

■ Technology Tools for Today's Campuses

Practitioner Award

Robert B. Barr, Director of Institutional Research and Planning, Palomar College (CA)

Richard A. Voorhees, Associate Vice President, Colorado Community College

■ Outgoing President's Message

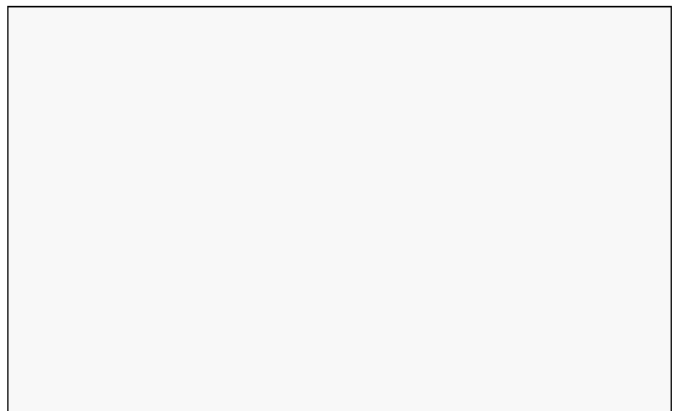
It has been an honor and privilege to serve as President of NCRP and editor of *Parameters*, NCRP's newsletter, during 1997-98 and to work closely with such a knowledgeable and dedicated group of officers, directors, and volunteers. Thanks to the efforts of all those who have contributed their expertise and energy, NCRP ends the year with a membership count close to 500 and a very solid financial position.

First of all, thanks to the officers on the Executive Board for their dedication in running the organization: Past President Scott J. Parke, Director, Policy Studies, Illinois Community College Board (IL); Karen A. Conklin, Market and Survey Research Analyst, Office of Institutional Research, Johnson County Community College, secretary/treasurer and *Membership Directory* editor; Gene Atkin, president-elect; and Benjamin L. Dilla, Director, Institutional Research, Westark College (AR), membership coordinator. Also many thanks to the outgoing and incoming regional directors, individually listed on the last page of this issue.

Thanks to Kevin Keefe, Mary Lou D'Allegro, and Cary Israel from Raritan Valley Community College (NJ) and Jo Ann Phillips in the Peralta Community College District (CA), NCRP has an excellent and up-to-date Internet web site. <http://www.raritanval.edu/ncrp>.

Thanks to Editor James C. Palmer, Associate Professor at Illinois State University, Mark Oromaner, Dean of Planning and Institutional Research at Hudson County Community College (NJ), and the highly capable assistance of the Editorial Advisory Board, the *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College* continues to be published with excellent articles. Thanks also to Richard L. Alfred and Patricia Carter at the University of Michigan for serving as guest editors for the special fall edition of the *Journal* which addressed institutional effectiveness in community colleges.

—Katrin Spinetta



Incoming President's Message

It was good to see so many of you at the NCRP and AIR meetings last month in Minneapolis. If you were in Minneapolis and would like to write a few lines about Forum experiences that really stood out for you and might be of interest to other NCRP members--a session, an event, or something else, send them to Katrin Spinetta, our Parameters editor. (We welcome negative feedback too, but won't publish that.)

One of my goals for the coming year is to promote communication within NCRP. If you know of meetings of regional or state associations or of other groups meeting in your region, feed the information to your regional director. If you have written survey questionnaires you'd like to make available on NCRP's web site, take a look at those posted on our web site, <www.raritanval.edu/ncrp>. If yours is somewhat different, send an electronic copy to Katrin Spinetta <kspinetta@peralta.cc.ca.us> or myself <genea@oakton.edu>.

There are a lot of new initiatives out there relative to research for program review and institutional effectiveness, and no single right way to do it. Our list-serve is a good way to be in communication with others who are facing similar problems, or have done so recently. <ncrp-list@cerritos.edu>

A big part of NCRP's program is rewarding excellence. Annually, we present a number of awards which are listed in the NCRP constitution in your paper directory (pp. 26-27) and on the web page. Again, the process is to nominate papers, etc. to any of the board members or to regional directors who will participate in the process of their consideration. Such nominations can be made at any time. *Parameters* will include calls for nominations from time to time as well.

Finally, I want to say something about membership. NCRP is the only national group dedicated exclusively to improving community, technical, and two-year colleges through research, planning, and information-based management. Nearly 500 of the nation's 1200 community colleges are represented in NCRP, which means more than half aren't. If you have friends in neighboring districts who are not members, tell them about some of the benefits you are finding from your membership.

I am deeply honored that you have elected me president and am looking forward to serving you and the organization this coming year.

—Eugene Atkin

Dear Colleagues:

It is a great tribute, indeed, to be recognized by NCRP for my article "Self-Assessments, Academic Skills and Student Achievement," which was published in the Journal of Applied Research in the Community College. I'm sorry I was unable to be at the NCRP meeting during the AIR Forum in Minneapolis, but I was giving a workshop on focus group research at the same time.

NCRP was among the first professional associations with which I became involved. The colleagues and friends I met through the Council remain important to me, providing ideas, feedback, and continuing evidence that research in the community college is expanding in depth, breadth, and relevance. I want in particular to publicly thank Gene Atkin, the current NCRP president and my valued collaborator and research partner at Oakton. His commitment to high quality work both for the college and for the council is exemplary, and, without his assistance, I would not be able to achieve my own professional goals.

I'm proud to be part of NCRP, and to observe the extent to which NCRP members contribute to AIR and to other regional and national groups. Community colleges are being recognized, increasingly, as vital participants in higher education who have much to teach our four-year college and university colleagues. Thank you for honoring me.

*Cordially,
Trudy Bers
Senior Director of Institutional Research,
Curriculum, and Strategic Planning
Oakton Community College, IL*

Government Relations/ Policy List Server

The Center for Policy in Higher Education's list server CPHE-L is now open to nonmembers.

It is a list server devoted to discussions on important policy issues like FERPA, student privacy, Solomon Amendment, SRTK/GRS, affirmative action, Hope Scholarships, IPEDS, veterans education, and campus security issues. To subscribe send a message to: Majordomo@enroll.unomaha.edu

Put nothing in the subject line. In the first line of the text type: subscribe CPHE-L

EDD-UI Wage Data Revisited

The presentation, "EDD-UI Wage Data Revisited: Economic Worth of an Associate Degree and Vocational Certificate from California Community Colleges - Methods, Analysis and Interpretation," was selected as the CAIR Best Paper for 1997-98.

One incentive that underlies individuals' decisions to attend college rather than enter the workforce upon graduating from high school is the expectation of higher paying jobs upon graduation from college. Most of this evidence is based on the differences between four-year college graduates and high school graduates. Although much has been written about the value of obtaining a baccalaureate degree on individual earnings, only recently has a wave of research studies been advanced, which has focused on the economic benefits of attending community colleges.

A recent study by Jorge R. Sanchez, Director, and Frankie Santos Laanan, Senior Research Analyst, in the Office of Vocational Education & Institutional Research at Coast Community College District examined data from the Employment Development Department Unemployment Insurance (EDD-UI) Wage Record and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information System (MIS) administrative database. Specifically, a cohort of leavers and completers, which is comprised of 841,000 students during the 1991-92 academic year, was examined. This study sought to answer the following questions: To what extent does completing an associate degree and a vocational certificate impact students' post-college earnings three years out of college? How do students' post-college earnings from last year in college, first year out of college, and third year out of college differ by educational attainment for all students and vocational students? What is the relationship between educational attainment and earnings for students under 25 and for

students 25 and over? Are there differences by ethnic background, economic status, gender, and age group among vocational students?

The results of the study support the notion that there is a positive relationship between formal education and earnings. For students who are economically disadvantaged, completing more education is positively related to higher percent gains and actual earnings. Moreover, completing formalized programs enables graduates to meet the certification or screening requirements maintained by employers upon embarking into the world of work. Further, by investing in their education these students not only develop certain skills and abilities but also foster their human capital - intellectually, professionally, and personally.

Because community colleges in California are now required to utilize the EDD-UI Wage Record data for federally-funded final performance reports and program evaluation, there is a need to establish standard procedures to assess, understand, analyze, and interpret the data. Specifically, the data can be analyzed to assess colleges' program-level enrollment, completion, and follow-up employment of students. Given the availability of the data, colleges and districts can use the data for local programming, evaluation, and student advising. Individuals responsible for the data management, analysis, interpretation, and reporting must be acutely aware of specific "contextual information" required to adequately interpret the raw data displayed in these reports. Having an informed background of the local economy as well as the regional economy will assist in providing a framework to interpret the data to achieve meaningful results.

For further information contact:

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The 39th Annual AIR Forum

Mark your calendars for the 39th Annual AIR Forum to be held in Seattle, Washington from May 30 - June 2, 1999. The theme, "Cooperation & Collaboration: Building a Seamless Educational System," encompasses issues of transfer, remediation, lifetime learning, selective admissions, legislation and reporting requirements, tracking, adult learning styles, curriculum coordination, competency-based issues, licensure issues,

economic impact issues, recruitment and retention, and distance learning/alternative educational methods. For further information about the Forum check the web site: <http://www.irp.udel.edu/air99/air99intro.html>

All 1998 Minneapolis Forum papers submitted for online access will be converted into a common format for viewing online. Information will be available about how to access the papers by early July. An E-mail will be sent to all current AIR Members when available.

Regional News

Region II: Mary Lou D'Allegro, Regional Director

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**NJ, NY, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands,
Quebec**

The performance indicators, which are slated to go into effect this academic year, will add little to the workload of institutional research offices across New Jersey. Nevertheless, they have been the cause of much anxiety. The performance indicators consist of four goals: 1) Improved Graduation Rates, 2) Improved Transfer and Articulation, 3) Improved Efficiency and Effectiveness, and 4) Diversified Revenues. Each goal contains two to four measurements to assess the extent to which an institution has reached that goal. For example, the process of assessing the outcomes for graduates is a measurement of Goal 3.

Some troubling issues arise from the use of the performance indicators that have been outlined by the New Jersey Office of Treasury. First, the goals are the same across all sectors, though each sector, as an aggregate, has different missions. Secondly, the measurements within each goal are weighted the same and each goal, in turn, is of equal importance. This weighting strategy, therefore, considers the combined transfer/graduation rate (one of three measurements in Goal 1) less important than external funding sources (one of two measurements in Goal 4). Taking a closer look at Goal 1, Improved Graduation Rates, the transfer rate will be determined by those students who transfer to NJ public, instate four-year colleges. This will undermine the true transfer rate, especially for the community colleges who reside in border counties or have no public four-year colleges in proximity.

One of the most unsettling issues concerning the performance indicators may be their implementation. Although the goals were not defined until the latter part of the 1997-1998 academic year, institutional performance will be evaluated based on this 1997-1998 academic year anyway. Hence the performance funding indicators were announced after they were to be implemented.

Fortunately, there has been a task force put into place by the community college sector and the NJ Council of Community Colleges. Their effort has succeeded in providing an open dialogue with the Office of Treasury. As a result, it has made some changes to the existing measurements. For example, the focus of graduation

rates in Goal 1, Improved Graduation Rates, will be restricted to first time, full time degree seeking students.

New York has yet to tie funding to performance, but it will probably happen in the near future. SUNY plans to start with some performance funding for the state operated campuses. Sometime afterwards, the community colleges will follow suit. Among the indicators proposed in the 1996 statewide plan for higher education, is a requirement that institutions report the results of New York students on professional licensure exams. In addition, higher education institutions would be required to monitor their graduates' satisfaction with their education as well as employers' satisfaction with their graduates' performance and make this information public. Developing an annual institutional performance reporting system was among the strategies listed in the 1996 statewide plan to improve higher education.

Region III, Hershel Alexander, Regional Director

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DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV

At the AIR conference in Minneapolis, Karl Boughan, Supervisor of Institutional Research at Prince George's Community College, MD, presented his paper, "New Approaches to the Analysis of Academic Outcomes: Modeling Student Performance at a Community College." This paper won the most recent NCRP Best Paper Award as well as the Best Paper Award for the Fall 1997 NEAIR conference in Hartford. Path analysis and cluster analysis were among the techniques that Karl utilized in the study.

Craig Claggett, Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis at Prince George's Community College, will be NEAIR President during the organization's upcoming annual conference in Philadelphia (November 14 through 17). Current NEAIR members should receive registration packets by mail. For information about NEAIR membership and about the NEAIR conference, contact Brenda Bretz (NEAIR Membership Secretary) at 717/ 245-1680 or at bretz@dickinson.edu. Region III members are encouraged to participate in the NEAIR Special Interest Group session for two-year institutions.

In other news, Arlene Blaylock, Research Analyst at Montgomery College, MD, has been working on a joint retreat between the Maryland Community College Research Group and the Maryland Community College Deans of Student Services. The conference took place

June 4 and 5 at Ocean City, MD. This will be the second year in a row that institutional researchers in the state have spent their annual retreat with members of other community college affinity groups.

**Region V: Susan Srbljan,
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IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI, Ontario**

The University of Rio Grande/Rio Grande Community College is awaiting the eminent arrival of a team from the North Central Association for a focused site visit. The 1994 comprehensive visit from North Central resulted in a recommendation that the next comprehensive visit be scheduled in 2004-2005 (the longest in the institution's history.) However, several areas were selected for a focused visit, including computerization and program evaluation/curriculum review.

Academic year 1995-95 marked the installation of a campus-wide optical fiber network, coordinated by Kingsley Meyer <kmeyer@urgrcc.edu>, the Director of Campus Computing and Networking. New computer labs have been constructed, and hardware in existing laboratories and many offices have been updated. All students and employees now have e-mail accounts, and "train the trainer" sessions have been held to introduce the e-mail and Internet technology to all members of the campus community. Instructors are beginning to use technology in their classes, and integration between offices and committee members via the network is on the rise. The University website <<http://www.urgrcc.edu>> is growing rapidly, with the Spring 1997 course schedule.

As part of the program assessment process, the Office of Institutional Research completed the first cost and productivity study of academic disciplines, using the 1997 National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity methodology developed at the University of Delaware. (Those who attended the Fall 1997 OAIR meeting in Columbus may remember the presentation by Michael Middaugh.) Instructions and an Excel or Lotus template available from the University of Delaware were provided, and campus data was submitted via FTP.

Nationwide comparison data will be available in a few months. But an immediate benefit of participation in the study includes several useful cost and productivity ratios that are automatically computed and immediately available to the individual campus: FTE instructors in discipline Ratio of tenure track v. supplemental

instructors; direct instructional cost per credit hour; direct instructional cost per FTE student; FTE students taught in the discipline per year; and personnel costs as a percent of total direct instructional cost.

The current national study of four-year and graduate institutions may be extended to two-year institutions next year. If no cost studies are currently part of the assessment and planning process at your college, you may wish to participate in this study. Contact Michael Middaugh or Linda Graham at Middaugh@UDEL.EDU or Rosalinda.Graham@MVS.UDEL.EDU

For further information about the University of Rio Grande/Rio Grande Community College, contact Catherine S. Clark, Institutional Research, University of Rio Grande, Rio Grande OH 45674; 614/245-7532 voice, 5035 fax

**Region VI: Benjamin L. Dilla,
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AR, LA, NM, OK, TX

For several years, New Mexico has used a report card system to show accountability in higher education. The 1997 session of the state legislature funded the Excellence in Higher Education committee to look into how well the state's post secondary institutions were doing. One bill introduced into the 1998 legislative session was designed to help move higher education toward a set of accountability measures to replace the report card. The bill did not make it through the session, but there is still plenty of interest in the development of new accountability measures.

Since the 1997 session, the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges has moved forward with an initiative to develop a common approach to identifying, measuring, and reporting on a set of community college effectiveness indicators. Frank Renz, Executive Director of the NMACC, put together a group of people to work on the project. The group consists of data coordinators, institutional researchers and institutional effectiveness people from the member community colleges. Renz started with the Core Indicators of the American Association of Community Colleges and presented the group with a working document. A revised draft was presented to the New Mexico Commission on Higher Education (CHE) in December 1997 and has been fine tuned during subsequent meetings.

The document includes six major areas, around which research questions, measurement, and data sources are organized. The six areas are:

- Preparedness of high school students for post-secondary education
- Transition of secondary education students to post-secondary education and two-year to four-year
- Retention of students
- Rates of completing programs or other measures of attainment of the students' educational goals
- Effectiveness measures and costs
- Participation and success of underrepresented students

At this time, the group has agreed on the areas, and members have begun to work on data gathering in particular areas in order to develop methodology, determine ease or difficulty of data collection, and whether all members can gather the same data. If successful, the approach will begin to address the concerns of the legislature, the CHE, and the community colleges.

Several Region VI members participated in the program at the 38th Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) in Minneapolis, May 17-20, 1998. Richard Bailey, Director of Planning, Research, and Evaluation for the San Jacinto College District, was an author/presenter for the Texas AIR Best Presentation on "The Determination of Student Perceptions of College Services: Analysis and Policy Implementation." Richard also hosted the SPSS Users Special Interest Group (SIG) on Monday.

Darline Morris, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, & Planning at Texas State Technical College, Waco, presented a paper entitled, "Student Environment Model: A Measure of Institutional Effectiveness."

David Preston, Director of Research and Planning at Brazosport College, presented "Lonestar, CSSEQ, and Institutional Effectiveness at Brazosport College" and convened a Breakfast Table Topic session on "Is There Life After Compensatory Education?"

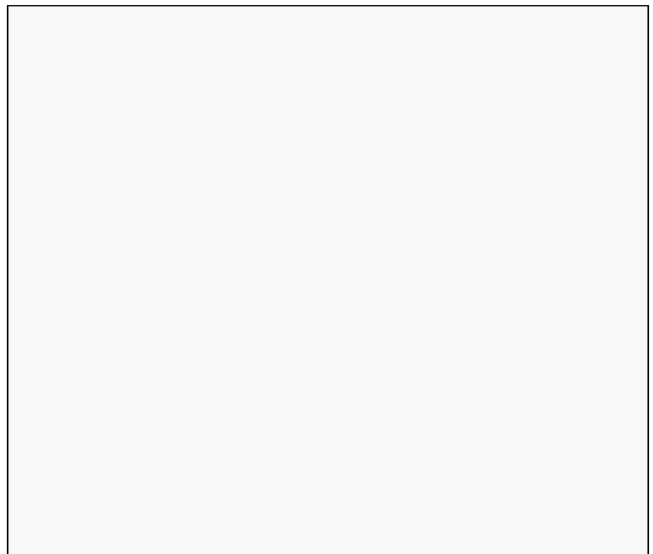
Since I've just been appointed to a one-year term as

**Region IX: Frankie Santos Laanan,
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(flaanan@cccd.edu)
AZ, CA, HI, NV, the Pacific Trust**

The 1998 CAIR Annual Conference will be held on November 12-13 in San Diego at the Doubletree Hotel Mission Valley, San Diego, CA. The theme is "Meeting the Challenges of Change in California Higher Education." Proposals are due on Friday, July 17, 1998.

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Detailed information about the conference themes and

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Parameters is the official newsletter of the National Council for Research and Planning. The NCRP is a council of the American Association of Community Colleges dedicated to improvement of two-year post-secondary education through research, planning and information-based management. NCRP is also an affiliate of the Association for Institutional Research.

Layout: Jo Ann Phillips