



From the NYR conference, New York City

**With the start of the fall 2022 semester, everything seems new again.**

Particularly after two-and-a-half years of virtual learning, social isolation, and an ever-changing set of circumstances, the energy on campus is unmistakable. So why would I want to spoil this state of bliss to talk about fatigue?

The fatigue, in this case, is survey fatigue. "What is survey fatigue?" you may ask. Rather than providing a canned response, I ask you to consider this: How many times have you ordered some mundane item from a website only to be inundated with emails in the following days asking you to rate your purchase? How many times do you actually respond? If those two numbers are not the same, then congratulations: You have survey fatigue!

Surveys are extremely powerful tools for gathering information, especially if you want to gather information from a large number of people somewhat quickly. But, as the saying goes, "With great power comes great responsibility." (Sincere apologies to Voltaire, Winston Churchill, Theodore Roosevelt, and most of all, Spider-Man.) Deployed carelessly, surveys can undermine trust and credibility and produce very little in the way of actionable information.

**When administering a survey, consider whether the questions you are asking will yield the information you need to make a decision.**

Too often, surveys become a "crime of opportunity" where extra questions find their way in "just in case," or because a member of the research team "always wondered." Survey length is directly and inversely related to response rates, so every question can become the last straw for a participant who bows out. Consider also the timing of your survey, and what your audience may be doing or feeling during the time you plan to survey them. You do not want to ask questions of overwhelmed and distracted people!

When done with care and consideration, surveys can be illuminating and transformative. If you are seeking advice on how to optimize your surveys, OIA's website contains a section of resources that can help. You can find them [here](#). Now go forth, and ask good questions!

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## WHERE TO GET YOUR DATA: TABLEAU DASHBOARDS

*Written by Zacharia Kibuta*

Are you looking for particular data such as graduation rate, faculty count, or enrollment count? OIA has resources that can help you get the data you need. Primarily, the resources can be found on the [OIA website](#). The resources include tableau public dashboards, a data dictionary, fact books, common data sets, official enrollment reports, etc. Additionally, if you are unable to find the desired data in the OIA resources, you can directly communicate your [data needs to OIA](#).

# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

**NYR Conference.** (*Heather Mechler*) The [NYR Conference](#) was held in New York City June 8-10, and was an exciting mix of R users from education, industry, finance, and even professional sports. Sessions focused on topics ranging from [Shiny](#), creating composite scores in sports analytics, and even doing analytics on the use of emojis on Twitter and other social media platforms. For a relatively novice user of R, this was a good opportunity to see how others use various R packages to accomplish interesting analytic tasks and to talk with other data science people to get advice on current and future projects. In a nod to the ongoing pandemic, there was a virtual option to attend the conference, and they did a nice job of trying to incorporate these participants throughout the day. It was my first in-person conference since fall 2019, and the intentionally small in-person attendance coupled with the relaxed pace (only one session at a time) was a nice reintroduction to the world of professional conferences. The R user community in NYC is vibrant and welcoming, and I look forward to attending another NYR conference in future years.

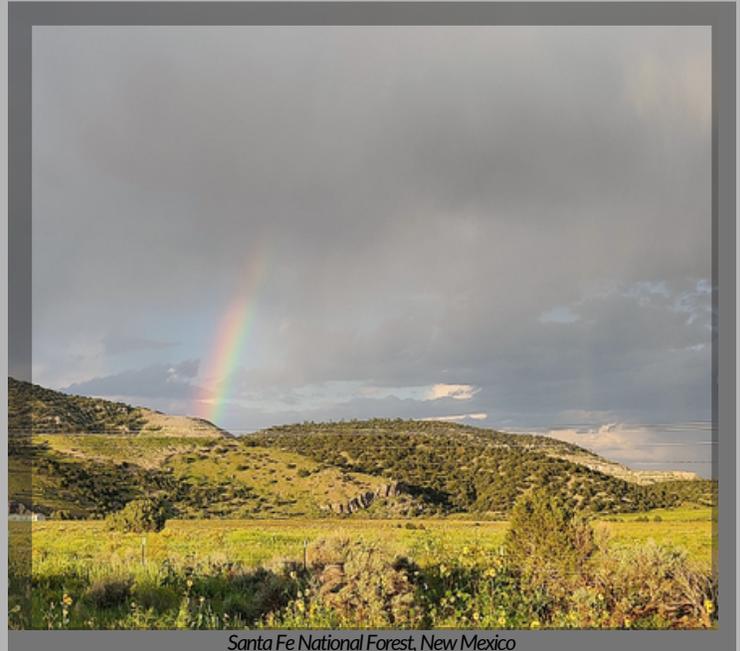
**useR! Conference.** (*Jing Feng*) This [annual conference](#) is an excellent opportunity for R users and developers from various industries to share their R projects, learn more about R, and build an R community. There were many data-related tutorials and talks, such as machine learning with the [tidymodels](#) package, regression models, and tips for [annotating plots](#). Most of the tutorials and talks will be published on the [R Consortium YouTube channel](#) in the coming months. You can also find recordings from previous useR! conferences on the channel.



## **Association for Institutional Research (AIR) conference.**

(*Charla Orozco*)

In June, I attended the 2022 AIR conference out in Phoenix, Arizona. In the midst of a heat wave, I learned about many interesting projects Institutional Researchers are carrying out in their respective institutions. I was inspired by each of the projects introduced: from hearing out how one Texas institution learned their off-campus student population defies the research base and performs better than their on-campus students, to hearing about [college return-on-investment based on institution](#), to learning new things about [effective storytelling with data](#). Unfortunately, these sessions were not made available after the conference because it was held in-person only and the sessions were not recorded. But if these topics interest you, perhaps consider attending the [2023 AIR Conference](#), to be hosted in Cleveland, Ohio this upcoming June!



*Santa Fe National Forest, New Mexico*

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

*Written by Charla Orozco*

Occasionally, we receive requests for training in data science, analytics, and visualization. As we ready ourselves for our annual Art & Science of Data event coming on February 15th (save the date and consider submitting a proposal to present [here](#)), we wanted to share some other upcoming data-related professional development opportunities:

**UNM Continuing Education** offers a variety of Data Science related professional development opportunities that range from Beginning Excel to intensive Data Science Bootcamps. Several of us at OIA have completed variations of the Bootcamps and we've enjoyed our experiences! The full list of data science related opportunities can be found [here](#). These events are mostly offered remotely and, in most cases, can be paid for with tuition remission!

**Data Roundup at Texas Tech:** The Rocky Mountain Association for Institutional Research (RMAIR) will host their 33rd annual conference close by this year in Lubbock, Texas from Tuesday, October 18th through Friday, October 21st.

**The National Numeracy Network:** This year's conference is being held here in Albuquerque from Friday, October 21st through Sunday, October 23rd. There are options to attend either virtually or in-person. While the full program is not yet available, you can get a sense of the material covered by reviewing the schedule and details from last year's meeting on the website. If you're interested in attending, you can register [here](#).

**New Mexico Data User's Conference:** This daylong, in-person conference will take place in Albuquerque at the CNM Workforce Training Center on Wednesday, November 16th. Early registration (prior to October 1st) is just \$65! More information, including the link to register, can be found at the website.

**Ongoing IPEDS Workshops:** If you've ever wondered about the data in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), these workshops are for you! Most are offered virtually and free of charge. Check out the full list of workshop opportunities at the website.

If you're looking for a more customizable learning experience, you can check out [DataCamp](#). This subscription-based online learning platform offers quick tutorials to support learning many of the most popular data analytics and visualization programs and software (Python, R, SQL, Tableau, Excel, PowerBI, etc.). Sessions vary in length, and the best part about it is the immediate opportunity to apply what you've learned.



*New Mexican sunset*

## **INCLUSIVE GENDER REPORTING IN INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH**

*Written by Monte-Angel Richardson*

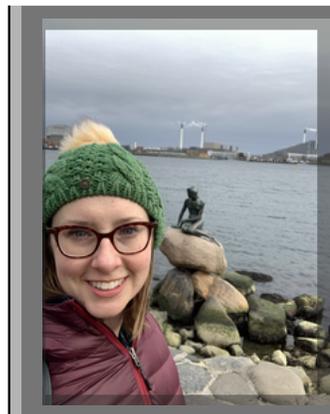
During the summer of 2021, governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed an executive order directing executive state departments to begin collecting voluntary information related to sexual orientation and gender identity, an advance long-sought by LGBTQIA advocates that will provide the state with data to improve services delivered to a traditionally underserved population.

For the 2022-23 academic year, these changes are beginning to be reflected in the collection and reporting of institutional data. The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), will provide space for the reporting of a third gender option beyond the typical gender binary of 'Male' and 'Female'. Students who self-identify as having a gender identity that does not fall into either of the mutually exclusive binary categories provided should now be reported in the "another gender" category. However, institutions are not limited to the options available for IPEDS reporting purposes and should determine the best way for their institution to collect and aggregate this information.

At the University of New Mexico, the roll out of these changes in data collection will take time and effort on the part of all departments. A campus-wide project is currently underway to modify University systems to collect and use preferred first names, gender identity descriptors, and pronouns. While this process will require adjustments, it is imperative that UNM continue on this path to fulfill its mission of providing diverse and equitable inclusion of all students, faculty, and staff who are part of the university community.

In rolling out the collection and reporting of gender inclusive data, UNM can continue to be a leader in equitable practices in New Mexico, and serve as an example for other New Mexican institutions to follow suit.

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### **FEATURED STAFF: HEATHER MECHLER**

*Written by Jing Feng*

Dr. Heather Mechler is originally from Alabama. She earned her B.A. in music and Ph.D. in educational psychology at the University of Alabama. She joined OIA in 2013, and has been the director of OIA since 2016. Heather is passionate about data and continues to learn useful data skills, such as programming, data visualization, and machine learning. She is committed in her work to provide data solutions to other UNM departments and improve data literacy in the community. She also strives to build an inclusive, friendly and cooperative team at OIA.

Heather lives with her husband Scott, two cats, and two dogs. In her spare time, she enjoys playing board games, traveling, skiing, and camping.