

# News from . . .



**Association for Institutional Research in the Upper Midwest**

a professional organization for higher education institutional researchers

[www.airum.org](http://www.airum.org)

Volume 20  
Summer, 2007

## Steering Committee Greetings!

### Dear members and other potential attendees of the AIRUM 2007 Conference:

Mark your calendars! The AIRUM 2007 Annual Conference will be **October 25 and 26 at the Sheraton Hotel, Bloomington, Minnesota**. After last year's overwhelmingly positive feedback, it was a simple decision to return to the Sheraton by the Steering Team. The conference theme this year is **"The Indispensable Institutional Researcher."**

Hotel reservations at the Sheraton Bloomington can be made by calling 866-837-4278. The AIRUM room rate of \$129 is available through September 24, 2007 for up to 40 guest rooms per night.

Last year, AIRUM continued to break records with 120 people in attendance. Building off of last year's success, the Steering Committee has been working hard to make this year's conference even better. Your papers, presentations, and attendance are what make AIRUM the success that it is today, so I encourage you to continue to submit your quality work to share with your colleagues from around the region. If your experiences at AIRUM have been as positive as mine, then please encourage graduate students and fellow institutional research personnel to attend.

We have grown substantially in recent years and that has helped us keep costs down while keeping quality high. More importantly, our growth as an organization has provided a more robust pool of research and information to share. We continue to rely on you keep AIRUM strong.

### Keynote Speaker

This year's keynote speaker is **Dr. Ellen Chaffee**, president of Valley City State University in Valley

City, North Dakota. Not only is Dr. Chaffee president of VCSU, but from 1993 until 2002 she simultaneously served as president of Mayville State University in Mayville, North Dakota. This unique arrangement won her the administrative leadership award from the American Association of University Administrators. During her presidency, VCSU has won national awards, been featured in national publications such as the *New York Times* and *Computerworld*, and has received a number of highly competitive federal and foundation grants.



Dr. Chaffee has been national president of two major higher education associations (the Association for Institutional Research and the Association for the Study of Higher Education) and served nine years on the national accrediting board for pharmacy education. She has written or co-authored five books and many articles on strategic management, quality, innovation, and leadership.

For this year's conference, Dr. Chaffee has chosen to discuss how institutional research personnel can make themselves indispensable to the people at the top of the organizational chart by "reading their minds." What issues are they thinking about or dealing with? What issues are pretty much universal in higher education? How can IR help? And what strategies work best for working with people at the top?

### Treasurer's Update

**A**IRUM's financial activity revolves around the annual fall conference. Virtually all of AIRUM's revenue is generated from conference registration fees, with an additional small amount coming from the lifetime membership fee

(its sole benefit is lower conference registration costs). And like AIRUM's revenue, almost all of the expenditures are for conference-related activities (food, printed materials, technical equipment rental, room rental, and speaker costs). Other annual expenses include the cost of printing the semi-annual newsletter and AIRUM's scholarships (to AIRUM and AIR).

Despite increases in food and equipment rental costs, the AIRUM Steering Committee has been able to offer a fall conference without any increase in the conference registration fees for the last three years. We accomplished this through thoughtful planning and menu choices and by taking advantage of savings opportunities when possible. For example, we continue to take advantage of AIR's free web hosting for affiliated groups and offer vendors the opportunity to participate (and thereby subsidize part of the conference costs).

At the end of the 2006 accounting period—after all conference income and costs were complete—the AIRUM checking account balance was \$9,865, higher than the balance from 2005 of \$8,669. The shared goal of the Steering Committee members is to offer a high quality fall conference that is affordable and covers expenses. Once again, we anticipate that we will be able to offer the fall 2007 AIRUM conference for the same \$150 conference fee. Despite the fact that costs have increased substantially, even at the same hotel, our large attendance last fall has resulted in a larger than normal cash reserve that can be used to offset some of these increases.

### New to AIRUM?

Scholarships are available for up to \$250 each to cover most (or all) of the expenses for two individuals to attend the November 2007 AIRUM conference. Visit [www.airum.org](http://www.airum.org) this summer for scholarship criteria and deadline information.

### 2006 Best Presentation

Every year, AIRUM members rate the paper presentations they attended through the use of session feedback forms. The Steering

*“Best conference I’ve attended, topics very good, accommodations great. Appreciate sessions that walk you through what others have done.”*

—2006 conference attendee

Committee uses the feedback by AIRUM members to award the best paper. This year, congratulations go to **Ron Huesman, John Kellogg, and Peter Radcliffe** from the University of Minnesota. Their 2006 paper—*Modeling the Incidence and Timing of Student Attrition: A Survival Analysis Approach to Retention Analysis*—was presented June 5<sup>th</sup> at the 2007 AIR Forum in Kansas City, Missouri, as one of the “best regional papers.”

The study developed a probability model using logit and a longitudinal model using survival analysis to identify factors that impact a student's ability to persist and graduate. The model distinguished between factors that influenced the likelihood and the timing of student attrition, and helped identify students who might benefit from outreach at particular points in their academic careers.

For being picked best paper, Ron, John, and Peter were awarded a small travel stipend. However, since their travel to the AIR Forum was already covered by the University of Minnesota, they graciously declined the monetary portion of the award.

Currently, their paper has been submitted for publication with *Professional File and IR Applications*.

### 2007 Steering Committee

New Members **Biao Zhang** and **Charlie Couch** were elected at the 2006 conference replacing **William Slanger**, AIRUM Steering Committee Chair for 2006 and Director of Institutional Research & Analysis at North Dakota State University; and **Gretchen Bogenrief**, Director of Assessment and Institutional Research at Briar Cliff University.

If you would be interested in serving a three-year term on the AIRUM Steering Committee or know somebody who would, be sure to apply or nominate them at the annual conference. New membership is determined by a vote of the existing Steering Committee which strives to maintain a balance of geographical and institutional representation as required by the AIRUM Constitution.

Contact information for all eight Steering Committee members can be found at [www.airum.org](http://www.airum.org).

**Charlie Couch** is the Registrar/Director of Institutional Research at Northwestern College in Or-

ange City, Iowa. In nine years at Northwestern, he has been involved in a variety of initiatives—a committee member for the institution’s NCA re-accreditation process, writing the Future Oriented Organization; a committee member on the current Strategic Planning Task Force; and a committee member on the Growth Analysis Task Force. He also developed the institution’s annual Fact Book and Peer Review reports.

Charlie is a Ph.D. student in Leadership in Higher Education at Capella University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He earned his Master of Business Administration from LeTourneau University and his Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Texas/Tyler.

**What is AIRUM?**  
 AIRUM is a regional affiliate of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR – [airweb.org](http://airweb.org)), a national organization dedicated to the profession of institutional research. AIRUM’s objectives are to:

- Improve and disseminate research predominantly of concern to institutions of higher education.
- Provide a collegium for professional persons in a common profession.
- Provide an avenue for professional accomplishment by offering at least an annual meeting at which papers may be presented, speeches given, workshops taught, and other such professional contributions made.
- Encourage association with the Association for Institutional Research and to promote AIR forums and other activities.
- Encourage professional identification, development, and renewal.

Go to [www.airum.org](http://www.airum.org) for more information.

**Biao Zhang** has worked full-time in institutional research, strategic planning and assessment for the past nine years at Southern University in Shreveport, Louisiana as Director of Institutional Research and Planning, Mount Marty College in South Dakota as Director of Institutional Research, and the University of South Dakota as Director of Institutional Research.

In 1998 he completed his Ph.D. in Higher Education at the University of Texas at Austin. Prior to that, he finished a graduate program in teaching English as a second language at Nanjing University in China.

## AIRUM New Business

**A**t the Friday business meeting at the 2006 conference, a motion was introduced to expand the size of the Steering Committee. Currently Article VII of the AIRUM constitution states “The Steering Committee consists of eight AIRUM members, with seven serving three-year terms and a Treasurer serving an indefinite term.” The motion under consideration would expand the steering committee to ten AIRUM members (nine serving three year terms). If the motion passes, then an additional new member will be selected for the 2008 and 2009 steering committees respectively, phasing in the new and larger committee. Further discussion and voting on this issue will take place Friday, October 26 at the business meeting (lunch).

## 2006 Conference Evaluation

**L**ast fall, the AIRUM conference was attended by 120 college faculty, staff, administrators, and students from around the upper Midwest region. There were plenty of familiar faces as well as many new attendees.

## 2006 Conference Survey Results

Based on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)	
Item	Mean
Concurrent Sessions	4.29
Range of topics covered	4.24
Keynote: Mary Francis Gibbons	4.26
Registration Costs	4.33
Hotel Costs	4.28
Quality of Food	3.89
Hotel Room Accommodations	4.21
Location in Bloomington	4.60
Opportunity for Networking	4.57
The Conference Overall	4.48

We received a lot of positive feedback regarding our move to the Sheraton after the Sofitel became cost-prohibitive.

**Address Correct?**  
 Contact Clare Huhn, [chuhn@vc.wisc.edu](mailto:chuhn@vc.wisc.edu), if this address is incorrect and you **are not** registering for the conference. Any other address updates will be derived from your conference registration form.

**News from . . . AIRUM** is published semi-annually.



## Proposal for Contributed Session

Association for Institutional Research in the Upper Midwest (AIRUM) 2007  
Annual Conference—October 25-26, 2007, Sheraton Hotel, Bloomington, Minnesota

### “The Indispensable Institutional Researcher”

Title of Proposal: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach a description of your presentation addressing the purpose, issues or techniques covered in the presentation and intended audience. Your description should be 200 words or less. Please plan on a 45 minute presentation.

Presenter(s) Name(s):	Title(s)	Institution(s)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Person to whom correspondence should be addressed:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to convene a concurrent session?  Yes  No

Will you need an Internet connection for your presentation (please check one)?  Yes  No

**Format (check one):**  Research or Scholarly Paper Presentation  Table Topic  Demonstration  
 Poster Presentation preferred

See online proposal at [www.airum.org](http://www.airum.org) for descriptions of the presentation formats.

#### Notes:

- 1) There is a screen, overhead projector and podium in each session room. **Presenters should plan on providing other equipment (laptop, LCD projectors, software, etc.) themselves.**
- 2) Session evaluations are used by the Steering Committee to select the AIRUM Best Paper. Presenters of the selected session will be invited to attend the Association for Institutional Research’s 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum, Seattle, Washington May 24–28, 2008.

***You will be expected to register and pay the full conference fee if your proposal is accepted.***

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#### Submit Proposals by August 31, 2007 to:

Charlie Couch  
Director of Institutional Research/Registrar  
Northwestern College  
1010 7<sup>th</sup> St. SW  
Orange City, IA 51041

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