
Editorial

The *Journal for Institutional Research* is an important platform for informing current debates in the tertiary education sector, particularly as the need for institutional research becomes an ever-increasing priority. This issue comprises articles that demonstrate the breadth of interest and quality of scholarship of institutional researchers in Australasia and beyond. As we embark on yet another educational reform, with no caps on student places in 2012 in Australia and a review of performance funding indicators in New Zealand (with the new TLEC Project: Tertiary Learner Event Collection), readers will find that articles in this issue tackle topics of interest for those engaged in assisting their institutions adapt to these changing contexts. Contributions from international colleagues in this issue remind us of the similarity in the challenges being addressed globally in this sector.

This issue features an article that was awarded best paper at the 2012 AAIR Annual Forum. David Carroll presents an analysis of the Australian Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) data and investigates differences between modes of data collection, that is, self-administered paper or online survey versus telephone collection. While the introduction of telephone collection has increased responses from graduates on the CEQ, which has traditionally suffered from less than ideal return rates, Carroll's analysis demonstrates that collection method impacts substantially on the nature of responses. Graduates tend to respond more favourably by phone, introducing bias and non-equivalent results. Carroll concludes with some suggestions for addressing this concern.

Many of the articles in this issue tackle the questions related to student entry requirements and their use in predicting successful outcomes for students. In other words, they are about *who to let in* and *how to predict success*. Michael Cuthill and Christopher Schmidt describe the challenges confronting one Australian research-intensive university in responding to the national widening participation agenda. Their study comprises a comprehensive analysis of the drivers and opportunities for widening participation through a range of qualitative methodologies, including a literature review and key informant interviews, as part of an institutional mapping process.

Erik Brogt and colleagues, address the issue of *who to let in* by testing the advice that course advisors give to potential students against performance data of first-year enrolled students. This article is a joint venture between the academics and institutional research staff at the University of Christchurch (NZ) and demonstrates the scholarly applications of this form of collaboration. Keith Comer and colleagues test the predictive validity of three student entry models against outcome grade for students in their quest to understand the best ways to predict success. They highlight the limitations of all models and caution institutional practice against the reliance on one sole model for student entry. Elisabeth Jacob and her colleagues ask similar questions in their article that explores the pathway of entry for nursing students who undertake a preregistration nursing course. On the same theme, international contributors, Abdolreza Eshghi and colleagues describe a study using multilevel predictive analysis to better understand what factors contribute to student attrition in a graduate business school. They encourage a view of the student in terms of a customer life cycle, where optimising student retention has financial as well as reputational implications. The article models factors that contribute to performance data over seven years and concludes with a list of factors that contribute to student attrition and may help identify students at risk.

The range of articles in this issue is timely and we hope will provide the reader with an evidence base to inform the questions and challenges they are facing today and into the future. This issue would not be possible without the combined efforts of the editorial executive committee, and of course all the reviewers who donate their time in time-poor conditions. Thank you for your continued interest and dedication to the quality of the journal. I would also like to thank our technical editor, Tina Thornton, who has provided us with invaluable insights and technical competence.

Josephine Palermo

Academic Editor