Intercom – Message from the President
Kathy Chandler-Henry

Happy New Year to all! I hope your 2004 year is off to a rousing start, your semesters are well underway with full enrollment, and your state legislators all have bills pending to increase funding to higher education! Might as well be optimistic, right?

We had a great conference this fall! Wendy Kappy did an outstanding job making us all feel welcome in Santa Fe, and Kayleigh Carabajal brought together one of the best programs ever. We were pleased to have several “honorary RMAIR” members with us, as well as a great group of folks new to the organization. Welcome! And thanks to our pre-conference workshop presenters, Marcel Nzeukou—who introduced data mining with Clementine—and Sonia Schaible-Brandon—who presented the IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Our treasurer, Ellen McGregor, reports that we even made a profit this year!

I hope you are already making plans for the AIR Conference in Boston this May. In addition to our annual RMAIR meeting, Kari Coburn and Mike Ellison will represent our organization with their “Best Paper” presentation: Dirty Data Peep Show: Implementing a Small Data Warehouse to Jumpstart Data Management. If you missed it in Santa Fe, be sure to catch the repeat performance in Boston; it’s great!

As the new semester and the new year get underway, I hope we have many more opportunities for networking and sharing resources and ideas. That’s one of the benefits of RMAIR, the wealth of skills of our members, and their willingness to share. As Wendy Miley stated last year at this time, “it is nice to know there is an institutional research professional association to assist, inform, and educate.” If you know of someone interested in RMAIR or AIR membership, please let me know.
I’m excited about the year ahead, and would love to hear from you; contact me at skihenry@juno.com or call (970) 390-3104. Thanks!

**Annual Business Meeting Report**  
**Ellen McGregor, RMAIR Secretary/Treasurer**

Business Meeting – Held on October 17th, 2003  
Santa Fe, NM

There were 82 members at the annual conference, held in Santa Fe, NM, including 20 newcomers. President Wendy Miley became RMAIR’s past-president as Kathy Chandler-Henry assumed the presidency.

Ellen McGregor presented the treasurer’s report:

Our account is now with Wells Fargo Bank. That bank has branches in all of the states in RMAIR, and this has allowed deposits from the shirt sale.  
Balance: $17,683.05 (April 30, 2003) reported at AIR Forum

Expenses since April:

Donations in memory of Ron Hagerman: $200.00 ($100 for Winship Cancer Institute for Research at Emory University and $100 for the Bulli Endowment at Brenau)  
$500 for AIR Train-the-Trainer Program, for Marcel Nzeukou (University of Arizona)  
$500 for RMAIR Best Paper Presentation for Mike Ellison (UNLV Board of Regents)  
$650 for University of Idaho Conference Services and Community Programs (CSCP) for next year’s conference

Deposits:

Memberships: $70 from June-October 10  
Shirts: $600  
Prior funds: $861.31  
Current Conference: No expenses. Registration covered everything.

Ending Balance: **$17,364.36** (as of October 10, 2003)

Four members have been approved for emeritus status:

Ken Brown – University of Arizona  
Bruce Higley – Brigham Young University  
Cel Johnson – formerly of Montana State University  
Paul Wilken – Metropolitan State College

The membership approved the continuation for one more year for the funding of $500 for Best Paper and $500 for Train-the-Trainer Program.
Jacki Stirn will be coordinating the newcomers program at the Forum.

It was suggested that at a future RMAIR conference that we should have a newcomers workshop and mentoring was discussed.

Volunteers are needed for the Boston Forum.

Our next conference will be October 27-29, 2004 in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, and Ray Wallace of the University of Idaho is doing the local arrangements. The theme is Reaching New Peeks: IR’s Role in Data-Sharing and Peer Analysis. Marcia Belcheir is the program chair.

Utah will host the 2005 conference at Park City.

Acknowledgements for hosting an excellent conference were given to Wendy Kappy and Kayleigh Carabajal.

A Few Words about RMAIR 2003

Wendy Kappy, Conference Co-chair

Kayleigh Carabajal, RMAIR 2003 program chair, and I hope that your time at the October 2003 meeting in Santa Fe was a wonderful time of learning and connecting with old and new colleagues alike. We were very pleased to see such a great turn-out. I guess there is always a fear among local organizers that something will happen and no one will show. Fortunately, we had a great turn-out with 82 attendees, a number of whom attended their first RMAIR conference. Welcome to RMAIR! We hope that this is the beginning of a long and fruitful association for you.

After receiving so many worthwhile proposals, you made it relatively easy for Kayleigh to put together a really great program. Thanks to each and every one of you who gave of your time and expertise. We especially want to thank Marcel Nzeukou and Sonia Schaible-Brandon for presenting two really top-notch pre-conference workshops. They were well attended and much appreciated.

Congratulations to Kari Coburn and Mike Ellison for receiving the “Best Paper” award for their presentation, Dirty Data Peep Show: Implementing a Small Data Warehouse to Jumpstart Data Management. It was truly excellent, and we are very pleased that they will be able to take their presentation to AIR in Boston.

We look forward to seeing you next year in Coeur d’Alene. If you have any improvements you wish to suggest, please send them on to Ray Wallace or Marcia Belcheir. I’m sure they would love to hear from you.
One last word, for those who didn’t attend the meeting in Santa Fe and wish to stay active in RMAIR, please send in your membership dues to Ellen McGregor. Dues are only $14 a year. You can contact Ellen at ellen.mcgregor@pima.edu. Thanks!

News from the States

ARIZONA
State Reporter: Ellen McGregor

Annual Conference

The Annual AZAIR Conference will be held on April 14 and 15 in Tucson, AZ, on the campus of the University of Arizona. Drs. Rick Kroc (UA) and Lou Attinasi (PCC) are coordinating the program.

Joint Admissions Program

Pima Community College’s chancellor announced a joint admissions agreement with the University of Arizona that is designed to increase the number of Tucson students achieving a baccalaureate. The plan is simple: students who rank in the top 25% of area high schools will be eligible to be admitted to both Pima Community College and the University upon application to the University of Arizona. The joint admittance will entitle them to take classes at either institution and receive advising and counseling at both. They may participate in student activities at both institutions. This plan eliminates the question of transfer issues. There is no transfer; they are officially admitted and enrolled at each institution. Students will pay Pima tuition for the classes they take at Pima College and UA tuition for the classes they take at the University.

Certificate Program at ASU in IR

There is a new graduate certificate program in institutional research at Arizona State University. Five students in the program will be going to one of the summer institutes. Contact Robert Fenske (Robert.Fenske@asu.edu) or Gary Hanson (Gary.Hanson@asu.edu) for more details.

Conference on Higher Education Set for February

Wayne F. Foraker, Senior Director of Assessment & Analysis, School of Advanced Studies at the University of Phoenix wants us to know of the conference on Trends in Higher Education, being held February 20 to 22 in Phoenix. Details about registration is available at http://www.phoenix.edu/trends2004/index.asp

Wayne included this brief description of the conference: The Future Reloaded will deal with solutions to the pressing issues facing higher education as it adapts to a new landscape. Shifting demographics and patterns of learning among students call for new systems to ensure access to quality education. The changing nature of the student population and their needs suggest new paradigms for structuring faculty work. In addition, as students become increasingly mobile,
institutions of higher education must collaborate to provide seamless transitions for students who will attend multiple institutions during the course of their education. Increased cooperation with state and accreditation regulatory bodies will also be essential as students become itinerant in their study patterns. The Conference will serve as a forum for exploring new models to address these issues. Sessions will focus on rethinking how students are served, the nature and structure of faculty work, institutional collaboration, and regulatory partnerships. Conference speakers will include Dr. Steven D. Crow, Executive Director, The Higher Learning Commission of NCA, and Dr. Laura Palmer Noone, President, University of Phoenix.

COLORADO
State Reporter: Stephen Chambers

Declining Funding, Enterprise Status and Vouchers Top Colorado Higher Education Agenda for 2004

The year 2004 starts off with the potential of dramatic change in the character of Colorado higher education in the wind. Declining funding, enterprise status, and vouchers are among the interrelated issues competing for one another and trading off of one another to gain the necessary attention that may lead to structural change in higher education financing this year.

The public colleges and universities have fairly convincingly argued that the spending limitations placed on them by the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR) have increasingly hurt Colorado higher education. TABOR, a constitutional amendment passed by the voters, began to hold total state spending to no more than 6% a year beginning in 1993. The effect of TABOR has been that increases in state spending in corrections, transportation, and health services reduced the growth of spending for education in order to keep state spending under the overall 6% growth limit.

The K-12 education sector, also hurt by TABOR, was successful in 2001 in getting another constitutional amendment passed by voters that guarantees public school funding at the rate of inflation plus one percentage point through 2011. Amendment 23 increased much needed K-12 funding but also put additional pressure on other state agencies to keep spending within TABOR’s 6% cap, including higher education.

TABOR and Amendment 23 are now squeezing appropriations to the point that public colleges and universities are urging state leaders for some guarantee of state higher education spending in the future. A recent University of Colorado study found that if the current trend continues, there will be no funding left for higher education by 2010.

Gaining enterprise status is one way available for Colorado higher education to free itself from the constitutional amendments that have shackled funding. Once a public entity receives less than 10% of its revenues from the state, it can be excluded from the TABOR limitations and granted more fiscal authority and flexibility. Currently, the University of Colorado qualifies for enterprise status, but some state officials are not quite ready to relinquish control of the financial reigns. For example, Governor Bill Owens mentioned in his recent State of the State address ([http://www.state.co.us/owenspress/01-08-04b.htm](http://www.state.co.us/owenspress/01-08-04b.htm)) that “…I will not give unlimited authority to colleges and universities to raise tuition.” He told supporters of enterprise status to “send me an enterprise bill that protects our students and our taxpayers, and I’ll sign it.”
Owens may not be in the mood to sign any enterprise bill unless he gets his way with vouchers. Instead of conventional general appropriations to higher education institutions, Owens favors a system of vouchers that go directly to students, and then are paid by the student to his or her institution of choice. No one has quite figured out how the mechanics of such a voucher system would work in the real world, but some college leaders are supporting the notion if granting enterprises status to colleges and universities is taken seriously.

Check your next Panorama for the next intriguing installment to see if Colorado’s institutions go belly-up or if some solution to this financial pickle is percolating.

IDAHO
State Reporter: Archie George

This year the Idaho State Board of Education mandated that Idaho institutions of higher education set their tuition and fees BEFORE the legislature meets, rather than after learning what the appropriations would be. This is in reaction to 10% increases the past two years, justified by state budget cuts. The message is “when we cut your budgets we don’t want you to make it up with higher student fees.”

However, on the whole things are looking up in Idaho. Tax receipts are above expectations every month this fall, and expectations are high for at least a modest recovery in state funding for higher education. Legislators are already learning of reductions in faculty and increases in students the past three years. We hope this will have a positive effect.

UI marked a significant milestone this year, as grant and contract funding not only exceeded the $100 million mark for the first time, but also exceeded state appropriated funds for the first time. Candidates for president of the University of Idaho will be visiting campus the week of January 19th, but the search committee has been keeping their names confidential. UI did hire a new football coach. Nick Holt was an assistant coach at UI in the 90’s, and was lured back from USC, where he was defensive line coach. It has been reported that Idaho will allow Nick to coach USC in the Rose Bowl, but only if he wears an “Idaho” cap. As I was jogging in “the dome” December 10th, I came abreast of Nick and one of his assistants. When I asked about the cap, he laughed and said “only during half-time.”

Retention of new frosh at UI shot up 3.9% to an all-time high this fall. We are trying to find out why. The only dramatic change in student satisfaction ratings this year over last was a 40% increase in positive ratings for the new student recreation facilities. The new climbing wall is especially popular. Faculty have commented that the students must really like having overcrowded classrooms and disgruntled faculty.

Boise State U is opening a new climbing gym January 16, so perhaps they will also see a dramatic increase in retention. The new president, Bob Kustra, is heading into his first encounter with the Idaho legislature, which should be interesting as he has an extensive political background.

Jesse Jackson is scheduled to speak at Idaho State U on January 28th, 2004. On the ISU campus, ground was broken in mid-July, and construction is under way on the Rendezvous, a unique multipurpose educational, residential, and social complex to be located on Martin Luther King Jr. Way across from Oboler Library. The Rendezvous complex is intended to promote an enhanced collegial atmosphere that integrates upper and lower campuses in a facility where students and faculty can meet both in the classroom and in a social setting.
Lewis-Clark College is also building. The “Activity Center” (sounds like a building looking for a donor to be named after) will be a modern 15 million dollar multipurpose facility that will hold community, recreational, intramural, artistic and cultural events, athletic events, and new improved kinesiology and traditional classroom space. This 3500+ seat multipurpose facility will include three full-sized basketball courts, classrooms, dance and exercise rooms, a conditioning/weight room, an athletic trainers’ facility, offices, and concession areas. Student retention is sure to jump dramatically.

MONTANA
State Reporter: Jim Rimpau

When President Bush handed out money to the states as part of the federal jobs growth and tax relief initiative, the State of Montana received $50 million. Governor Judy Martz dedicated most of the money to paying the cost of fighting this year’s and next year’s forest fires. From the remainder, the Governor allocated $2.7 million to higher education. The Montana University System Board of Regents doled the money out to campuses on a more or less proportional basis—based on resident student FTE enrollment. Each campus plans to use their share of the funding to assist students with various types of loans and grants. On the Bozeman campus, for example, about 770 resident undergraduates who meet a certain level of need will each receive $400 grants for the next two semesters. Other campuses took a more across-the-board approach or added the funding to existing need-based loan programs.

The Board of Regents approved a pilot program that offers a “half price” tuition waiver to employees’ immediate family members. There are strings attached; the employee must have worked for the System at least ¾-time for five years, and each employee can only use one waiver at a time. The idea arose as a result of discussions and negotiations with some of the MUS unionized employee groups. The union accepted the offer and signed the contract. Then the Regents approved the idea and expanded the offer to all qualifying employees. Now we are trying to figure out how to estimate the cost. (There must be a cart and horse story in there somewhere!)

Our Board has been discussing “quality” and “quality benchmarks” for several months. They are interested in demonstrating to the citizens of Montana that the campuses of the university system are delivering quality programs. When asked to be more specific about what they might consider as acceptable benchmarks, they offered the following: responsiveness, effectiveness, measurable missions and goals, caliber of learning experience, quality of life on campus, renowned faculty publishing histories, faculty student ratios, output ratios, licenses and certificates earned, grad school placements, employee satisfaction, retention, number of years to graduation, and value of the programs offered. They then went on to request the formation of a committee to include campus representatives, politicians, legislative staff, business people, citizens, and students. This committee is charged with defining appropriate benchmarks. It will probably begin its work in February or March.

In the fall 2003 semester, the campuses of the Montana University System experienced an enrollment increase over fall 2002 of approximately 1.9%. The campuses had a slight decrease in non-resident enrollment but made that up with an increase in Montana residents.

NEVADA
No Report
NEW MEXICO
No Report
SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY – Regents Approve SUU Nursing Program

The State Board of Regents approved a bachelor of nursing program for Southern Utah University. Weber State University will finish the courses for students currently in the two-year and four-year programs now offered on the SUU campus. SUU will begin offering its newly approved four-year bachelor of nursing program beginning in 2005. Steve Bennion, SUU President, exclaims: “The approval of the new four-year nursing program at SUU is great news! There is a growing shortage of nurses in southern Utah, throughout the state, and nation.” He continues, “This program will produce well-trained nurses to help meet the increasingly complex healthcare needs of the 21st century. The expression of interest from a large pool of prospective students is strong. The excellent faculty who have taught in the SUU/Weber Cooperative program will continue to teach in this program.”

http://www.suu.edu/news/nursingapproved.htm

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH – The Utah State Board of Regents Invites Nominations and Applications for the Position of President of the University of Utah

The University of Utah, located in Salt Lake City, with an enrollment of over 29,000 students, was chartered in 1850 and is the state’s oldest and largest public institution of higher education. Classified by the Carnegie Foundation as a Doctoral/Research University-Extensive, the U of U offers degree programs through 15 colleges and professional schools and a graduate school. The University community includes a major regional medical center and teaching/research hospital. Current annual budgeted expenditures exceed $1.6 billion. Sponsored research and training programs are presently funded at more than $240 million. http://www.alumni.utah.edu/services/u-news/december03/search.htm

UTAH VALLEY STATE COLLEGE UVSC – Green without Envy

U.S. News & World Report has just ranked UVSC among the top five comprehensive public four-year colleges in the west. UVSC is the fastest growing higher education institution in Utah five years running. UVSC offers 32 bachelor’s degree programs and a wide range of associate degrees. There has been a 40% drop in the number of student’s transferring to other colleges, and an increase in those transferring to UVSC. Their campus boasts the largest LDS Institute program in the world. In athletics, UVSC just became the first member of the NJCAA to make the jump directly to Division I of the NCAA. Yet, with all its growth, their focus hasn’t changed. They still maintain small class sizes and faculty dedicated to students. http://www.uvsc.edu/

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY – 1,000 Get Degrees from WSU
Next Quest: Finding Keys to Success, Jobs, and Paying Off Loans

Weber State University recently honored approximately 1,000 graduates who have completed their coursework. In a group of about 10 graduates, only one spoke of having any debt from student loans. Don Bishop, 29, owes $15,000 after earning his bachelor of science degree in human performance. He has a wife and two children. Oh, and he’s looking for work. “I’ve got to have a way to ensure my wife and kids,” he said. With rising tuition on Utah campuses, debt load for people like Bishop will likely be worse in the future. The thrill is fleeting for such graduates, who are in effect re-entering the real world. Bishop,
like so many others, left a job he didn’t like for an advanced education that will—fingers crossed—take him somewhere he wants to be. http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,570036703,00.html

DIXIE STATE COLLEGE – Dixie State College Awarded Four-Year Nursing Program

Dixie State College today received unanimous approval from the Utah State Board of Regents to go forward with its proposed baccalaureate degree of nursing (BSN). Beginning fall semester 2004, approximately 24 nursing students, as mandated by the Regents, will begin coursework in the program. The college received that word at the Utah State Board of Regents meeting held at the Gateway in Salt Lake City. The decision had been postponed at least twice for further review and an independent evaluation. In May, the proposed degree was unanimously approved by the college’s board of trustees, which then recommended approval by the Utah State Board of Regents. The degree is the fourth four-year degree introduced at the college since 2000. http://www.dixie.edu/pr/news.htm#nursing121103

WYOMING
State Reporter: Lisa Muller

The state of Wyoming continues to be in the envious position of having a budget surplus. Wyoming is a fiscally conservative state, and the on-going discussions really summarize Wyoming politics. The state legislature is currently in a budget session and looking at state agency and Gov. Dave Freudenthal’s budget recommendations. One hotly debated concept is to immediately deposit part of the surplus (numbers thrown out by the Joint Appropriations Committee ranged from 50 million to 250 million dollars in early January) into the Permanent Wyoming Minerals Trust Fund (PWMTF). Money deposited into the fund cannot be withdrawn, but interest off the account flows to the General Fund. It should be an interesting session with savings, one-time projects, and ongoing budget items pitted against one another. 100% of market-level salaries for University of Wyoming and community college faculty and staff continue to be mentioned, but the Governor’s recommendations are for a 3% increase for each year of the biennium along with modest market adjustment dollars. These measures are intended to keep the University of Wyoming and community colleges at close to 97% of market. In addition, funding to maintain family health insurance of 85% state and 15% employee formula is included. The change from 100% coverage of the employee only (no family coverage paid by state dollars) in May of 2003 makes this topic especially interesting.

The Governor’s recommendations are for full funding of many one-time items. The budget for the University of Wyoming that has gone forward includes capital construction, residence hall renovations, and athletic plan capital facilities of approximately 41 million dollars.

The success of the University of Wyoming matching fund endowment program of 30 million dollars reported previously has led to a recommendation by the Governor to add an additional matching fund of 20 million dollars from this legislative budget session. It will be interesting to report on the budget session in the next issue of Panorama.

On the University of Wyoming campus, the biggest news is that our enrollment goal of 13,000 was reached with an end of fall 2003 semester student count of 13,162. Renovation of the Health Science building continues, and plans for dorm renovations are underway starting in the summer of 2004.

In September 2003, Outside Magazine recognized Laramie as one of the 40 best college towns in the United States. The magazine noted the natural beauty of Vedauwoo, the Snowy Range, and the Medicine
Bow Mountains, along with a fun outdoor adventure program. Since I am personally an outdoorsy RMAIR member, these are all fun parts of the local region, and mentioning these assets reflects my personal bias.

Thanks to Wendy and Kayleigh for the great RMAIR conference in Santa Fe.

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