

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL ANALYTICS



Director's Column

BY HEATHER MECHLER

Numbers can wield such immense power in our world, and yet can also be completely meaningless. People at times regard numbers as objects with a distinct ability to determine things as important as truth or even life itself. Absent human intervention (with often very human motives), numbers are merely representations of objects, concepts, or events. Without context, a number has little to offer.

With that said, the misuse of numbers can result in the destruction of reputations or even careers. Numbers are merely symbols, but are often the only tools we have for understanding certain aspects of our world. This makes it all the more important to use and report data with the utmost standards of care and integrity.

A few recent stories in the news have highlighted what can go wrong when researchers are careless or even dishonest in their use of data. The now-former president of Stanford University resigned after revelations of manipulated data in several reports. In another story with an especially ironic twist, a researcher who studies honesty was alleged to have falsified data in studies going back more than ten years.

When we attend to numbers rather than the things or ideas they represent, we supply numbers with more power than they perhaps deserve. Focusing on what the numbers represent can keep the human-number relationship on a more equal footing, and allow us to clearly and honestly convey the ideas we seek to share.

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What's new in the data community

BY JING FENG

Analytics Day 2023

Analytics Day is a one-day mini-conference that focuses on data in higher education, hosted annually by Appalachian State University. Analytics Day 2023 was held virtually in June with presenters from all over the country. Two staff members from UNM OIA presented at the conference: Heather Mechler presented about the [Carnegie Classifications](#), and Charla Orozco presented about [Using Parameters in Tableau](#).



The many uses of institutional data

BY MONTE-ANGEL RICHARDSON

Ranging from financial information to medical records, institutional data is widely known to assess a university's progress in achieving federal, state, and internal milestones. However, institutional data collected by the university does more than just report big numbers. It can also tell personal stories about our students and staff. It can also be leveraged to advance equity. One example is the use of institutional data to understand the historical equity of representation within departments by gender, race/ethnicity, or ability status.

IPEDS Workshops

The [Association for Institutional Research](#) offers ongoing workshops designed for Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data providers and users. These workshops are free of charge, and most are conducted virtually. Upcoming sessions in September - December include new keyholder training, IPEDS survey reporting, IPEDS Data and Benchmarking, IPEDS Data as the Public Face and more. Check out the offerings and register [here](#).

The case has been made at many universities that programs should be monitored for equitable inclusion of different populations, particularly those in which marginalized groups tend to lack representation. The Association of Institutional Research (AIR) has written about two universities that have effectively used data in combination with the voices and input of underrepresented students to [improve the student experience and enhance student success](#). By creating models to enhance student support and using data insights to highlight inequities, these two universities are prime examples of how institutional data can be harnessed to increase not just a school's outcomes, but inclusivity.

Featured Staff: Yury Bosin



Dr. Yury V. Bosin holds two PhD degrees: one in History and Asian studies from the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the other in Political Science from the University of New Mexico. His research has covered a wide variety of topics, from international security and cooperation in Central Asia, to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the 2020 Midterm elections. Dr. Bosin's work has resulted in numerous publications and conference presentations across the world. His research has been supported by private and public foundations, including the Fulbright program, the International Research and Exchanges Boards, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Open Society Institute, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, and the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies. Yury is a former college tennis player and, in his spare time, coaches his son Philip, who will be on the UNM tennis team this Fall.

Featured UNM Branch Campus: Taos

BY ALEJANDRA VILLALOBOS MELENDEZ



UNM-Taos is one of the four branch campuses of The University of New Mexico. It is a comprehensive community college serving the region from “cradle to career” with an award-winning early childhood education and care center; pre-college programs including pre-K to 12 grade outreach, high school equivalency, dual enrollment, and early college; vocational and technical courses and short-term certificates, including industry-recognized credentialing; associate degrees; transfer and articulation to four-year institutions in New Mexico and surrounding states; career readiness; adult basic education, including High School Equivalency (HSE) and English Language Learners (ELL); and lifelong learning opportunities.

Located approximately 130 miles north of Albuquerque, UNM-Taos is the only college within a 50-mile radius. Nestled between the Rio Grande, Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and the ancestral lands of the Taos Pueblo, we are tightly connected to the unique rural, multicultural, and historically rich communities we serve. The branch has two locations, the Klauer and Civic Plaza complex. UNM-Taos offers 10 Associate degree programs and 23 Certificates. The branch enrolls a diverse student population of almost 1,300 local and visiting students across the UNM system (Spring 2023 Census Snapshot, Fall 2023 Census Snapshot).