

Presentation Abstracts

Monday, June 19

Morning Sessions

9:00 am – Invited Speaker – Means, Bias, and Trends: What We All Bring to the Conversation

Erika M. Farfan (Director of Institutional Research, Office of Institutional Research, Kenyon College)

Institutional research offices have made their name by offering accurate, replicable, and understandable data. As technology has allowed us to grow more efficient with these tasks and business intelligence makes data more accessible to everyone on campus, IR staff is increasingly called upon not to just run a report or produce models but to “make sense” of the data in deep and resonant ways. As we collectively move from being purveyors of data and information toward storytellers with knowledge and wisdom, we have to add new non-technical skills to our repertoire that help us to include different perspectives without diminishing the clarity of the story. In smaller IR offices, including diverse perspectives can be a particular challenge but one that IR professionals are uniquely placed to meet. In this conversation, we’ll talk about how IR professionals are becoming the narrators of their campuses’ stories and supporting difficult conversations while staying true to the data and stretching their own professional skills. We’ll also discuss the opportunities these challenges open up for the IR profession.

10:15 am – Concurrent Sessions

Concurrent Session 1

Factors that Contribute to the Development of Writing Skills

Carol Trosset (Associate Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, Carleton College)

Carleton College requires all students to reach a certain level of skill in academic writing, measured by the evaluation of a writing portfolio submitted at the end of the sophomore year. Each year, about ten percent of sophomores are required to do extra work the next year to reach proficiency. This presentation reviews what factors predict, or correlate with, the performance of Carleton’s Fall 2015 entry cohort on their sophomore portfolios (which will be evaluated before the 2017 HEDS conference) and in the writing-rich courses they took in their first two years. The study examines the relationship between students’ perceptions of their own writing ability (CIRP data), their early performance as writers (SAT scores, Research Practices Survey results, and Collegiate Learning Assessment scores), their inclination to take writing-rich courses and their performance in those courses, whether or not they make use of the Writing Center and why, and ultimately their performance on the sophomore Writing Portfolio. The integration of many data sources makes it possible to examine the extent to which writing-rich pedagogy and support from the Writing Center help to equalize writing skills in a cohort of Carleton students.

Writing Our Way Forward: Using Assessment to Inform Writing Pedagogy

Bethany Miller (Director of Institutional Research & Assessment, Cornell College)

Writing has been assessed three times over the past ten years with little improvement. In the fall of 2014, the Institutional Research & Assessment Advisory Committee (IRAAC) decided to assess writing again. Working in collaboration with the Writing Program Committee and the Cole Library Center for Teaching & Learning, a campus wide assessment of writing began. Writing samples were collected from senior capstone and seminar courses, as well as from the seniors’ first year writing course. Utilizing the AAC&U value rubric on written communication, a group of faculty gathered in the summer to score the samples. Additional data about writing was gathered by asking supplemental questions on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

After the scoring and analysis of writing, results were shared with President’s council, the Writing Program Committee, and the Institutional Research & Assessment Advisory Committee before being shared campus wide at a Wine, Cheese, and Data event, designed to share data and foster conversations about using the results. The culture of assessment at Cornell College leads us to understand that data does not become assessment until it is shared and used to improve student learning.

Given the results of the writing assessment, our first initiative was to increase faculty development opportunities focused on current writing pedagogy. Faculty development opportunities have included bringing

Jill Gladstein, associate professor of English and Director of the Writing Associates Program at Swarthmore College, to facilitate a workshop on Writing Pedagogies and Practices; creating a Conversations about Teaching series centered around writing pedagogy; and hiring a Writing and Teaching specialist with expertise in the areas of rhetoric and TESOL.

Concurrent Session 2

Tableau? Why Not!? Example of a Cost Friendly Tableau Implementation and Journey Beyond

Tamara Gross (Business Data Reporting Analyst, Office of Institutional Research, University of Cincinnati)

Yearly, the Office of Institutional Research (IR) at the University of Cincinnati (UC) published an over 100-page spiral-bound Student Fact Book which documented the university's student data. Clearly, the paper-bound facts needed a digital facelift so we could start clicking and stop flipping to understand our data from over 44,000 students. The idea to visualize the university's data was born.

At UC we started on a smaller scale and more cost friendly adoption of Tableau. During the session, participants will gain insights, on how to get initially started with Tableau and follow UC's journey to Tableau Server, which provides now access to data for key personnel across 13 colleges and a variety of offices across the three UC campuses.

CSUB Tableau Dashboard: Impact on Decision Making

Kris Krishnan (Assistant Vice President of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment, California State University, Bakersfield), Vikash Lakhani (Assistant Vice President for Student Success, California State University, Bakersfield)

Business Intelligence (BI) analytics has helped CSUB address student success and accountability while better fulfilling its academic mission. In this presentation, an intervention solution for the university using Tableau dashboard is discussed. In order to ensure lasting cultural change, this intervention solution was conceived and implemented alongside two major strategic changes that occurred at the university. The university successfully completed its Quarter to Semester conversion and redesigned its General Education curriculum. The dashboards were developed to allow staff and advisors the opportunity to employ the power of analytics to determine which students may face academic difficulty, allowing interventions to help them succeed. The dashboards extract student grades, enrolled units, past academic history, and other student parameters from various academic systems. The system itself is explained in detail, along with retention and performance outcomes realized since its implementation.

11:45 – Concurrent Sessions

Concurrent Session 1

First Destination: Where Are Graduates Going and How Do We Know?

Michelle Spencer (Research Analyst and Data Manager, HEDS Consortium), Susan Canon (Director of Institutional Research & Effectiveness, St. Olaf College), Troy Kase (Director, Career and Internship Center, Albion College), Dawn Hernandez (Assistant Director, Career and Internship Center, Albion College), Colleen Wynn (Associate Director of Institutional Research, Claremont McKenna College)

Where students go and what they do after graduation is important information that is challenging to collect. Over the past year, HEDS has refined its First Destination Survey in an effort to better fit into the work institutions have been doing in this area. Along the way, we learned that institutions are using many different techniques for determining what their recent graduates are doing, and they are using this information in a variety of ways, as well.

Conference participants will receive information about how we built the HEDS First Destination Survey using NACE guidelines and feedback from HEDS members. They will also learn about how other institutions use this survey as part of a larger collection piece. In particular, St. Olaf has been instrumental in their collaboration with HEDS. Attendees will learn what methods they use to reach a “knowledge rate” of over 90%, as well as how these data are used on their campus. Finally, attendees will hear about some of the interesting findings from the data.

This presentation will be a place for ideas on how to collect first destination data and ways it can be used. We will share successes and failures of trying to collect these valuable data and what we have learned along the way.

Concurrent Session 2

Data-Informed Decision Cultures

Leah Ross (Consultant, Association for Institutional Research), Mary Ann Coughlin (Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Springfield College)

Data-informed decision cultures are rooted in an institution's approach to data use and data capacity. These cultures recognize and support expanded sets of decision makers (data use) and the IR function (data capacity). Yet, realization of a data-informed decision culture is not a destination. Rather, it is a journey that requires institutional commitment to use of data in decision making, and the leadership of a dedicated senior-level administrator who thinks and strategizes about data and their use across the institution. In its most mature state, a data-informed decision culture is a highly dynamic and interactive network of units that support each other in the pursuit of institutional goals. This session features the pillars of data-informed decision cultures, considers different lenses with which to examine these cultures, and encourages dialog about the ways in which IR professionals can help institutions achieve and sustain them.

Monday, June 19

Afternoon Sessions

1:45 pm – Concurrent Sessions

Concurrent Session 1

Partners in Progress: Engaging Faculty to Improve the Academy

Will Miller (Assistant Vice President-Campus Adoption, Campus Labs)

The main data issue on college and university campuses today is not that data does not exist; instead, the area of concern is the siloed nature of data. Data points kept in isolation do not help a campus improve or students to succeed. On most campuses, the silo is most clear when considering the role of faculty, who see students every day, measure academic success, and observe the interpersonal workings within classrooms. Yet, the relationship between institutional researchers and faculty can be strained by misunderstandings of each other's roles. Some faculty will see requests for assessment data or reports as bureaucratic burdens they simply fill out without receiving value back, while some administrators will see faculty disinterest in the process as potential signs of laziness or unwillingness to perform duties. This presentation is designed to present a framework for faculty and institutional research and effectiveness professionals to work in a symbiotic fashion toward the singular goal of promoting and cultivating student success. No matter how great of a system or process that is in place to report and examine assessment data, the ultimate results are entirely contingent on faculty providing accurate information and understanding the true spirit of institutional effectiveness. And faculty willingness to fully engage in the process depends on the belief that doing so will provide some utility back to the faculty beyond meeting an institutional requirement or accreditation standard. By creating a culture where faculty power is harnessed and recognized, rather than questioned, institutions can truly demonstrate effectiveness while positioning students for the highest likelihood of success.

Concurrent Session 2

How to Measure the Impact of Study Abroad Programs on Student Performance: Propensity Score vs. Case Control Matching

Robert Roe (Executive Director of Institutional Research and Planning, Central Michigan University), Emma Gyasi (Research Analyst, Central Michigan University)

Study Abroad (SA) programs are often hailed as wonderful opportunities for students resulting in a better educational experience leading to better student performance. However, at our institution, no analyses have been completed to accurately estimate the impact of the experience other than anecdotal stories (e.g., Steven studied abroad and he graduated in 3.5 years!). In order to evaluate the impact of the SA experience, several

questions must be addressed: Do study abroad students differ on key predictors of success (HSGPA, ACT, First Generation, Minority, Pell eligibility, and number of courses brought from high school)? What are the appropriate measures of student performance (e.g., does it matter when the SA experience takes place)? Is there evidence that the study abroad experience accounts for differences in performance beyond the differences in key predictors between SA and non-SA students? To answer these questions, it was necessary to match the SA students with an appropriate control group of non SA student on all predictors of success mentioned above. To do so, we evaluated two matching techniques, Propensity Score and Case Control Matching. Ultimately, given our data types, we found Case Control Matching to be the better technique. Using this method along with Analysis of Variance and dependent t-tests we were able to show strong support for a positive impact of study abroad in terms of cumulative GPA at graduation and the time to degree. Implications of this study on expansion of SA programs (e.g., scholarships for high need students) will be discussed.

2:45 pm – Invited Speaker – Scrutiny of Higher Education: Are the Right Questions Being Asked?

Scott Jaschik, (Editor and Cofounder, Inside Higher Ed)

A review of the landscape of discussion of higher education—in the press, Washington, statehouses and elsewhere—and suggestions on how colleges are trying (and sometimes failing) to make the case for their institutions.

Tuesday, June 20

Morning Sessions

8:30 am – From Survey Results to Curriculum Design: Acting on Data from the HEDS Research Practices Survey and the Longitudinal Analyses that Follow

Greg Anderson (Director, First Year Experience, Armstrong State University), Andrew Dudash (Head of Reference Services, Juniata College), Edith List (Librarian, Assistant Professor, Principia College), Adrea Hernandez (Research Analyst and Data Manager, HEDS Consortium)

Since 2013, institutions have used the current iteration of the HEDS Research Practices Survey to assess the extent to which their students can apply their information literacy skills to the practice of scholarly research. The survey instrument includes a test portion that determines whether students know how to find, use, and cite sources. The survey also asks students to rate the difficulty of those same skills that the test portion covers. With this approach to assessing research skills, institutions have been able to detect actionable items within their results and apply those findings to their work with students in a multitude of ways.

When administered to incoming first-year students, survey results can bring together faculty and librarians to identify areas for improvement for each new cohort. Results can also help inform individualized curriculum for students in the first semester. By conducting a longitudinal study, institutions can use the first administration as a benchmark to track growth in information literacy and college-level research skills over the course of the first semester, first year, and/or four years of college. Furthermore, institutions that have participated in the survey multiple years are able to consider the patterns across and changes between different cohorts of students. Panelists will discuss their experiences in using results to develop First Year programs and information literacy instruction, as well as their collaboration with faculty and librarians to enhance accreditation reporting, adapt course objectives in real time, and plan for the year ahead.

9:45 am – First-Generation, Continuing Generation.... All Generations: Improving Support for Endurance and Success

Polly Albright (Director, Institutional Research and Assessment, Earlham College), Neal Baker (Director, Earlham Libraries, Earlham College), Joe Green (Director, McNair Program, Earlham College), Bonita Washington-Lacey (Senior Associate VP for Academic Affairs, Earlham College)

Earlham College averages 20% of each new freshman cohort as comprised of first-generation college students and this presentation will highlight programs for first-generation students. Nationally, ambitions to earn a graduate degree are nearly the same for first-generation students and their continuing-generation peers (Eagan, et al., 2014). However, despite these aspirations, first-generation students, nationally, complete their college education at a rate of only 55% compared to 71% degree attainment for continuing-generation students. (Davis,2010). At Earlham, the first-generation student 6-year grad rate lags slightly behind at 65% compared to the overall College average of 72%.

Earlham College addresses the needs of First Generation students with two programs:

- Library Emersion Fellows Team (LIFT) serves first-year, first-generation students by providing access to technology, programming to promote technology use, and scholarships for off-campus study.
- Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program for pursuit of graduate studies. Through this program, 2nd year students gain access to skills-building courses, research experiences with a faculty mentor and individualized assistance with application to graduate school.

In addition to tracking student retention rates, the Institutional Research and Assessment office has conducted research to examine the experiences of first-generation students. This research uses focus group data along with survey data (CSI and MYSA). This presentation will examine the evolution of the LIFT and McNair programs in light of this recent assessment and share next steps as the College seeks to best serve all students.

11:00 am – Invited Speakers – Practice for Life: Making Decisions in College

Lee Cuba (Professor of Sociology, Wellesley College), Nancy Jennings (Associate Professor of Education Emerita, Bowdoin College), Suzanne Lovett (Associate Professor of Psychology, Bowdoin College)

College offers practice at making decisions that build foundational skills, habits, and values associated with liberal education: openness to new ideas, appreciation of difference, ability to make connections, problem-solving. But rather than focus on the aspirational outcomes of a liberal arts education, we claim that how students respond to the many decisions they must make in college is essential to understanding the process that can lead to these outcomes. Drawing on college and post-college interviews of over 200 students who attended seven liberal arts institutions, we'll discuss five areas of decision-making in college that offer practice at becoming liberally educated: managing time and balancing commitments in a new setting, developing personal support networks, establishing a sense of home in an unfamiliar place, asking for advice, and becoming a lifelong-learner. The decisions students make in college are important practice for becoming liberally educated, yet they are also important practice for creating a meaningful adult life. We'll conclude by discussing the benefits and challenges of this collaborative project, the findings that surprised us the most, and the ways our colleges have used data from this project to implement changes to their practices and policies.

Tuesday, June 20

Afternoon Sessions

2:15 pm – Institutional Researchers as Trainers, Coaches, and Educators

Gina Johnson (Strategy Director for IR Capacity Initiatives, Association for Institutional Research), Ellen Peters (Director of Institutional Research and Retention, University of Puget Sound), Jason Rivera (Director of Institutional Research, Dickinson College), Ann Marie Russell (Director of Institutional Research, Analysis & Planning, Bates College)

Institutional researchers wear many hats in their work at institutions, systems, and organizations. Traditionally viewed as stewards of data; collectors, analysts, and reporters of data and information; and evaluators of programs and functions, some institutional research practitioners have “left the office” and ventured into the realm of training, coaching, and educating producers, users, and consumers of data in their organization. What might this education role look like for institutional research professionals? It is a role that may come naturally to some professionals in the field, but not to others, who have focused their knowledge and skill development on other duties and functions of institutional research. This session will explore the role of institutional researcher as trainer, coach, and educator, providing specific examples from a variety of institutions where the Institutional Research Office has embraced the role of educator of information producers, users, and consumers. In addition to sharing practical application of this function of institutional research, panelists will explore its role in the overall function of institutional research in an organization. As more professionals in higher education use data and information for decision making, more emphasis may be placed on educating, coaching, and training for those in the field of institutional research.

3:30 pm – Invited Speaker – Institutional Effectiveness, Student Success, Data-Informed Decision-Making Culture: Ask Not What Your Institution Can Do, Ask What You Can Do?

Mary Ann Coughlin (Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Springfield College)

Demands for accountability and transparency in higher education continue to grow and abound. The demand for data to inform decisions in higher education is greater than ever before. Yet, in all these calls for data and information, we often lose sight of the important questions. Yes, establishing the effectiveness of our institutions is important. And of course, each of our institutions has a unique mission, yet at the core of each of our missions is student success. Ultimately, we cannot provide evidence that our institutions are effective, if we cannot document the success of our students. Providing evidence of institutional effectiveness, promoting student-success, and creating a data-informed decision making culture are all key elements of the work of institutional researchers and assessment professionals. Many of these professionals work in smaller offices and may work in isolation. Accomplishing these tasks can then become overwhelming and be viewed as tasks for others or tasks that cannot be accomplished without greater institutional support. This session will explore how each professional can contribute and can make a difference to all of these key outcomes.

Tuesday, June 20

Late Afternoon Poster Sessions

Poster 1 – Independent Student Analysis for Continuous Quality Improvement

Elizabeth Curtiss (Medical Student, Wayne State University School of Medicine), Jason Booza (Director of Assessment and Medical Education Research, Wayne State University School of Medicine)

Higher education accreditation is in the midst of a paradigm shift with greater emphasis being placed on the processes that ensure good student outcomes. The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) has recently enacted a new standard that requires United States medical schools to have a continuous quality improvement (CQI) system in place in order to monitor and improve program quality. An essential component to CQI systems is the collection and analysis of data. Traditionally, schools have relied on course evaluations and student outcomes; however, these measures may fail to provide metrics that allow for the evaluation of other aspects of the program (e.g., effective integration of curricular content). In order to address this need, the Wayne State University School of Medicine (WSUSOM) Medical Education and Evaluation co-curricular program (ME2) developed as an independent student analysis (ISA) group, which collects various curriculum metrics for CQI process. As part of ME2, an annual survey has been developed to address student opinion on quality and effectiveness of curriculum and WSUSOM as an institution. The annual survey has been used for the past 4 years, targeting all four years of students and tracking the changes in student opinions throughout their medical school experience. In addition, each year the annual survey is updated to reflect the changes occurring at WSUSOM. Response rates for each class are historically well above 60%. This survey is used to determine areas of improvement and success in all aspects of WSUSOM with questions in regards to curriculum, financial aid, safety, mental health, to name a few. The ISA is then brought to the attention of the appropriate departments to plan and implement changes.

Poster 2 – A Graphical Approach to Identifying and Prioritizing Quality Improvement Opportunities

Matt Haugh (Data Analyst, Wayne State University)

Continuous quality improvement is an accreditation standard for many higher education agencies. Unfortunately, many organizations are overwhelmed with data, resulting in choice overload, which can paralyze decision makers from making decisions. This poster outlines an objective, data-driven approach to prioritizing opportunities for continuous quality improvement at Wayne State University School of Medicine (WSUSOM). By utilizing survey data, various aspects of medical education were evaluated by calculating the degree of change over time at WSUSOM and our difference from the national average. These issues were then plotted – by domain – on a graph and categorized as high priority, low priority, or an area of excellence. Areas of excellence (positive trend and above national average) fell in quadrant one, high priority issues (negative trend and below national average) were found in quadrant three, and the remaining quadrants were considered medium priority (one positive and one negative measure). This methodology empowers users to make objective decisions based on a graphical representation of the data.

Poster 3 – It’s On Us: Acting on the HEDS Sexual Assault Survey Data

Kristin McKinley (Director of Research Administration, Lawrence University), Erin Buenzli (Director of Wellness and Recreation, Lawrence University)

Lawrence University participated in the 2015 HEDS Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey. The Office of Research Administration prepared a comprehensive report, including recommendations, providing evidence-based support for numerous actions by the University to improve campus climate:

- Revised sexual misconduct policy and procedures making them clearer and more effective.
- Changed SHARB (Sexual Harassment and Assault Resource Board) into SHARE (Sexual Harassment and Assault Resources & Education); increased group’s focus on education, support, and prevention.
- Designated SHARE confidential resources for Lawrence community members who experienced sexual harassment or assault.
- Created comprehensive SHARE website and app to provide access to support, education, and online reporting, and to highlight ways to get involved in improving campus climate.
- Provided Title IX training to all employees regarding the new policy, reporting requirements, the SHARE website/app, and the role of SHARE confidential resources.
- Encouraged activities of student groups who worked to increase awareness and prevention of sexual assault and who offered bystander training to other campus groups.
- Awarded a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant to provide a full-time sexual assault advocate on campus.
- Hired a part-time Title IX coordinator to remove that responsibility from the associate dean of the faculty.

The effects of these actions will be measured in part by the next HEDS Sexual Assault survey, scheduled for spring 2017. The poster will highlight key findings that provided evidence-based support for preventing sexual assault in a comprehensive and integrated way across campus through education, collaboration, programming, and training.

Poster 4 – Going Rogue: How to Take Down Data Empires

Maggie Bolter (Institutional Research Analyst, Shawnee State University)

On campuses near and far, it is a period of change. Data empires have continued to store the neutral data, maintaining control. Rogue forces have formed to free the data, so it can be shared across the campus. The empires are vulnerable. This interactive session, using a case study approach, will discuss how to take down data empires and form data republics. This session will discuss how departments can pool their data to create a more data inclusive campus. Topics to be discussed include how to develop data partnerships across the campus using a nominal budget, how to internally place the most requested data at your fingertips, and how to use data to take down data silos. Come, use the force and join the rebellion.

Attendees will learn:

- How to fund the rebellion (using a nominal budget)
- How to build their rogue team (campus partnerships)
- How to create their insurgency plan (data silo destruction)
- How to create battle tools (most requested data at fingertips)

Poster 5 – Developing a Learning Analytics Department

Michelle Ford (eLearning Data Analyst and BI Specialist, University of Cincinnati)

Institutional research manages, analyzes, and reports much data for an institution, but there is a wealth of information that usually goes untouched – data from learning technologies. The University of Cincinnati created the eLearning Analytics department to address the need for managing, analyzing, and reporting data related to student behavior during a course, through the LMS and other eLearning tool data. During the first year, the team focused on benchmarking the current state of eLearning at the University. During this next year, the team is focusing on operationalizing benchmarking processes and implementing learning analytics capabilities. Check out the visualizations we have created, find out what the data has told us, and learn about how to develop a learning analytics department at your college or university with limited resources.

Poster 6 – Assessing Our Work, Improving Our Services, and Learning from Our Members: Assessment of HEDS Services

Adrea Hernandez (Research Analyst and Data Manager, HEDS Consortium)

In Spring 2016, the HEDS staff began a more conscious effort to collect feedback on our products when we released a new kind of report for the HEDS Research Practices Survey. Since then, we have amplified the assessment of our services and products so that we may ensure that our work is attuned to the needs of consortium members and survey users.

This assessment campaign has led us to ask about items we have changed, items we are thinking of changing, and items that we have maintained in order to gain insight into the areas that need to be re-envisioned and those that are working well and simply need our ongoing support and attention. We have learned a great deal from our members, whether we collect data from a snap poll, have a phone interview, or meet for an in-person conversation. With this poster, we will share our assessment process and findings, as well as our plan to establish a culture of assessment within our own work at HEDS.

Poster 7 – HEDS Today and Tomorrow: Diverse Institutions with a Common Purpose

Kathy Wise (Associate Director, HEDS), Charlie Blaich (Director, HEDS)

In this poster, we will explore how current HEDS institutions are similar in some ways yet diverse in others. We will also explore how potential HEDS members compare to current HEDS members on key institutional variables.

Wednesday, June 21

Morning Sessions

8:45 am – Exploring Student Experiences of the PEAK Curriculum at the College of Idaho

Mark Heidrich (Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and College Registrar, The College of Idaho), Jen Wallin-Ruschman (Assistant Professor of Psychology, The College of Idaho), Jennifer McGraw (Student Researcher, The College of Idaho), Rachel Blach (Student Researcher, The College of Idaho)

A liberal arts college aims to provide a well-rounded education to students by offering breadth of study across multiple disciplines. The PEAK curriculum at the College of Idaho is novel and exciting for offering both breadth and depth of study across four areas: professional studies & enchantments, social sciences & history, natural sciences & mathematics, and humanities & fine arts. Students have a major and three minors in each of the PEAK areas. Because PEAK was a radical reform of a traditional program, there is no set protocol for assessing its functioning. This study begins to explore the outcomes of PEAK by analyzing student experiences. We used student-led focus groups to collect data from upperclassmen regarding their experiences in designing their PEAK paths and in drawing connections to concepts learned within the different PEAKs. We used thematic analysis to answer two research questions: how are students choosing their PEAKs? and how do students form a narrative based on their chosen PEAKs/educational program? The first step in what will be longitudinal, institutional research, we expect that the results will inform the institution in moving forward with assessing and improving PEAK.

10:00 am – Staging Data: Transforming Data into a Theatrical Performance

Kristin McKinley (Director of Research Administration, Lawrence University), Kathy Privatt (James G. and Ethel M. Barber Professor of Theatre and Drama and Associate Professor of Theatre Arts, Lawrence University)

Looking for a creative way to transform data? Theatrical performances engage the audience on an emotional and cognitive level, using both verbal and non-verbal communication, offering a unique mode for presenting data and fostering conversations. As a culminating experience to Lawrence's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant for mental wellness and suicide prevention, Lawrence Lifeline collaborated with Associate Professor of Theatre Arts Kathy Privatt and students to devise a theatrical piece, Show Your Face(s): A Masque, which explored the complexity of human emotions and outcomes of sharing and hiding. During the performance pertinent results from our National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey were shared with the audience. Qualitative data solicited from the campus and local community, including past Wisconsin Poet Laureates, were also incorporated. The innovative theatrical performance demonstrated that suicide prevention could be incorporated into the curriculum and tap the creativity of many. The presenters will explain the collaborative process, with a focus on the ways data were used in the performance, and its impact.

11:00 am – From Dispassionate Data Fount to Advocating in the Trenches: Equity, Inclusion, and IR

Mark Salisbury (Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, Augustana College), Ruth Vater (Director of Strategic Research and Planning, Beloit College), Anne Dueweke (Director of Faculty Grants and Institutional Research, Kalamazoo College)

In recent years, institutional researchers have been encouraged to move beyond the traditional role of impartial data source to embrace a mission of evidence-based advocacy for institutional effectiveness and student success. Although justification for this impassioned plea seems pervasive and compelling at first glance, the implications for IR professionals, as well as the institutions they serve, are complicated. Such a move can be fraught with personal challenge and professional risk. It can also set the stage for a deeply gratifying sense of vocation and purpose. For institutions it can accelerate the pace of change even as it complicates the nature of that change, yet it can also introduce a political element to institutional research that many IR professionals have long assiduously avoided.

This presentation will explore the personal, professional, and organizational implications for IR professionals who have chosen to move from neutrality to advocacy. Focusing specifically on their efforts to support institutional initiatives to improve inclusion and equity, the three panelists will describe the experiences and perceptions that foregrounded this choice, the ways in which they have endeavored to embrace a role of advocacy without losing objective integrity, the professional and personal risks that they have had to navigate in this new environment, the ways that this shift has changed their own sense of professional purpose, and the degree to which this expanded vision for institutional research may (or may not yet) have positively improved educational effectiveness at their own institution.