPA Conference, which is taking place in Hamilton, Ontario from October 26–28, 2014.

A4: Institutional Research/Planning provides research, analysis, and advice in support of strategic planning, policy formation, and informed decision making activities.



Jennifer Murray, Member-at-Large (Term 2012-2014)

Dalhousie University
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A1: I get to ask questions, and lots of them.

A2: Ask questions. We need to understand why people want data and how they will use it, because sometimes they are not asking the right questions to get the information they need.

A3: I really enjoy the conferences. Once a year CIRPA comes together and it is like catching up with old friends but with lots of learning and sharing of knowledge.

A4: I explained what I do to my niece last month; people bring problems to us and we get to ask questions so we can come up with ideas to make it better.



Sonia Richards, Member-at-Large (Term 2013-2015)

Nova Scotia Community College
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A1: There are so many great things about working in the field of Institutional Research, but I think what I love the most is that we get to help our organization learn more about itself and unlock information that informs decision making and planning.

A2: The best advice that I have received about working in Institutional Research/Planning is to not be afraid to reach out to CIRPA colleagues if you have a question or need advice on an issue. We have such a wealth of knowledge and experience in our Association, and there is always someone willing to share a best practice or answer a question.

A3: CIRPA is truly an amazing organization and has given me so much over my career. I have had the opportunity to broaden my knowledge of the IRP field while meeting a lot of wonderful people. I am very excited to be able to contribute back to our Association as a member of the Board of Directors.

A4: Oh this is the million dollar question...it may be a good workshop or session at the next CIRPA conference? But if I were describing it to someone who didn't know what we did, I would say that we take data and turn it into knowledge that is actioned by the institution.



Brian Beacham, Member-at-Large (Term 2013-2015)

Vancouver Community College

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A1: As a Director I am involved in a number of different portfolios, and my role oversees the traditional institutional research, calculating and submission of case level student data to the Central Data Warehouse, enrolment planning, timetabling, room booking and space allocation. I also enjoy being part of a provincial structure representing VCC, and in some case the BC College community, on a variety of committees at various levels.

A2: Become involved in the IR community within your province and across Canada. It is such an amazing group of colleagues that we can learn from, and share ideas and practices.

A3: The opportunity to network with the IR Community across Canada.

A4: I guide a team of researchers and analysts to provide high quality and accurate information to the management team and Board of Governors of the College and the Ministry of Advanced Education, to enable them to make evidence-based decisions about the College and the postsecondary education system across the province.



Carmelinda Del Conte
2014 Conference Co-Chair

Mohawk College

carmelinda.delconte@mohawkcollege.ca



Luc Simon
Member-at-Large (Term 2012-2014)

Université Laval

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2013 CIRPA Conference - Regina, SK

2013 CIRPA Best Practices Award Recipients

Congratulations Eric Lavigne and Monica Lopez, Marianopolis College

“Flipped Program Evaluation” explored whether an alternate method for evaluating academic programs would increase efficiency and produce more meaningful findings. Instead of evaluating programs individually, across multiple criteria and over a lengthy cycle, Marianopolis College opted to evaluate all programs at the same time and based on a single criterion: Program Coherence. This approach had the advantage of engaging all stakeholders simultaneously and allowed for changes to be implemented rapidly. Given the encouraging results of the Program Coherence Evaluation completed in 2013, Marianopolis College is currently implementing the next stage of its program evaluation cycle: Course Coherence, with a focus on pedagogical methods and assessment. Congratulations Eric and Monica for your success on reforming program evaluation at your institution! For more details on this project, you can contact them at

e.lavigne@marianopolis.edu or m.lopez@marianopolis.edu

2013 CIRPA Outstanding Service Award Recipient

Congratulations Suzanne Drapeau, Nova Scotia Community College

Sue is a longstanding and active member of CIRPA, with contributions to the association including serving as conference chair, facilitator, presenter, and recurrent participant over the past twelve years. Sue's colleagues have described her as an effective collaborator with a passion and ability to implement real improvements for the student experience and success. Since establishing the first Institutional Research and Planning office at Nova Scotia Community College, it has evolved to become a respected contributor to organizational decision making at the institutional level – all the while mentoring and inspiring her co-workers. Sue continues to be active in CIRPA as a member of the program committee for the 2014 conference in Hamilton. Thank you Sue for all you have contributed to the progress of Institutional Research and Planning!



Sue Drapeau and Cameron Tilson

Reflections on the 2013 CIRPA Conference

By K. McGovern

It is hard to believe that more than seven months have past since we closed our 2013 conference in Regina, Saskatchewan. Planning for the 2014 conference is well underway and I am truly looking forward to what Carmelinda Del Conte and John Dube have in store for us.

Since attending my first CIRPA conference in the Garden City of St. Catharines, Ontario in 2006 I have found that, while each forum has consistently provided highly valuable learning and networking opportunities, no two have been alike. The differences start with geography, but they don't end there. A large part of what makes each one distinct is the way in which consecutive organizing committees draw on the collective pool of talent and energy from their members, to deliver an event that addresses the particular and pressing needs of the CIRPA membership. Differences are also attributed to the creative and nuanced ways local resources are harnessed to deliver a unique and memorable experience. Just as important in shaping each conference are sponsor support, member participation, and volunteerism.

The 2013 conference theme – **Rising to the Challenge: Adding Value and Embracing Change** – was inspired by the membership. Upon taking the Program Chair role, Sonia Richards sought input on what mattered most and crafted a program accordingly. The main keynote speakers delivered thought-provoking and engaging addresses. Notably, Ken Coates was described as delivering not only a thoughtful and highly relevant speech on Aboriginal education, but as also instilling a much needed “call to action”. Geoffrey Scott's contribution to the conference was enormous. Right from the start, he engaged us with his Aussie humour to deliver a sound and relevant opening address that drew on over thirty years of experience in the area of change and leadership within higher education. Additionally, he shared tips and tools from across the globe in his student voice presentation, chaired our first-ever closing panel, and delivered a post-conference workshop. Local geography professor Randy Widdis provided us with insight on how culture, geography, history, and politics have shaped Saskatchewan.

What's a CIRPA conference without great opportunities to mix and meet? By all accounts the President's Reception and the Monday Social at Regina's RCMP Heritage Centre were huge successes. The collage of photos of colleagues in RCMP garb is testament to the light-heartedness of the evening. Among the memories most near and dear to me personally was seeing Robert Schultz, CIRPA's first recipient of the longstanding service award, return the honour. He presented the 2013 award to a member who commanded my respect on first meeting her in 2006: Sue Drapeau of Nova Scotia Community College.



(left to right): Miranda Pearson, Sonia Richards, Kate McGovern, and Jan McEachern



Kate McGovern and Cameron Tilson

Equally moving was having the privilege to recognize our outgoing President, Cameron Tilson, for his service to the Association. Having worked under his leadership, I know firsthand how solid his dedication and commitment to the Association are, and I sincerely appreciated his thoughtful and caring style. That's not all; having come out of the closet and openly prepared to show his true team colours, I was thrilled to be the one to crown him, in true Roughrider style, with his first watermelon!

DO YOU HAVE AN INTERESTING TOPIC OR ARTICLE FOR THE CIRPA MEMBERSHIP?

Please send us your ideas or articles for publication in the February 2015 CIRPA Newsletter.

CIRPA Newsletter Editors

cirpa.editors@gmail.com

The next CIRPA Newsletter Article Submission Deadline is

***** January 15, 2015 *****

About The CIRPA Newsletter Editors

Hello, I'm Emily Roscoe and I am your CIRPA newsletter co-editor! My foray into the research world formally began in 2005 with an economic impact study of the music industry in the Yukon. Ah, what fond memories of data collection! Those years in the private research sphere were a whirlwind of customized projects, from initial client meetings and RFP submissions, right through to publication and presentation. I had the opportunity to work for a range of clients in different industries such as education, finance, human resources, labour, health care, tourism and hospitality, manufacturing and construction, science and technology, as well as arts and culture. A fun and varied background like most IR folks! All of this was punctuated by a series of three-month volunteer excursions to Alberta, Quebec, British Columbia, and South Africa. Some of my favourite project types are new product development, training gaps analysis, satisfaction and loyalty, competitive intelligence, and anything longitudinal. In 2013 I found a new nerdy roost at the University of Manitoba as a Research Analyst in the Office of Institutional Analysis, where I have a whole new gamut of data to wrangle.



Hello, my name is Elisa Allegro and I am one of the newly minted editors for the bi-annual CIRPA Newsletter. Over a span of over eight years, I have worked in many PSE offices and departments, including Academic Advising, Admissions, Awards and Financial Aid, I.S.T. Special Projects, Registration, Research Services, and Student Records. Most recently, I held a position at the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, home of the Population Health Research Data Repository, where I contributed as an editor, author, and to the production of population health

reports for the Province of Manitoba and other stakeholders. In addition, I have also worked as a Research Technician for the Institute of Wetlands and Waterfowl Research – the national research unit of Ducks Unlimited Canada. This included many hours of field research in and around wetlands, lakes, and agricultural fields during the more pleasant months, while implementing data analysis, management, sharing, and archiving projects when being outside was unbearable! Those who mentioned that a diverse background is commonly found in Institutional Research and Planning were not joking! I am currently a Research Analyst for the Office of Institutional Analysis at the University of Manitoba, and look forward to the many interesting articles that will come my way as co-editor of the CIRPA Newsletter.