



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Department of Educational Leadership
and Policy Studies

April 24, 2023

Dear AIR Colleagues:

I am honored to be this year's recipient of the John Stecklein Distinguished Member Award and greatly appreciate the entire AIR community for this recognition (yes, every single one of you). I started working in the field in Fall 1981, as a graduate assistant in the Student Affairs Research and Evaluation Office (SAREO) at UMass-Amherst. Forty-two years later, I find myself approaching the end of my formal work years as a professor, preparing the next generation of IR leaders and using the IR perspective to advance the quality of higher education in the US and internationally. What a long, strange, but wonderful trip it has been; and it's not over!

As I noted when I received the Sidney Suslow Scholar award, receiving this award is especially meaningful to me because it reflects all the wonderful mentors, colleagues, students, and other collaborators that I have had a chance to work with since I started over 40 years ago. From that first IR position at UMass-Amherst, through my work at IR offices at UMass, George Mason University, IUPUI and the IU System, my success was closely linked to the people I was mentored by, I worked with and that I now have the opportunity to mentor.

An individual achievement is not just an individual achievement. There are so many from whom I have learned so much. This includes those I have directly reported to (Billy Weitzer and Bob DeLauretis at UMass-Amherst; Ed Delaney at George Mason University; and Trudy Banta, Charlie Nelms and John Applegate at IU) as well as the too-many-to-count IR colleagues who have closely influenced my thinking and approach to the profession. That noted, I'd like to give a special shout out to the dozens (hundreds?) of colleagues, graduate students and undergraduate students, that I have had the opportunity to work with or teach over the years. As I'm sure most of you know, you learn as much or more from those you teach as from those who teach you.

Thank you again for this recognition. I intend to redouble my efforts at collaborating with as many colleagues as possible in the years to come. I will end with a lyric from an AIR Windbreakers song:

*I know I won't be getting very wealthy in this line of work,
I knew that from the very start.
But I can't stop from modeling scenarios in the spreadsheet of my heart.*

From the depths of my heart,

Vic