2020-2021
Annual Report

Responsive & Relevant

air | ASSOCIATION
FOR INSTITUTIONAL
RESEARCH

Colleagues,

We are pleased to present the 2020–2021 annual report of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR).

The events of the past year—most significantly, the coronavirus pandemic and broader recognition of racial injustices—have upended and reconfigured our professional and personal lives in significant ways. The events have also underscored the importance of AIR's mission and our espoused values—empowering higher education professionals to use data and analytics for better decisions that benefit students and institutions. We promote using data and analytics with integrity and in ways that are ethical and equitable—as well as effective.

Like many organizations, AIR faced unexpected and difficult operational choices over the past months brought on by the coronavirus pandemic and the loss of planned revenue sources. Fortunately, the financial situation has stabilized, and efforts have begun to rebuild and effectively position AIR's business operations for long-term sustainability and service to our stakeholders.

AIR is called to be relevant, responsive, and forward-looking—open to new ideas while remaining attentive to our core purpose and values. We are here to support the AIR community during a period of uncertainty, disruption, and financial constraints as well as during our transition to a more hopeful time of rebuilding and renewal.

The AIR Board of Directors and AIR Staff remain committed to supporting, connecting, and empowering each of you and our broader community through these tough times and serving as good stewards of our association and its resources. Your voice and input are essential elements in the success of these efforts.

We invite you to review this annual report and learn more about the association's work over the past year, as well as our plans for rebuilding and reenergizing our association for a strong and vibrant future.

Sincerely,

Heather A. Kelly
2020-2021 President

Christine M. Keller
Executive Director & CEO

Pandemic Response

Over the past year, AIR prioritized and focused its efforts on helping the IR/IE community cope with the coronavirus pandemic and its consequences. From re-imagining events and providing new ways for the community to connect around pressing issues to realigning internal resources to meet evolving needs, AIR provided programs, resources, and services in response to external and widespread changes impacting higher education. At the same time, the association adapted internal operations to offer AIR staff safe, supportive, and flexible options for working remotely amid changing professional and personal circumstances.

AIR Forum Virtual

AIR was faced with a difficult decision in March 2020—how and when to hold the association's annual conference, the AIR Forum. It was still early in the pandemic with widespread uncertainty and shifting guidance and travel restrictions. Conference registration was open and significant planning had already taken place to host an in-person event in New Orleans in late May 2020. Prioritizing the health and safety of participants, the in-person 2020 AIR Forum was canceled. However, by moving

quickly to identify and launch an interactive virtual platform and utilizing creative and efficient presentation methods, the 2020 AIR Forum Virtual, sponsored by Microsoft, delivered a smaller, but engaging conference experience for over 700 registrants and supporting sponsors.

The ongoing pandemic, gathering restrictions, and health and safety considerations necessitated that the 2021 AIR Forum again move from an in-person venue in Washington, D.C., to a virtual format. With additional time for planning and communication, 2021 AIR Forum Virtual registrations surpassed 2020 totals just weeks after opening registration. Despite the inability to connect in-person, the 2021 conference provided access for over 1,200 AIR stakeholders around the world to engage and learn together. The program schedule included widely recognized keynote speakers—journalist Michele Norris and futurist Harper Reed—along with over 130 quality presentations from the community and numerous opportunities for individual connections.

With the rates of vaccination continuing to rise, AIR looks forward to hosting the 2022 AIR Forum in-person in Phoenix, Arizona, while also leveraging important lessons learned in delivering a virtual conference experience to broaden access and participation.

LEARN ABOUT AIR FORUM

AIR Hub

Recognizing the importance of connecting our community virtually during widespread lockdowns, in May 2020, AIR launched an online community for higher education data champions—AIR Hub. The community provides a dedicated space for participants to:

- Create a personalized **profile**.

- Expand professional networks by **connecting** with new colleagues.

- Harvest the collective knowledge of a diverse professional network by posting to the **discussion board**.

- Share personal expertise by **engaging in discussions**.

- Search for specific resources and past discussions by keyword.

One year later, the community has grown to nearly 1,000 users sharing resources and expertise.

JOIN AIR HUB

Virtual Coffee Chats

Launched in June 2020, coffee chats provide the IR/IE community another opportunity to connect thoughtfully around specific questions and challenges we're facing, including expanding equitable student success, the post-pandemic future of higher education, and putting equity strategies into meaningful action. Averaging nearly 200 registrants per coffee chat, participants break into groups for informal discussion and peer learning around the selected topics.

Coffee chats are always free for AIR members and will continue throughout 2021.

REGISTER FOR COFFEE CHATS

air hub

BY THE NUMBERS

1,000

Users

600+

Connections Made

1,800+

Content Contributed

8,200+

Logins

AIR Stakeholder Survey

In fall 2020, AIR conducted a survey to assess the changing needs and challenges IR/IE professionals are facing, evaluate how AIR is serving those needs, and learn how we can better support and advance the profession into the future. Overall, nearly three-quarters of over 1,100 respondents rated the overall value of AIR's programs, resources, and services as "very good" or "excellent." The survey also identified areas for improvement and topics for professional education that AIR is using to plan and deliver programming and services for 2021 and beyond. For a more detailed description of the Stakeholder Survey and its results, see page 27.

READ SURVEY RESULTS

IPEDS Virtual Workshops

Funded by the **National Center for Education Statistics**, AIR produces Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) training opportunities, including video tutorials, workshops, and online Keyholder courses.

In the spring, AIR took its face-to-face IPEDS workshops virtual, offering at least one workshop every week, to ensure those involved with IPEDS reporting requirements didn't skip a beat during the pandemic. IPEDS workshops will continue to be offered virtually through fall 2021.

FIND A WORKSHOP
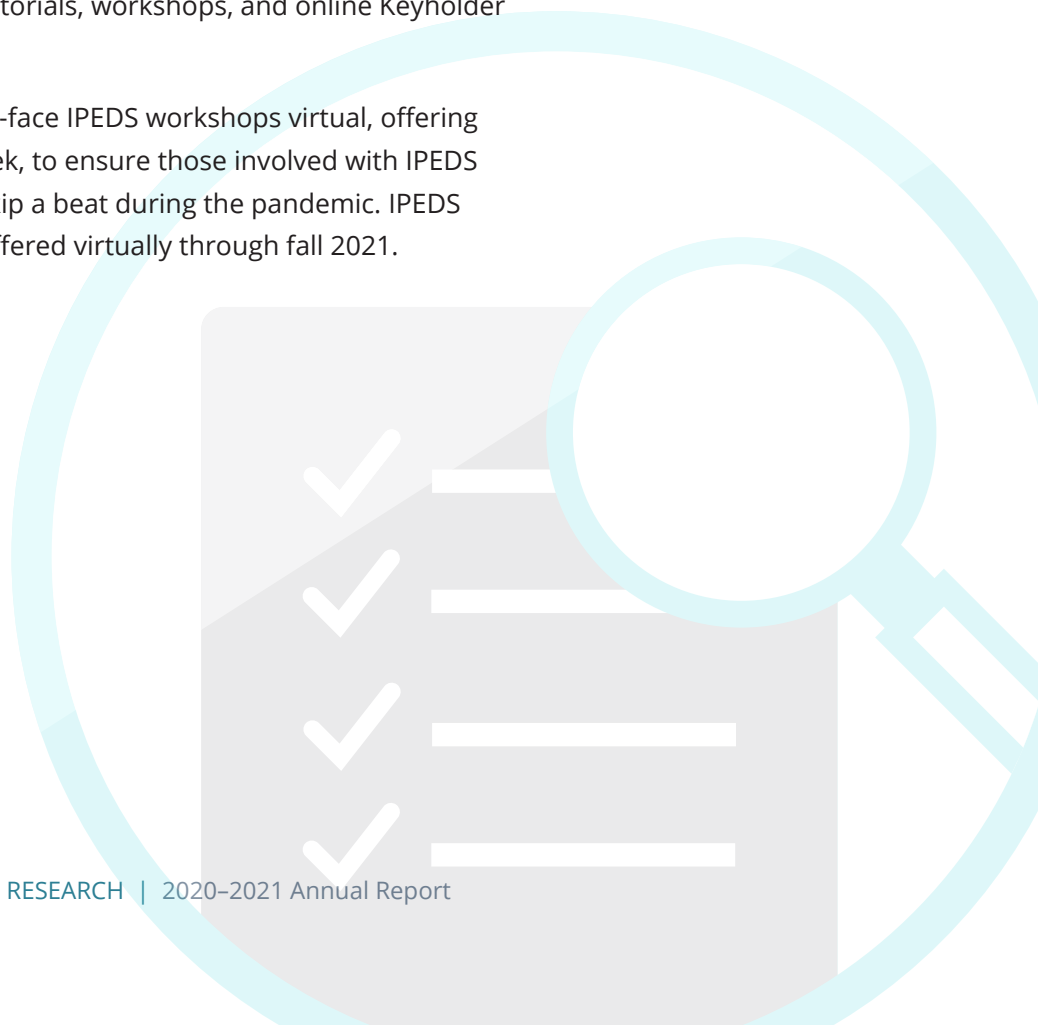
Knowledge Exchange

Combining informal virtual meetings with AIR Hub discussions and resources, AIR launched a Knowledge Exchange throughout fall 2020 called "Navigating a Pandemic Together." Featuring a set of curated resources and events, the format provided synchronous and asynchronous opportunities for participants to build a network of peers, collaborate on critical issues, and learn from each other. The Knowledge Exchange, which was free for AIR members, gathered more than 200 participants to share and network together.
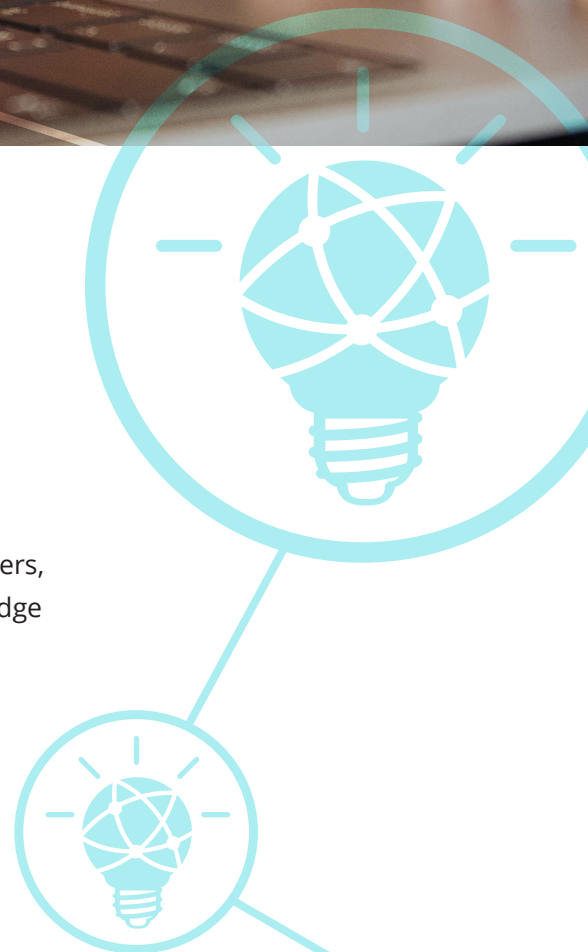
AIR Community Surveys

AIR conducts surveys on a variety of topics to gather an in-the-moment understanding from data professionals working in higher education. Throughout initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, AIR gathered data on topics including how the IR/IE community was coping with working from home, leading and managing, and assessing student learning during a global pandemic.

VIEW SURVEY DATA

Association Operations

Like many organizations, AIR faced unexpected and difficult operational decisions brought on by the coronavirus pandemic and the loss of significant revenue streams, such as the in-person AIR Forum. The AIR staff quickly responded by adapting events such as the AIR Forum and training such as the IPEDS workshops to online formats, as well as creating new opportunities such as the AIR Hub and Coffee Chats for the AIR community to connect and learn amid the pandemic.

The AIR staff moved to fully remote work in March 2020 and will continue to do so until at least early fall 2021. Additional flexibility in work hours and scheduling remain in place as staff juggle disruptions in routines and COVID restrictions. The financial backstop provided by funds from the federal Payroll Protection Program (PPP), as well as AIR's financial reserves assisted in navigating the uncertainties and disruptions caused by the pandemic.

While AIR's operational and financial situation had stabilized by the end of 2020, the 2021 budget was reduced by one-third to ensure long-term financial sustainability and to rebuild revenue sources. Unfortunately, the budget cuts included a reduction in the number of full-time staff in early fall 2020. The smaller budget allows AIR the opportunity to restart, rebuild, and expand programs, services, and resources without further tapping into financial reserves.

Focus on Equity

Events over the past year have laid bare historic inequities and sparked a renewed call for greater attention to equity and justice in the U.S. and around the world. As a global leader for the ethical use of data for better decisions, AIR works to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. Furthering the use of data for decisions that improve equity and success for all students is at the heart of our work.

Statement on Racial Injustice

In June 2020, AIR released its Statement on Racial Injustice. While the statement is neither perfect nor comprehensive, it is an important step in clearly articulating the association's commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education, as well as its commitment to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for association events and activities.

READ THE STATEMENT

"The AIR community plays an important role in identifying inequities and working to provide solutions. Data professionals explore new ways to share tools and information that challenge conventional ways of thinking about student success and transform how colleges and universities support and educate students. We've made some progress, but more work is needed."

— AIR Statement on Racial Injustice, June 2020

Learning Together

One of the best ways to increase understanding and initiate change is through honest dialogue across multiple perspectives. To that end, AIR hosted various virtual events over the past year to provide opportunities for the IR/IE community to discuss and learn about the role of IR/IE in improving equity and inclusion in higher education.

JULY 2020: COFFEE CHAT | Advancing Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education—Listening and Learning Together

OCTOBER 2020: COFFEE CHAT | Fast Forward: Considering the "Post-Pandemic" Future of Higher Ed—A Conversation with Scott Jaschik

OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2020: AIR KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE | Navigating a Pandemic Together

APRIL 2021: COFFEE CHAT | From Equity Talk to Equity Walk Author Tia Brown McNair: A DEI Discussion

APRIL 2021: WEBINAR SERIES | Equity and Access-Focused Analytics: What Do Our Constituents Need from IR?

MAY 2021: AIR Forum Virtual included 20 sessions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion at various times throughout the conference

Plus, members of the community have shared perspectives and ideas through stories, articles, and AIR Hub discussion posts.

BROWSE CONTENT

Looking Inward

To advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within higher education, it is also important for AIR to look inward and recognize areas where inequities may exist within our own association's policies and processes. This past year, the AIR Board of Directors and Staff have taken initial steps to ensure its practices are in line with its values by considering different perspectives and exploring ways to honor and promote diversity and to strengthen our commitment to racial justice and equity. Some of these steps are summarized below with additional detail on Board committee work in the "Positioning for the Future" section on page 23.

Review of Mission and Future Direction

The AIR Board of Directors is committed to ensuring AIR is welcoming to all professionals dedicated to data-informed decision making to improve higher education. During the Board's "Future of IR and Higher Education" conversations, *Promoting Equity and Inclusion in AIR* has been identified as one of the three themes for future member focus groups. The Board is also reviewing the AIR mission statement (the "Ends") to make certain there is a visible and actionable commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Volunteer Leadership Selection and Effectiveness

The Nominations & Elections Committee (NEC) is tasked with recruiting a slate of nominees to serve as AIR's volunteer leaders. The 2020–2021 NEC placed a particular focus on ensuring the association's leadership selection processes, policies, and structures promote equity and inclusion, starting with revising the candidate vetting questionnaires to learn more about candidates' commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusiveness. The NEC developed formal recommendations for future improvements, which were presented to the Board of Directors in March 2021.

In addition to the work of the NEC, a special ad hoc committee—the Board Structure for Accountability and Effectiveness—was convened to evaluate Board governance structures for improved leadership continuity, diversity, and accountability. As part of their review and deliberations, the Committee is considering the suggestions of the NEC and of the Governance Orientation and Training Committee with an eye toward clear expectations, expanded opportunities, and enhanced equity. The Committee's recommendations were presented to the full Board in early summer 2021, with plans to strategically address the identified needs and for communication to the AIR community.

Expanding Access

A committee of AIR members, staff, and board members is exploring ways to expand AIR's current membership options. The goal of expanding membership options is to provide greater access to AIR's products, resources, and services for all individuals who use and/or produce data within higher education.

Updates to Stakeholder Information

AIR staff gathered current perspectives, trend data, and stakeholder feedback to update fields and response labels associated with AIR stakeholder profile and demographic data to enhance inclusivity and to allow for better disaggregated data to support decisions and planning. For example, pronouns, gender identity, race and ethnicity demographic labels and choices have all been updated and expanded to provide more inclusive options. Changes are scheduled to be reflected in AIR website user profiles by fall 2021.

Programs and Services

In a time of transition, disruption, and financial constraints, it is important for AIR to remain focused on its core mission and values—advancing the effective, ethical, and equitable use of data for the benefit of students and institutions. To accomplish our mission and support our community, AIR continues to focus our efforts in four operational areas:

1 | EDUCATION AND TRAINING
Provide educational opportunities to meet the current and future training and professional development needs of the community.

2 | KNOWLEDGE CENTER
Serve as a center of knowledge and innovation for the creation and exchange of research, practice, and tools.

3 | COMMUNITY AND NETWORKS
Create and engage a community of professionals and organizations to learn, connect, and collaborate.

4 | ADVOCACY AND POLICY
Advocate for the resources, expertise, and infrastructure necessary for the effective use of evidence in higher education.

Education and Training

AIR develops and delivers a vast array of education and professional development opportunities for the higher education community with the goal of enhancing decision making in support of improved institutional effectiveness and student success. We take an inclusive approach to our education, training products and services so that IR and IE and the entire higher education data community considers AIR as a resource for acquiring the knowledge and skills related to their roles. Offerings include online and in-person programming that range from one hour (e.g., webinars) to multi-day activities (e.g., courses).

Despite widespread lockdowns and travel restrictions, AIR found ways to connect the IR/IE community to share and learn together virtually. Between May 1, 2020, and April 30, 2021, AIR hosted 70 events, garnering 7,056 total registrations—meeting the evolving learning needs of our community.

Highlights from 2020–2021 include reimagining live professional development and training events for a virtual learning environment. The IPEDS workshops, for example, were redesigned and offered multiple times per month. Monthly webinar series were restarted in January 2021 featuring topics directly identified by the AIR community in the stakeholder survey from fall 2020, as well as a call for proposals distributed in early 2021. Popular topics include enrollment forecasting, data visualization, and equity-focused analytics.

BY THE NUMBERS

83%
Of this year's webinar evaluation respondents said they would recommend the webinar to a colleague.

82%
Said they gained knowledge or skill that was relevant.

AIR also launched a suite of virtual workshops providing foundational knowledge in the core building blocks of the data-informed decision-making process. Delivered in an engaging manner, these virtual workshops introduce skills needed for a strong data-informed decision culture and cover information considered to be the foundational knowledge in each area of concentration:

- Foundations of Research Design

- Foundations of Data

- Foundations of Survey Design

- Foundations of Descriptive Statistics

- Foundations of Effective Reporting

VIEW WORKSHOPS

ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

"Do you think you know what IR is? If you define it by a to-do list, take this course. The course helps you understand the purpose of IR while giving you opportunities so consider what that means specifically for you and your institution."

"This course was indispensable to me in my new role in higher education: IT support for IR staff and campus leaders using IT data systems and analytics platforms across the 17 institutions of the UNC System. It provided the Why and business context for so much of the What and How we focus on in IT. I highly recommend this course."

"This course was very well-structured, organized, and provided a lot of great readings, videos, interactive activities and discussions about Institutional Research as a whole. The digestible and interactive content was both enjoyable and informative for me as a new IR professional."

Knowledge Center

To support and expand data-informed decision making within higher education, the association contributes to the production, collection, and dissemination of innovative research, practice, and tools.

In 2020–2021, AIR published two issues of *The AIR Professional File*, which included several case studies illustrating the use of the *AIR Statement of Ethical Principles*, and nine National Survey of IR Offices (NSIRO) Briefs highlighting various aspects data surrounding IR practitioners and units. The next iteration of NSIRO launches in fall 2021, so keep an eye on your inbox for details.

Community and Networks

AIR also supports the higher education community through participation in a wide range of conversations and collaborations across professions and functional areas. The association's hallmark event, the AIR Forum, is a strong example of the value of convening our community to learn and share. Read more about the AIR Forum on pages 4-5.

Highlights from 2020–2021 also include the fourth annual Enterprise Experience Summit (formerly called the Enterprise Analytics Summit), jointly planned and hosted by AIR, EDUCAUSE, and the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO). Held in November 2020, the summit brought together leaders and professionals from IR, IT, and business offices to enhance collaboration to address institutional challenges and opportunities.

AIR regularly contributes to data and analytics-related professional development and networking opportunities for national higher education association staff. This year, AIR led a conversation about defining "analytics" and facilitated a conversation about the just and responsible use of data, with reference to the **AIR Statement of Ethical Principles**. Associations that participate in these events include the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, the Council of Graduate Schools, EDUCAUSE, NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, and National Association of College and University Business Officers.

Advocacy and Policy

AIR advocates for the expanded and informed use of data and analysis in higher education and for policies, regulations, and legislation that support data availability, infrastructure, transparency, and accountability. AIR accomplishes this work through partnerships with other organizations and groups. For example, AIR, EDUCAUSE, and NACUBO, continued their cross-organizational work to promote change and improvement in higher education by accelerating the implementation and use of data and analytics. Efforts continue to widely promote and to operationalize the joint analytics statement *Change with Analytics* that was released in 2019 through outreach efforts and effective practices published on the initiative's website, **www.changewithanalytics.com**.

The association also advances the perspective of data professionals in policy and regulatory discussions. Activities include participation in IPEDS Technical Review Panels, the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) Postsecondary Data Cooperative, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Ad-hoc Technical Review Group on Higher Education Institution-level Data. Over the past year, AIR also provided input and support to ongoing efforts by RTI International and IHEP to better define the scope and specifics of a student level data network, as well as venues for community input and feedback.

Positioning for the Future

In 2021, AIR began the work to restart, re-energize, and expand programs, services, and resources—many of which were postponed or scaled back in 2020 as AIR responded to the effects of the pandemic within our community and on our association. The AIR Board of Directors and Staff are also preparing and positioning AIR for a strong and vibrant future through new efforts and innovative approaches in programming and governance as we continue to navigate out of the pandemic through this period of transition. The Board and Staff prioritized attention and resources on issues of equity and inclusion in AIR programming, operations, leadership selection, and planning for the future. For additional detail on that work, see the "Focus on Equity" section on page 10.

Planning for Success in 2021 and Beyond

Four overarching goals shaped AIR's operational priorities, decisions, and activities in 2021:

1 | **Achieve contract and grant deliverables**

2 | **Support the needs of AIR stakeholders through programs, resources, and services**

3 | **Gain knowledge and experience to calibrate AIR's business model for the future**

4 | **Balance the budget to maintain financial stability**

Of special note is goal three, acquiring the experience and knowledge necessary to calibrate AIR's business model. Although AIR was already engaged in the discussions, research, and initiatives that will inform an updated business model, the experiences of the pandemic emphasized the need to accelerate future-focused work and build out a more diverse array of products, services, and revenue streams. Read on for details about some of these new opportunities and initiatives.

DATA & DECISIONS® ACADEMY DATA LITERACY PROGRAM

In fall 2021, AIR is launching a new professional education program designed to foster institutional-wide data literacy. The Data & Decisions Academy Data Literacy Program supports data-informed decision cultures at colleges and universities through investment in data literacy education for professionals across functional areas. The program establishes the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and habits needed to empower institutional staff and faculty to use and apply data strategically to make effective, equitable, and ethical decisions.

DATA LITERACY INSTITUTE

The Data Literacy Institute (Institute) is a pilot program that utilizes the Data & Decisions Academy Data Literacy Program's curriculum. The Institute is a collaboration with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), funded by Ascendium Education Group. The Institute will be delivered to 11 institutions separated into two cohorts; each institution will experience two 12-week terms. The first cohort will start in fall 2021 and finish in spring 2022. The second cohort will start in fall 2022 and finish in fall 2023. To achieve the curricular goals set forth in the Data Literacy Program curriculum, each institutional team will comprise up to 20 individuals from various departments, units, and functions.

POSTSECONDARY DATA PARTNERSHIP TRAINING

AIR, in collaboration with the National Student Clearinghouse, created and launched a **new series of tutorials** to help users within the Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) better understand and get the most out of the PDP. National data collection initiatives, including the PDP, have the potential to help democratize data and expand the reach of an institution's student success agenda. AIR's current PDP training includes more than four hours of content through which various topical areas are examined, including the purpose of the PDP, how the PDP works, and how to use the PDP to drive a student success agenda.

BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP

AIR is a collaborator in several Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) projects and initiatives to further the work of institutional transformation in support of student success. BMGF recognizes the foundational role of data within all activities, services, and decisions in the higher education environment, and has turned to AIR for leadership and expertise in this realm. AIR has a direct investment to help institutions assess the core requirements for data capacity in support of evidenced-based transformation. Additional activities include service as a thought and capacity partner in a BMFG-sponsored ecosystem designed to evolve into an open marketplace for institutions and groups of institutions to receive assistance in foundational areas, including institutional research and data. Parallel to AIR's role within the BMGF ecosystem is AIR's contributions and service as a thought and capacity partner with Strong Start to Finish, which organizes assistance for schools engaged in developmental education reform.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Continued growth and development as leaders is critical for the success of IR/IE professionals. As the use of and expectations for evidence-based practices expand across the higher education landscape, IR/IE professionals have the potential to contribute and direct critical, strategic discussions around data and data use. Launching in 2022, AIR's new leadership development program will provide educational and networking opportunities to advance the development of institutional leaders whose careers within IR, IE, and related fields have positioned them well for higher-level strategic leadership at their institutions.

Association Governance

As the governing body of the association, the Board of Directors sets expectations for what AIR will accomplish on behalf of its members and stakeholders. The Board also establishes the association's mission, purpose, and vision. For over 10 years, AIR has operated within a governing system called "policy governance," which is based on a system of integrated principles and agreements on how the Board will work together. Those principles outline how the Board will empower and hold accountable the association's executive director, how the Board will articulate the AIR's purpose (the "Ends") and set up the association for movement in that direction, and how the Board understands the role of members and stakeholders in the governance of the association.

Work of the Board

To fulfill its charge, the Board regularly gathers information on the future of higher education and the IR/IE profession from multiple sources, including members of the AIR community. This year's future of institutional research and higher education discussions were informed by the AIR Stakeholder Survey. Three key areas identified for further exploration include: (1) communicating the value of IR/IE; (2) promoting equity and inclusion in AIR; and (3) serving in AIR leadership roles.

The Board also engaged directly with AIR members and stakeholders to understand their perspectives, objectives, and needs by facilitating small group discussions during Coffee Chats and hosting networking groups at AIR Forum. These interactions and conversations allow the Board to plan more effectively for the association's future and to create policies that support association stakeholders and advance the profession.

Evolution of AIR's Mission (the "Ends")

Since adopting the policy governance model over a decade ago, the association's Ends policy (our association's mission and purpose) has evolved and grown to be more expansive in its potential reach and influence. The first Ends policy (2012–2014) focused on providing resources for institutional researchers, with a specific focus on "members having the knowledge, skills, and tools related to institutional research," while recognizing that nonmembers also needed knowledge and skills to work with higher education data. The second evolution of the Ends policy (2015–2017) incorporated the use of institutional research for decision support within higher education, as well as the importance of higher education leaders viewing institutional research as essential.

The current Ends policy (2018–2021) articulates a more ambitious vision of AIR as a global association of higher education professionals. The current Ends policy sets a clear outcome—the use of data and information to make decisions and take actions that benefit students and institutions and improve higher education. Over the 10-year period, AIR's purpose as stated in the Ends has expanded from a sole focus on providing members with the knowledge, skills, and tools to effectively use institutional research to empowering individuals to use data and information to make decisions and take action. Directed by the Ends, the association's

programs, services, and resources have also expanded to serve both members and new audiences who can also benefit from the knowledge and skills to use data for better decisions.

The Board is again reviewing the Ends policy in light of the events and experiences of the past year. This time, the Board will examine the policy with an eye toward strengthening its commitment to the ethical and equitable use of data and the diversity of the profession, as well ensuring the alignment of AIR's purpose and mission to the current and future needs of our community.

Work of Board Committees

Board Committees provide an opportunity for a subset of the Board, often working with members of the AIR community as advisors, to delve deeper into a particular topic area, work on a specific project/task, or prepare policy options and implications for Board discussion and deliberation. The work of this year's Board Committees are detailed as follows.

CHARLES F. ELTON BEST PAPER COMMITTEE

The Committee was charged with reviewing criteria for the Charles F. Elton Best Paper Award, which was established to recognize scholarly papers that best exemplify the standards of excellence established by the award's namesake and that make significant contributions to the fields of IR, IE, or Assessment. The committee concluded that the eligibility criteria—particularly the requirement to present at the AIR Forum—were unnecessarily exclusive and might preclude those who cannot attend AIR Forum from applying. The criteria were updated to be more inclusive and reflective of the spirit of the award and approved by the full Board, completing the work of the committee. The new criteria are effective as of January 2022.

GOVERNANCE ORIENTATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

The Governance Orientation and Training Committee (GO&TC) is charged with providing orientation, training, and education to new and continuing members of the Board of Directors and Nominations & Elections Committee. The committee focused its discussions on content development, engagement, knowledge continuity, and resources through a social justice framework. The training was successfully delivered through a virtual meeting on May 21, 2021.

BOARD STRUCTURE FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE

The Board Structure for Accountability and Effectiveness Committee is charged with reviewing the structure of the Board to improve its overall effectiveness, continuity, and accountability to the association and its stakeholders. The committee's work builds upon the recommendations of the 2018 Board Structure Committee and has examined the size of the board, the length of terms, the selection of Board leadership as well as the structures of the Nominations & Elections Committee. The committee drafted a set of recommendations that were reviewed by the full Board. The work of the committee will continue in order to refine the recommendations and determine next steps and timelines.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The charge of the Membership Committee is to recommend a revised AIR membership model and fee structure to better accomplish the association Ends, including the consideration of an organization-level membership option. The committee researched and discussed several alternative membership models, aided by the input from a 15-member advisory group and the results of a short survey of association stakeholders. The committee is finalizing their recommendations for presentation to the full Board in fall 2021, including a plan for communication to the AIR community.

NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (NEC)

The Nominations & Elections Committee (NEC) is elected by the AIR community and charged by the Board with recruiting a diverse and competent slate of nominees to serve as future leaders of the association. Not only did this year's NEC successfully vet and present a highly qualified slate of outstanding candidates for election by the AIR membership, the NEC also presented their observations and recommendations to the Board of Directors for a reexamination of AIR's nomination and elections policies and processes to better ensure inclusiveness and diversity.

Elected Leadership 2021-2022

The slate of candidates selected by the NEC were presented to the AIR membership and voting took place between February 1 and February 28, 2021. The following individuals were elected and took office during AIR's annual business meeting on May 27, 2021.

VICE PRESIDENT
The Vice President serves a three-year term—one year as Vice President, one year as President, and one year as Immediate Past President.

- **Karen L. Webber,** Professor Emeritus, The University of Georgia

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE
Members-At-Large serve a three-year term.

- **Maren Hess,** Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, Campbell University

- **Mitchell Nesler,** Vice Provost for Strategy and Planning, SUNY System Administration

- **Christopher Pena,** Director of Data Management, University of Denver

NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
Nominations & Elections Committee members serve a two-year term.

- **Yenny Anderson,** Vice Provost for Institutional Research and Strategic Analytics, Lehigh University

- **Iryna Johnson,** Assistant Vice Chancellor for System Analytics and Business Intelligence, University of Alabama System

- **David Rudden,** Managing Director of Institutional Research, Elgin Community College

The association is grateful to the individuals who run for elected leadership positions, all of whom contribute to strong ballots that reflect the talents and passions of our profession.

Association Snapshot

AIR is a global association that empowers higher education professionals at all levels to utilize data, analytics, information, and evidence to make decisions and take actions that benefit students and institutions and improve higher education.

AIR's Remote Team

While AIR is based in Tallahassee, FL, nearly half the staff work remotely. Hailing from California, Virginia, Tennessee, Texas, Missouri, and the United Kingdom, many have been remote long before the pandemic. In addition to helping recruit and retain strong, dedicated staff, a longstanding openness to a remote workforce provided an advantage during the pandemic, drastically reducing the technology and remote teamwork learning curves. The knowledge, talent, and skills of AIR Staff continue to serve as an essential and valuable asset for achieving the association's mission and goals.

INFO AT A GLANCE

50+

Years of Leadership

20

Executive Staff

500+

Volunteers

3,000+

Members

8,000+

Subscribers

AIR Stakeholder Survey

Over 1,100 individuals from the AIR community responded to a stakeholder survey in early fall 2020. The survey results provide AIR Staff and Board members with a better understanding of community needs and challenges, feedback on how AIR is serving those needs, and insights into how AIR can better support and advance the profession into the future. Key takeaways from the survey included the following.

AIR Products, Services, and Membership Value

- Three quarters of respondents found high value in AIR's programs, resources, and services, and nearly 90% would recommend AIR to a colleague.

- Some of the most highly rated and highly visible AIR products and services include the in-person AIR Forum, IPEDS education and training, the Statement of Ethical Principles, and the eAIR newsletter.

- Additional efforts are needed to increase awareness among stakeholders for newer programs and initiatives, such as the AIR Hub online community, AIR Forum Virtual, and our partnership work with other associations such as EDUCAUSE, National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU).

- The top reasons for choosing to be an AIR member are to stay current with the field, be part of your professional association, access useful resources, and access quality professional education and training.

- More attention is needed on communicating and enhancing the value and benefits of AIR membership throughout the year. The most common reason for letting AIR membership lapse is not attending the AIR Forum.
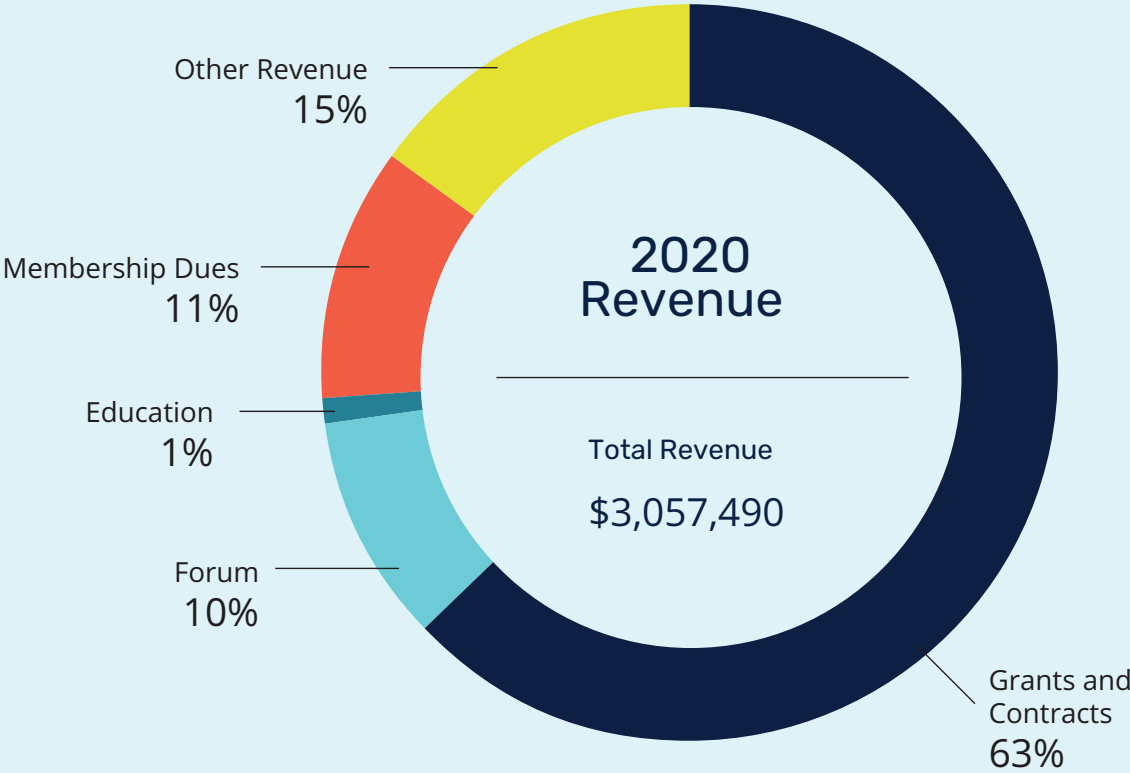
Current Challenges and Future Trends

- The most frequent challenge mentioned by survey respondents was managing workload and increased demands.

- Respondents also cited facing one or more of the following three challenges—communicating the value of IR/IE, establishing data governance, and the impact of budgets and resources.

- The top 5 trends on the minds of IR/IE professionals are funding cuts to higher education, declining enrollment, new technology replacing staff, remote learning, and predictive analysis.

- The skills and abilities identified as important for career advancement were data visualization, communication/effective presentations, data analytics, office management/leadership, software/tools, and strategic planning.

The survey responses provided important insights into how AIR can better support community members in addressing current challenges and in preparing for the future. These six broad areas of need were considered as part of operational planning and priority-setting for 2021:

- Education and training focused on skills such as communication, working remotely, and leadership as well as statistics and other technical skills.

- Educational offerings at different levels of mastery.

- Increased advocacy for the future of IR/IE.

- Development of career pathways for the profession.

- Partnerships with other organizations to increase the visibility of IR/IE and to facilitate cross-functional collaboration.

- Opportunities for networking and the formation of peer groups.

Financial Report

2020 Revenue

Other Revenue 15%

Membership Dues 11%

Education 1%

Forum 10%

Grants and Contracts 63%

Total Revenue

$3,057,490

While the AIR Board as a whole is responsible for overseeing the financial health of the organization, specific leadership responsibilities were delegated to the Treasurer, Wendy Kallina, for 2020–2021.

The treasurer provides leadership for the independent annual audit, and reviews the financial statements and findings from an independent audit firm concerning the financial state of the association. The treasurer is also responsible for presenting an annual report of AIR's financial condition at the annual business meeting, managing Board travel, and researching comparable executive director compensation every three years. The treasurer ensures that the Board has sufficient information to make sound financial policies. Three of the executive director monitoring reports reviewed and discussed by the Board deal specifically with the association's finances—(1) financial planning, (2) financial condition and activities, and (3) asset protection—and evaluate how the executive director handles the executive limitations set by the Board. The governance policies and executive limitations related to the association's finances provide a level of protection, set boundaries, and serve as a warning mechanism, if needed.

The firm of Thomas Howell Ferguson P.A., Certified Public Accountants of Tallahassee, Florida, audited the December 31, 2020, financial statements of the association. The auditors issued a clean audit report that indicated that the audit disclosed no instances of significant deficiencies and/or material weaknesses in the association's internal controls. The December 31, 2020, audit was discussed and accepted by the Board on May 24, 2021.

Key findings on the current financial health of the association:

1 | Unmodified opinion issued on the financial statements with no reportable instances of significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal control and no material instances of noncompliance.

2 | Unmodified opinion issued on the major federal award programs with no reportable significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal control over major federal programs and no findings required to be reported.

3 | Due to impact of the pandemic, AIR revenues decreased by nearly 1.2 million or about 30 percent from 2019. While expenses were also reduced, the association incurred a net loss of $872,133 in 2020. Current total net assets are $2,696,909 as of December 31, 2020.

VIEW AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Leadership

2020–2021 Board of Directors

PRESIDENT
Heather Kelly
University of Delaware

VICE PRESIDENT
Junelyn Pangan Peeples
San José State University

PAST PRESIDENT
Martin Fortner
Northeast Lakeview College

Laura Palucki Blake
Harvey Mudd College

Soon Merz Flynn
Austin Community College District (Retired)

Michele Hansen
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Braden J. Hosch
Stony Brook University

Wendy Kallina
Agnes Scott College

Elizabeth A. Lee
Consultant

Mary Lelik
NC State University

David Troutman
The University of Texas System

Eric Yang
The George Washington University

2020–2021 Nominations & Elections Committee

Martin Fortner (Chair)
Northeast Lakeview College

Craig W. Abbey
University at Buffalo

Karen Froslid Jones
American University

Kristin McKinley
Lawrence University

Bethany L. Miller
Mary Baldwin University

Mike Urmeneta
New York Institute of
Technology

Meridith Wentz
University of
Wisconsin-Stout

AIR Staff Leadership

**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR & CEO**

Christine Keller

**DEPUTY
DIRECTOR & CFO**

Jason Lewis

**ASSOCIATE DEPUTY
DIRECTOR**

Leah Ewing Ross