



# How to win friends and influence people

*Perspectives, lessons & suggestions from IR Newcomers*

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AIR – San Diego, CA

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# Background

- ◆ “Newcomers” in IR make up a significant proportion of AIR members
- ◆ From 1981-1998, approximately one-third of members had five or fewer years of experience
- ◆ Our focus: on newcomers in established offices (i.e. research analysts, etc.)



# Background

- ◆ Little research has been conducted on institutional research, especially professional development
- ◆ Between 1974-1997, 16 out of 280 AIR publications were about “Theory, Practice, and Ethics” of Institutional Research
- ◆ Only **three** of these were about career development—mostly about IR Directors



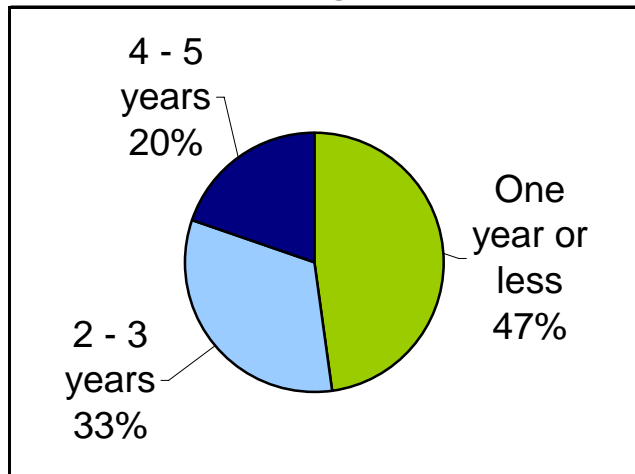
# Methodology

- ◆ On-line survey, collect data for the month of October (10/1-10/29)
- ◆ E-mail invitation, one reminder
- ◆ Requested forwarding to target audience
- ◆ 287 Initial Responses
- ◆ Data cleaned – 216 final responses

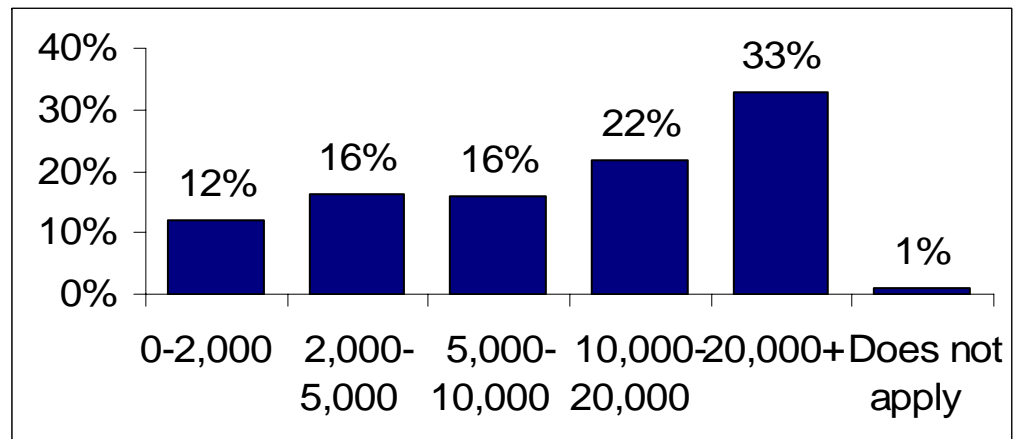


# Respondents

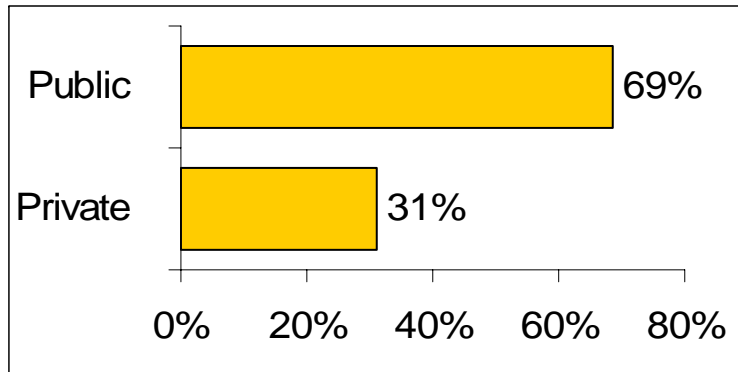
*How long in IR?*



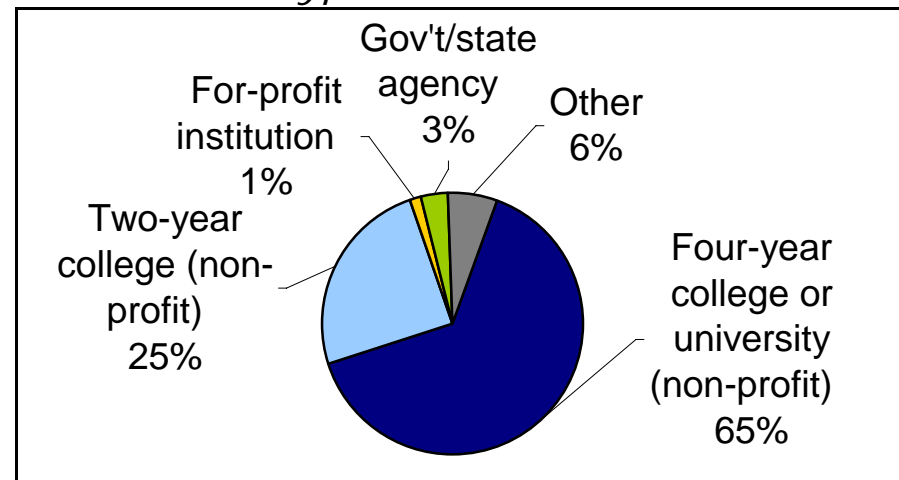
*Size of Institution*



*Public/Private*



*Type of Institution*





# Pathways to IR

- ◆ 25% “answered a job description”
  - ◆ Over half of these answered ad because the description fit their skills/experience
- ◆ 21% entered field because it specifically related to their degree or background
  - ◆ Another 5% were just “interested” in the field
- ◆ 16% were introduced to IR as undergraduate/graduate research assistants in IR offices
  - ◆ Another 4% exposed to the field through grad. programs
- ◆ 13% transferred to IR from a different department at the institution
- ◆ 2% wanted to work in higher education and not in the private sector



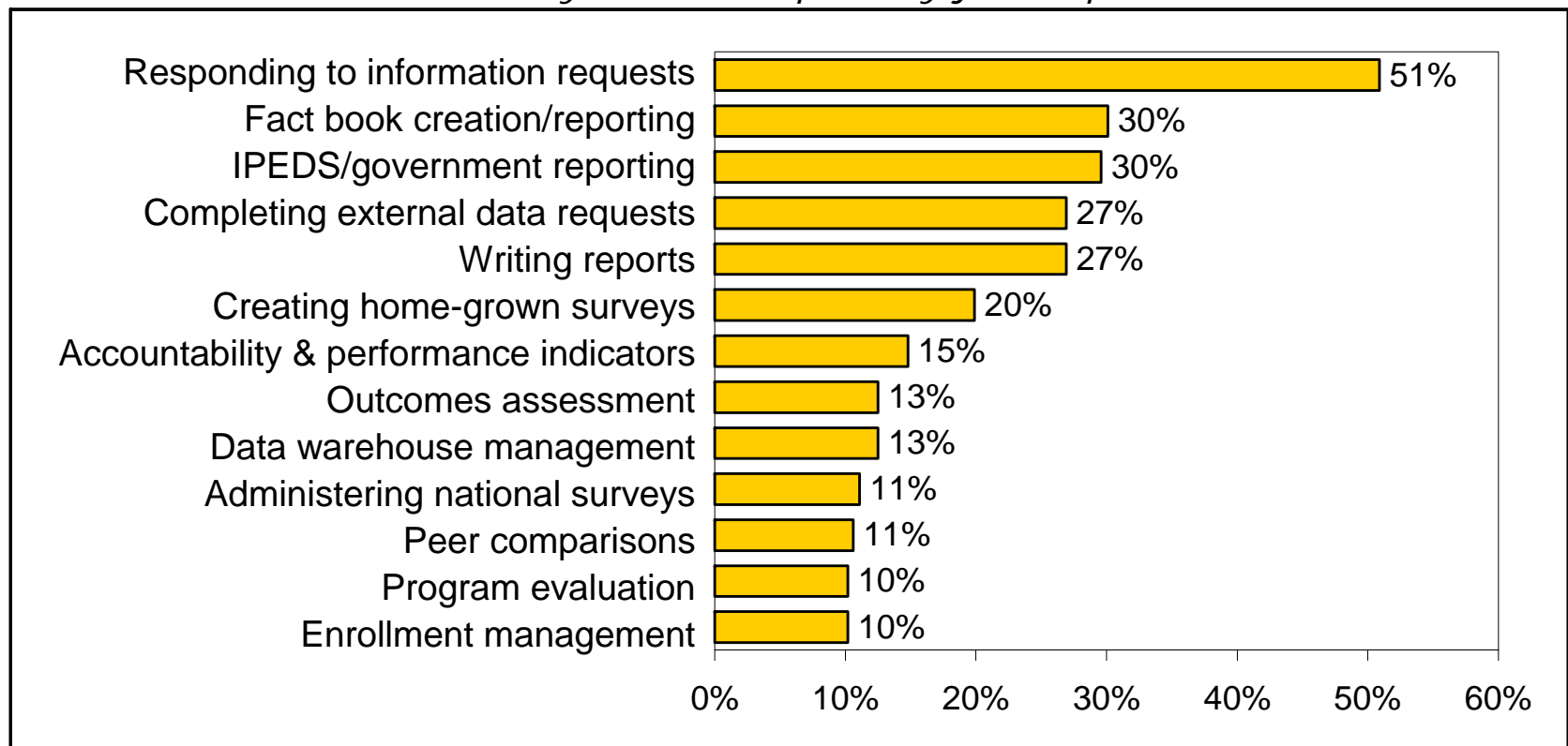
# Job Satisfaction

- ◆ 84% of respondents are satisfied/very satisfied professionally in IR
  - ◆ Just 8% are dissatisfied/very dissatisfied
- ◆ 83% would choose Institutional Research again if they had to re-start their career in higher education



# Job Responsibilities

*Please indicate your THREE primary job responsibilities:*



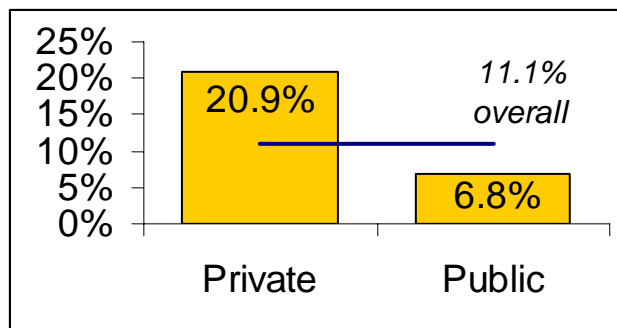




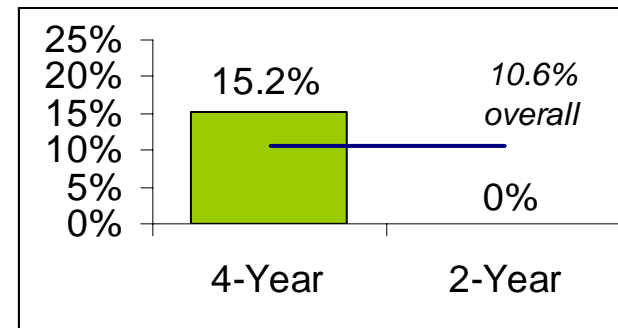
# Job Responsibilities

## Differences between groups

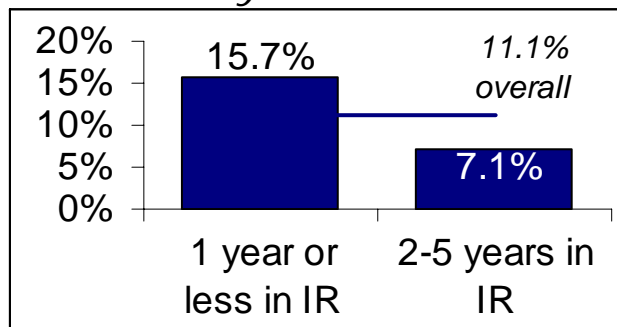
*Administering National Survey Instruments*



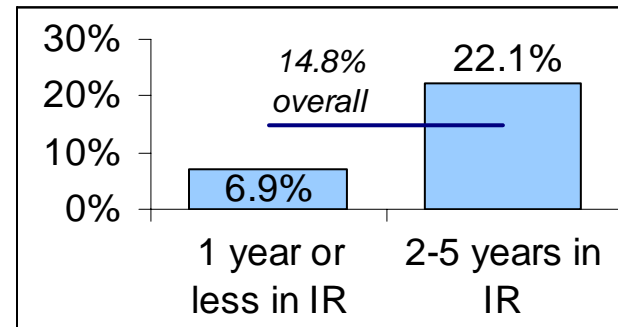
*Peer Comparisons*



*Administering National Survey Instruments*



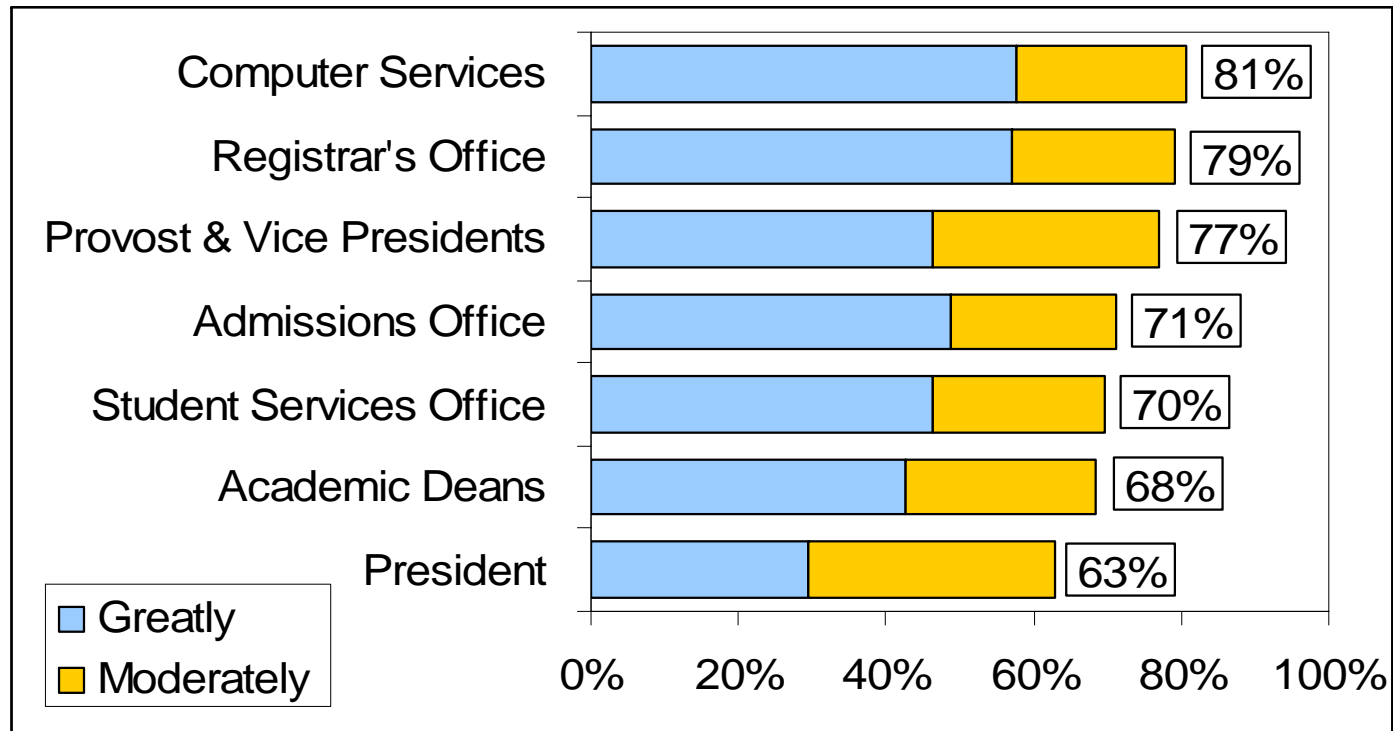
*Accountability & performance indicators*





# Interaction on Campus

*How familiar are you with the following "cast of characters" from your institution:*



**Greatly** – *"I have met and worked with them"*

**Moderately** – *"I have met them"*



# Interaction on Campus

How familiar are you with the following "cast of characters" from your institution?  
 % Responding "Greatly" or "Moderately"

	<b>Private</b>	<b>Public</b>
Registrar's Office	87.9%	75.0%
Academic Deans	77.6%	63.9%
Computer Services	89.4%	76.8%

	<b>Small*</b>	<b>Large*</b>
President	72.4%	62.2%
Registrar's Office	88.3%	71.3%
Student Services	76.6%	63.8%
Admissions	77.7%	65.5%
Academic Deans	78.8%	59.4%
Computer Services	86.2%	76.1%

\*Small = 10,000 or fewer students; Large = 10,001+ students

	<b>4-year</b>	<b>2-year</b>
President	59.3%	75.5%
Academic Deans	61.8%	82.7%

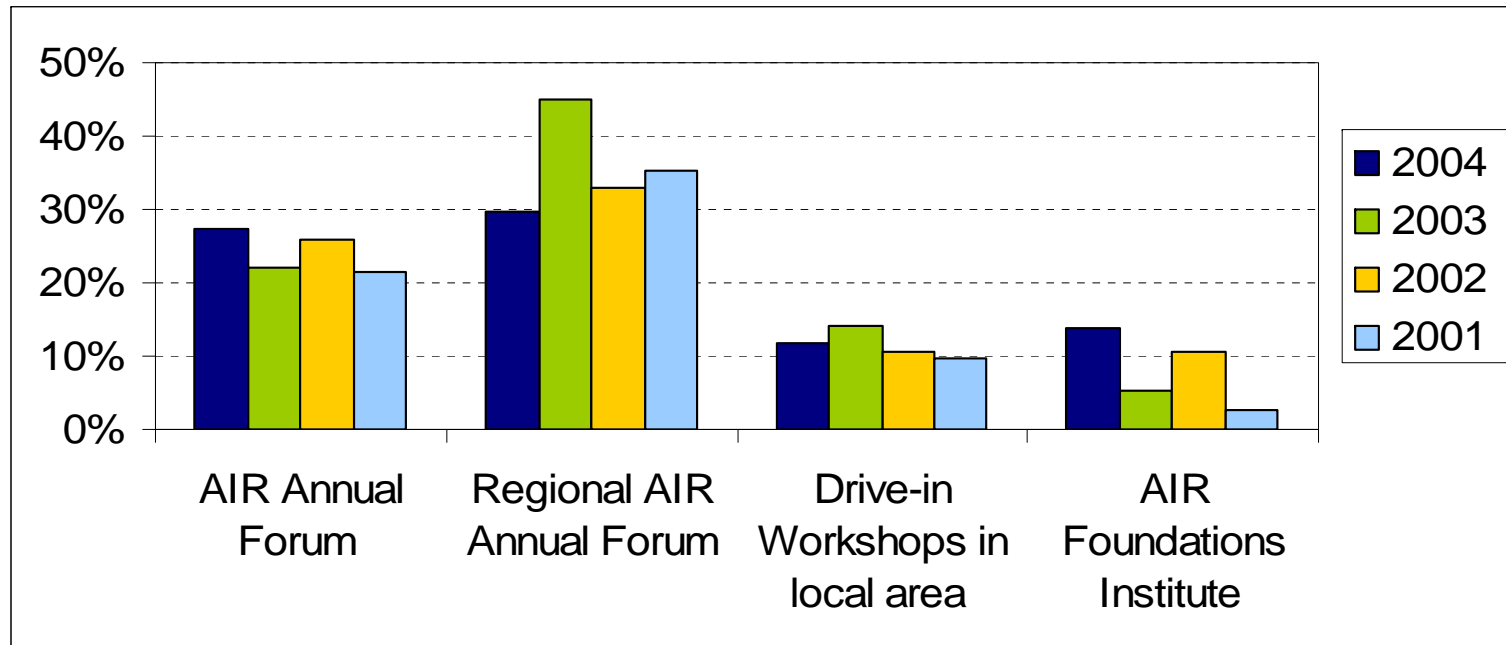
	<b>≤ 1 yr.</b>	<b>&gt; 1 yr.</b>
President	50.5%	73.9%
Provost & VPs	65.7%	86.4%
Student Services	59.6%	78.4%
Admissions Office	60.6%	80.2%
Academic Deans	60.6%	75.7%
Computer Services	72.7%	87.2%

Office of Institutional Research, May 2005



# Professional Development

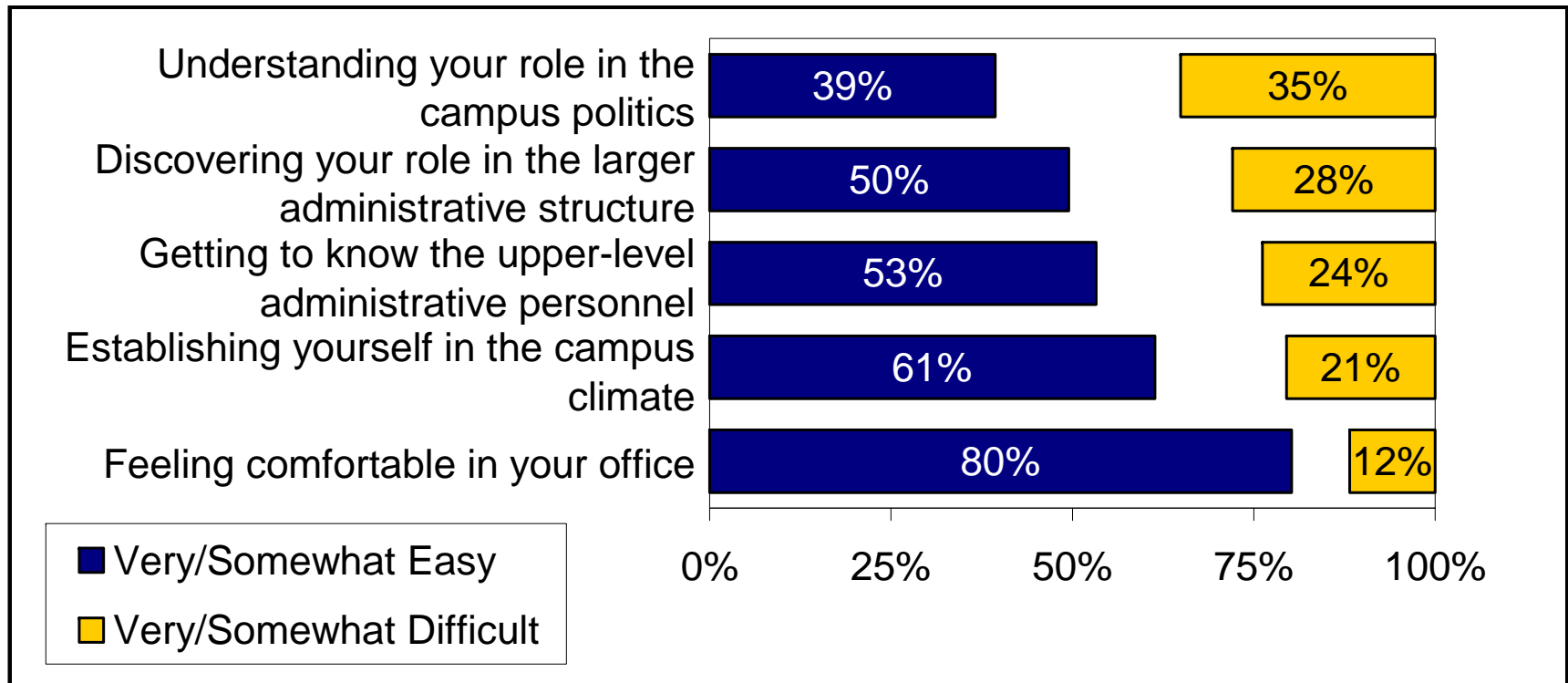
*Attendance at Professional Development Events  
Approximate Percentage of those employed in IR in each year who attended:*





# Transitions

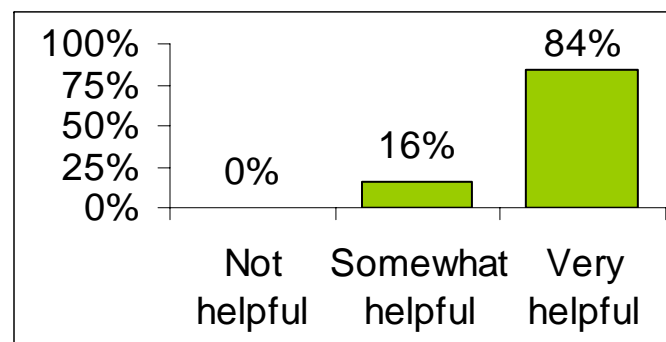
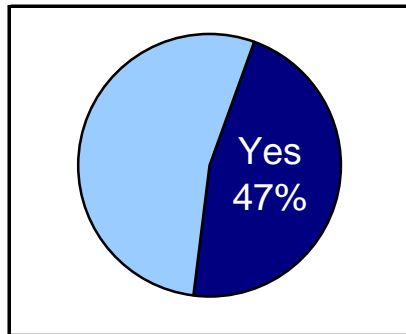
*Please rate your level of difficulty making the following adjustments during your time at your institution:*



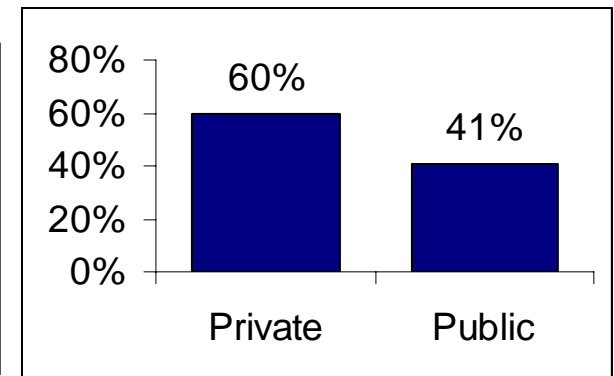


# Mentoring

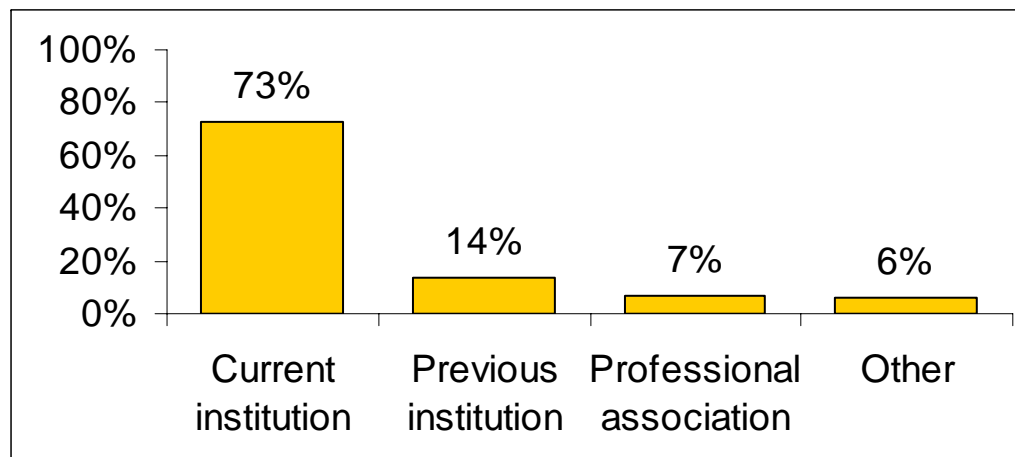
*Do/did you have a mentor in the IR field? How helpful has your mentor been in helping you understand IR?*



*Do you have a mentor?*



*How did you meet your mentor?*



*How did you develop your mentoring relationship?*

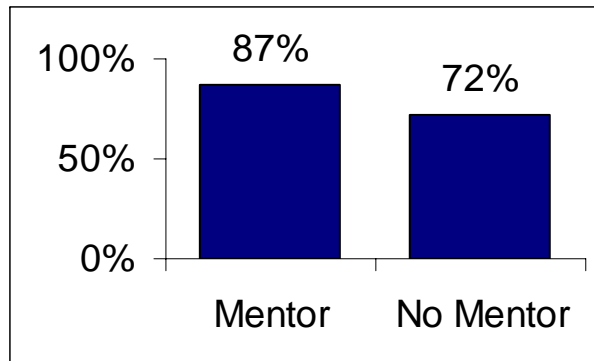
Mentor is supervisor	66%
Mentor is co-worker	12%
Through student/ advisor relationship with mentor	10%
Assigned to mentor through NEAIR conference	6%



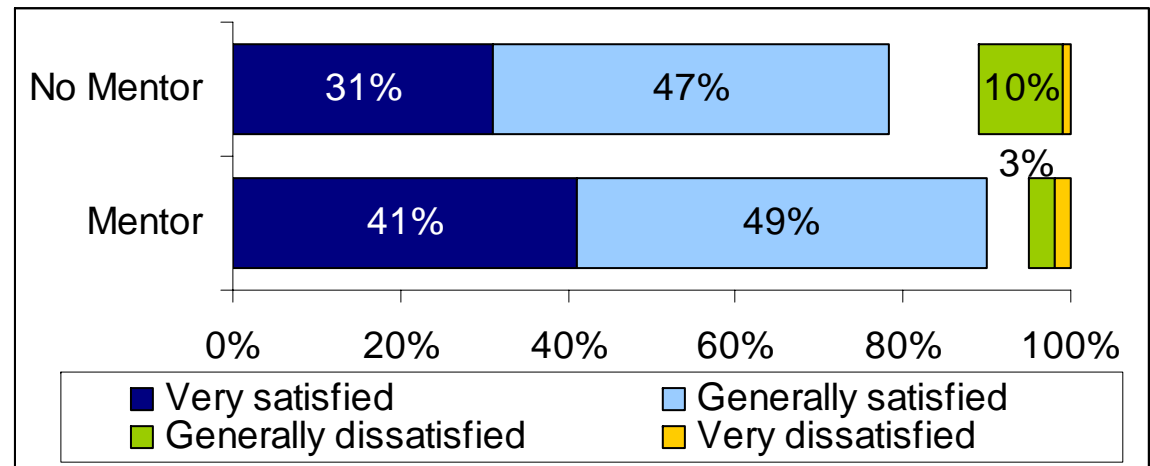
# Mentoring

*How easy was it for you to feeling comfortable in your office?*

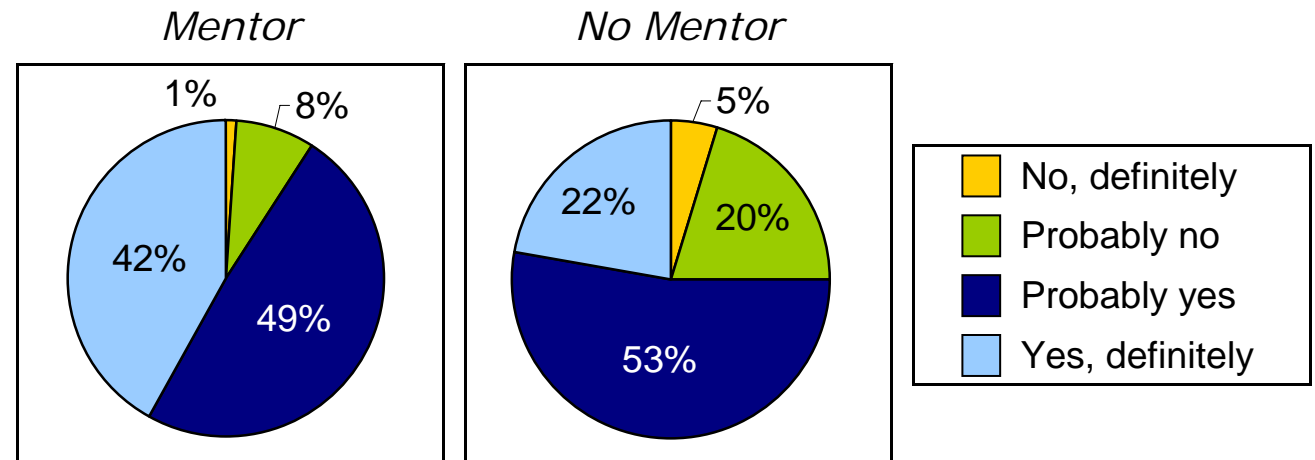
*% Very or Somewhat Easy*



*Overall, how satisfied professionally have you been with your time in Institutional Research?*



*If you could start your career in higher education over again, would you enter the IR field?*





# In Retrospect

***Looking back, what do you wish you had known about IR before entering the field?***

- ◆ Better data analysis/statistics skills, software for analyzing data, computer skills
- ◆ Better understanding of campus politics
  - ◆ *I didn't realize the amount of political maneuvering that takes place inside the University, much more so than in the private sector.*
- ◆ How the institution works, what IR's role in the institution is
  - ◆ *More about the basic workings of institutions, especially since I did not have any Higher Ed experience. I really didn't understand the nature of the business and it has taken me a lot of time to learn this by experience.*
- ◆ Terminology ("slang," "lingo")
- ◆ How IR's duties/focus varies among institutions, what IR does at their institution
  - ◆ *The extensiveness of the types of work the IR office is expected to take charge of and complete.*





# Advice

- ◆ Ask Questions!
- ◆ Get involved in AIR/Regional Chapters; Go to conferences & institutes
- ◆ Make sure you have a solid research/stats background
- ◆ Before you take the job—consider the kind of work you will do, the type of institution you will work at, etc.
- ◆ Make sure you like working with data and computers!
- ◆ Be patient; Always be willing/eager to learn
- ◆ Make sure you know how your institution works, where you fit into the politics, etc. Don't make assumptions.
- ◆ Network; Make friends in the right places.



# Overall

- ◆ Minimal problems in adjusting to daily IR work
  - ◆ Newcomers charged with complex tasks (survey development, report writing, fact book creation, program evaluation)
  - ◆ Many acquired with ease a familiarity with personnel on campus, including upper-level administrators
  - ◆ Learned many skills on the job
- ◆ Harder time: Making more “intangible” transitions:
  - ◆ Making contacts and networking
  - ◆ Establishing oneself in the campus politics
  - ◆ Understanding where office fits in larger structure of institution



# Areas for improvement

- ◆ Mentoring
- ◆ Professional Development
- ◆ Networking