Council Minutes -- October 12-15, 1995

**Present:** Kenneth A. Bollen, David E. Card, William H. Flanigan, John A. Garcia, Norval D. Glenn, Ann S. Gray, Charles Hirschman, Charles K. Humphrey, M. Kent Jennings, Margaret Levi, Michael S. McPherson, Carole Shammas, Franklin D. Wilson.

**Guests:** Bjorn Henrichsen, Norwegian National Membership; E. Karen Clark, Center for Political Studies, Administrator; Harold Jacobson, Center for Political Studies, Director; Peggy Norgren, Institute for Social Research, Assistant Director.

**Staff:** Erik Austin, Christopher Dunn, Cindy Folsom, Nancy Fultz, Peter Granda, John Gray, Hank Heitowit, Michelle Humphres, Peter Joftis, Mary Morris, Richard Rockwell, Pamela Schwarzmann, Mary Vardigan, Janet Vavra

# Introductions and Announcements

Carole Shammas chaired the October 1995 Council meeting, replacing Pat Patterson who was out of the country. Bill Flanigan chaired the Official Representative Business Meeting, and John Garcia was selected to be the Master of Ceremonies of the Official Representatives banquet dinner.

Kenneth Bollen, University of North Carolina, was introduced as a new member of Council, replacing the late Clifford Clogg. Margaret Levi, University of Washington, was introduced as a new member of Council, replacing Carole Weitzel Kohfeld, who resigned from the Council.

John Gray was introduced to the Council as ICPSR's new Director of Computing and Network Services. Gray has a BGS from the University of Michigan and did graduate work at Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan, in mathematical psychology and in the School of Public Health in medical care organization. One of Gray's first jobs was as a coder-clerk down on the 2nd floor of ISR, and later he was a Research Associate in RCGD and in the organizational behavior program in SRC. During Gray's 17 years away from ISR he was a senior computer systems analyst for the Department of Veterans Affairs and then Director of Data Administration for HCIA, a private company that maintains the largest archive of health care data in the world.

# Approval of Minutes

Humphrey made the observation that there was a lot of space dedicated to who David L. Featherman (the new Director of ISR) is, but only one short paragraph about what Featherman actually said. It was suggested that the paragraph on page 2, "Featherman noted that the social sciences face a daunting set ..." be changed to:

"Featherman noted that the social sciences face a daunting set of changes in the five to ten years ahead. The rationale for collecting data has to be founded in the broader value that we bring to the public. He requested that Council give input to help make these decisions. In that context, he referred to the ICPSR as a national laboratory for the social sciences and commented about the importance of the ICPSR to present and future cohorts in the social sciences. He expects the ICPSR to provide leadership in the interconnection of data and training; to keep an eye toward altering training programs so as to remain a leader in social science research; and to look into the future and the kind of intellectual challenges to be faced.

Furthermore, he reported that ISR will begin a self-evaluation in January 1996 and invited the ICPSR to participate."

Humphrey moved the change and approval of the minutes. Garcia seconded the changes and approval of the minutes. The changes were approved.

It was suggested that general information discussed in the Executive Session minutes should be made public. Specific personnel topics and confidential information should not be included with this information. Wilson made a motion to publish minutes of general action items. Motion was seconded by Hirschman. The motion was approved unanimously.

# Financial Matters

A broad-ranging discussion of fiscal matters opened the Council meeting. In addition to reviewing financial statements for 1994-1995 and projected budgets for 1995-1996, Council also directed attention to the financial relationship between ICPSR and the Center for Political Studies (CPS), and to the fee schedule (and actual payment record) of Federations.

New sets of financial statements were presented to Council by the staff. These utilized financial information obtained electronically from the University of Michigan's central system, assuring that ICPSR's fiscal statements are in accord with official records maintained and audited by the University. Since these statements utilized a different reporting style than that to which Council was accustomed, it was a struggle to understand the financial picture which they presented. Three generalizations emerged from examination of the consolidated reports listing all sources of income and expenses for the past (and upcoming) year, including membership dues, the summer training program, sponsored projects (funded externally by grants and contracts), the Center for Political Studies, and the University of Michigan. The first was the "net worth" of ICPSR after all financial obligations are met. Described as "healthy" by CPS and ISR administrative staff present at the meeting, this figure was approaching $500,000 ($447,000 in reserve funds, $25,000 in the Paul T. David Endowment Fund, and some thousands recoverable from the current Accounts Receivable line item.) Regarding the financial health and the net worth of ICPSR, the capital assets were not included.

The other two general points that emerged dealt with the annual funds balance of income and expenditures for 1994-1995 and 1995-1996. A deficit of $96,247 was incurred in fiscal year 1994-1995 (on total revenue of $4.6 million). Council had earlier authorized a draw of $150,000 from reserves, to pay the costs of retooling the organization for new modes of data delivery, chiefly electronic file transfer via FTP which required new equipment and the putting of all data on-line. Another deficit (amounting to $191,265) was forecast for 1995-1996, as the retooling is completed. Even though the projections for 1995-1996 are conservative (with actual income likely to be higher, and expenses lower, than forecast), Council expressed concern over continuing deficits, observing that membership dues no longer appear sufficient to fund all of the core operations of ICPSR. Noting that unpaid member invoices constitute a large portion of the deficit, Council asked staff to redouble their efforts to collect these fees. In a similar vein, staff and Council both noted the discrepancy between the Federation fee schedule and the amounts billed to the Federations (some tens of thousands of dollars lower than the scheduled rates). The Executive Director was instructed to discuss the fee levels with Federation members present at the Biennial Meeting and to bring billed amounts into compliance with the fee schedule.

Considerable Council discussion focused on the flow of funds between ICPSR and CPS/ISR, chiefly the Indirect Cost recovered on ICPSR grants, contracts and membership fees. Complicating the understanding of this issue were contributions from the Institute for Social Research and the University of Michigan, and the absence of a 1995-96 budget and completed financial statements for 1994-95 from CPS. Council members noted that a separate review of the relationship between ICPSR and CPS (mandated in the Memorandum of Agreement between the two, and reaffirmed at the June, 1995 Council meeting) would occur after the Programmatic Review committee (chaired by Mike Baer) delivered its report in early 1996.

# Membership Liaison

The membership structure is a valuable feature of ICPSR and should be strengthened. However, before membership liaison can be improved, the composition of the membership must be clarified. The Official Representatives are an important component of the membership, but they are not the whole membership. The membership also includes social science faculty and researchers at the institutions that pay member fees. Therefore, the current composition of the Council may be more representative of the membership than would be a Council composed primarily of ORs. Other ways of giving the ORs a greater voice in ICPSR should be considered, however. For example, one Council meeting every two years could be replaced by a similarly intensive meeting of 12 ORs.

At one time, most ORs were also researchers. Now those roles tend to be held by different people, and special efforts may be necessary to revitalize ICPSR's image in the research community. Because data are available from many sources, ICPSR needs to reproduce energy and enthusiasm among social scientists and those who write the membership fee checks, as well as among ORs. Similarly, there may be a tension between ICPSR's archival functions and its educational/informational functions. Depending upon which function is stressed, a different type of advisor is needed. The desirability and feasibility of building up ICPSR's non-archival side is an appropriate issue for short-term attention by the Long-Range Planning Committee.

For the next Council meeting, staff will be prepared to make specific proposals about how these various aspects of membership liaison might be handled.

# Annual Reports, FY 1995

Rockwell noted that a draft copy of the 1995 Fiscal Year Annual Report was part of the packet of materials and welcomed questions.

Austin referred to the Archival Development report in the Annual Report and called for questions. None were raised.

Vavra said that the Data Usage report includes information for both FTP and Removable Media services. This year's data distribution figures reflect a 20% drop in usage of Removable Media. This is primarily because the demand for 1990 Census data has diminished and users are beginning to migrate to the FTP service. This migration will increase as more data goes on FTP and as we start to shut down the magnetic tape service.

John Gray reported that besides the daily operational responsibilities, his staff was working hard on the migration from MTS. Negotiations continue with MTS to be able to use what has been budgeted for the year to complete the migration but no more. Other goals are to finish the migration from the Prime and move to the Solaris Operating system on the Sun.

ICPSR has purchased new Sun servers and new tape systems which will allow for better backups. We expect to have this set up and to migrate all our systems over to the new Sun in the next 60-90 days. Development continues on the World Wide Web, including analysis and extract capabilities. With all the projects going on, there is no time remaining to look at a technical strategic plan for the future, in which ICPSR would try to anticipate the direction of future technological developments and prepare itself to deal with them. Also, there is very little time to analyze the problem of storage and distribution of documentation. A document outlining ICPSR's technical environment as of November 1, 1995 was circulated to Council.

Hirschman commented on how the new WWW pages for Population Centers are set up. All have adopted the same standard, and you can easily get any publications listed. ICPSR should organize its homepage so that you can click and easily get the data needed. ICPSR could use its position to get everyone to adhere to the standard it has developed. This is not a fiscal problem since the Population Study Centers did this with no special funds. This is a coordination problem.

Wilson said that the end of October there is a meeting of Population Centers, and ICPSR would have an opportunity to initiate the process of working with this group and developing a standard. The problem is that many of the Centers are at institutions that are not members of ICPSR. All materials on this service have to be available to anyone.

Card asked whether ICPSR has adopted a data compression standard. John Gray replied that ICPSR is using gzip, but that we can also decompress data for users upon request.

Shammas asked whether ICPSR knows where to send users if we do not have a study. She inquired whether ICPSR could develop such a list and refer people to sources or put this on WWW. This would be easy to do since staff could do this in the course of responding to calls. Flanigan noted that developing such a system could become quite a large task when updating and staying current and accurate is considered. Rockwell noted that ICPSR has committed itself to working on a common directory interface to send people to other sites for data. Hirschman suggested that using some of the data available at ISR would be a good way to begin this service. Rockwell noted that the government is also adopting standards and will be offering dataset facilities that allow extracts and similar services. Staff was instructed to look at ways to enhance the homepage to point to other resources and to develop a standard for this. Shammas asked that a report on feasibility of this be made to the Computing and Technical Services Committee in March 1996.

Rockwell reported that the Directors of ISR and UM's Population Studies Center have appointed a committee to evaluate computing for researchers at ISR and at other units. Rockwell serves on this committee, which will mean better computing for ICPSR. However, in the past concern has been expressed that ICPSR computing resources remain dedicated to ICPSR use and are not for ISR use. Wilson responded that there are ways to integrate facilities without being concerned about whether ICPSR resources will be used by other units.

Council attention was directed to the report on Summer Program activities in the Annual Report.

Heitowit asked the Council to approve a fee increase for participation in the Summer Program. The proposed increase for non-credit participants averages about $50 per individual. The Summer Program is not currently in financial trouble. The need for the increase stems from: (1) an anticipated negative impact from a new University of Michigan budgeting arrangement (called "Value Centered Management"), (2) the need to invest in some infrastructure improvements to the Program (e.g., new and additional air conditioning for study and computer rooms), and (3) modest increases in costs due to inflation.

Council questioned whether VCM would actually be implemented. Staff responded that, while VCM had been postponed for one year, the University administration was still firm in its resolve to activate the new budgetary/fiscal plan.

Council asked about the impact on enrollment of a fee increase. It was noted that a much larger increase the year before had had negligible effects on enrollments in 1995. OR reaction to this proposed fee increase was limited to four comments, two negative and two supportive.

Council inquired as to how much income the proposed increase would generate. Heitowit responded that, if participation levels remained constant, the increase would produce about $20,000 in additional revenue.

There then followed a related discussion about Program fees and grants from foundations for special targeted activities. This was stimulated by a previous announcement that the Mellon Foundation would fund a special seminar for fourteen faculty from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) to attend the Program. Council questioned the appropriateness of "waiving fees" for these participants. Staff responded that the grant was for $168,000, which would cover all costs associated with the activity, as well as additional funds for administration and overhead. In general, it is almost always the case that foundation grants expect the host institution to "cost share," and that "waiver of fees" is a typical mode to accomplish this. This is ICPSR's third grant from the Mellon Foundation over the last seven years. In all cases, the grants have generated far more revenue for the organization than the "cost sharing" would imply.

Returning to the initial request to raise Program fees, Levy moved the motion, and Flanigan seconded the motion. Council unanimously voted in favor.

# Review of Strategic Plan

Many of the issues presented in the strategic planning document are too complex to be easily resolved in the context of a Council meeting. Moreover, many of the questions raised are rhetorical in nature, and need to be addressed through in-depth discussion. Therefore, the established committees (e.g., Administration and Governance, Membership Services) may be the appropriate forum for considering the action items and decisions suggested by the strategic plan. Rockwell will be responsible for assigning topics to the various committees. It should be remembered, however, that new Council members will be coming into these committees without much background on the issues involved.

The possibility of beginning FTP service to individuals at member campuses was discussed briefly. Although Council had approved an experiment to begin this service, it has not yet begun. The staff have not had sufficient resources to resolve all of the problems involved (e.g. authentication and verification of users, and training users on CD-NET). Such problems need to be taken up by the Computing and Membership Services committees, with the goal of having a vote on the issue at the next Council meeting. Staff should prepare a short statement outlining the plan for individual services and the policies that would be acceptable.

# Proposed Mix of Storage Media and Distribution Technologies

Rockwell gave a brief overview of the current state of storage media and distribution: At present, ICPSR distributes data via 9-track tape, 3480 cartridges, CD ROMs, diskettes, 8 mm cassettes, and FTP. Generally, FTP has been well received by the users, although some members require technical support for accessing FTP. The 8mm tape cassette has become the new tape standard and will be used by ICPSR to meet tape cassette needs of users.

Nine-track tapes and 3480 cartridges are becoming increasingly difficult and more expensive to produce for users. ICPSR's ability to produce 9-track tapes will be drastically reduced July 1, 1996, when its internal resource for producing the tapes -- University of Michigan computing services -- will no longer offer the service at the current level of service and at the current cost to ICPSR. ICPSR will continue to provide data via FTP, diskettes, CD ROMs and 8mm tape cassettes.

Council discussed the impact on users of the impending change in the availability of 9-track tapes and 3480 cartridges. Requests for data on 9-track tapes are declining. Concern was expressed that ORs need to be notified of the change, and notification should be done on a timely basis. Shammas proposed a fee structure of $50 per 3480 cartridge and $100 per 9-track tape be instituted July 1, 1996 and asked for comments about member response to these fees. Jan mentioned that ICPSR currently charges members $7-$12 per cartridge for the media (depending upon timing of payment by user); some ORs have complained about this fee.

Card proposed a motion: "As of July 1, 1996, ICPSR will no longer be shipping 9-track tapes or 3480 cartridges, except by special arrangement. Fees and delays should be anticipated under these arrangements. ICPSR will work with any members experiencing technical or financial difficulty adapting to this change of media and technology until a mutually satisfactory solution is reached. A paramount goal is that no researcher and no student will be disenfranchised by ICPSR's transition to new media." Levi seconded the motion. Discussion of this motion included comments about notifying the ORs several times prior to July 1, 1996, discouraging use of tapes and 3480 cartridges, and asking the user to bear the cost of producing data on these media. After discussion, the motion was passed by a unanimous vote. It was then agreed that this policy on the change in types of media available would be announced at the OR Business Meeting, scheduled for the afternoon of October 14, 1995.

Flanigan wanted to know how often data would be issued on the new "periodic" CD ROMs? Rockwell stated that this largely depended upon the volume of data released and indicated that a large volume could mean that releases would be more frequent than quarterly. Flanigan proposed that ICPSR commit to issuing CDs more frequently than quarterly. No such commitment was made.

# Federation Issues

Staff provided Council a table displaying current ICPSR Federations, presenting member institutions, categories and fees of the institutions had they been individual members, the current total federation fee, and discrepancies between actual fee payments and correct fee payments. It was noted that aggregating across all federations, we are undercharging federated members by about $46,000 per year.

It was proposed that Council re-evaluate the federated membership concept. Until recently federated memberships reduced ICPSR's servicing costs by permitting ICPSR to write a single tape to serve the needs of multiple institutions. It was noted that in a period when the majority of data will be or can be provided via FTP, perhaps the rationale for discounts on federation fees (ranging from 10% to 45%) needs to be discussed.

The Council voted to ask the Executive Director to talk to federation representatives about fee adjustments in order to bring them into alignment with the current fee algorithm. He should also alert them to the need for discussion about the long-range view and rationale of federated ICPSR memberships.

The question was raised: Do federations still serve a function, given changes in data delivery mechanisms? It was stated that federations provide regionally-distributed support: data delivery, sub-setting, consultation, value-added services, sub-setting of local interest data, data for classroom use, and regional workshops on selected topics. Federations also provide a wider marketing of ICPSR products. In general, federations provide a model of membership development, e.g. they could be a mechanism for regional outreach to community colleges. It was also stated that federation representatives are preparing a statement on their current and future roles and function within ICPSR to be presented to Council.

A suggestion that federation representatives form a working group to communicate with ICPSR staff and Council might be another mode of communication.

The discussion of federation fees and function was deferred to the next Council meeting with two important questions noted: What is the appropriate fee reduction for a federation? How does federated membership "save" ICPSR resources (what is the correct justification for reduced fees)?

# National Memberships

The fees paid by National Members to ICPSR are widely variable. They were individually negotiated fifteen to twenty years ago and appear to follow no schedule or pattern. The Council empowered the Executive Director to raise with representatives of the National Memberships the topic of adjusting fee rates and creating an equitable and defensible fee schedule. It was recognized that for most nations this would result in an increase in the fees that they pay to affiliate with ICPSR. It was further suggested that Council discuss in the future implementing a system (or time-line) to reach the goal of "fair share" contributions by National memberships.

# Executive Session

## Friday, October 13, 1995

11:50 a.m. session

**Present:** Kenneth A. Bollen, David E. Card, E. Karen Clark, William H. Flanigan, John A. Garcia, Norval D. Glenn, Ann S. Gray, Charles Hirschman, Charles K. Humphrey, Harold Jacobson, M. Kent Jennings, Margaret Levi, Michael S. McPherson, Peggy Norgren, Richard C. Rockwell, Carole Shammas, Franklin D. Wilson.

It was announced to Council that Carolyn Geda, former Assistant Director of ICPSR, has filed a gender and age discrimination suit against the Regents of the University of Michigan and Richard Rockwell; Executive Director of ICPSR. The Council was not named. The University of Michigan has retained an outside attorney to represent the Regents and Richard Rockwell. Both Rockwell and the administration of the Center for Political Studies have been told by Counsel that they should not comment on the case. Legal expenses are covered by the University of Michigan defense and indemnification policy. The University contact for questions about the suit is Elsa Cole.

The question of who would be liable for payment in the case of a settlement or a judgment against the University is not clear.

No action was taken by Council.

# Executive Session

## Saturday, October 14, 1995

Afternoon

(Director Richard Rockwell attending)

The Council discussed both longer run and shorter run aspects of the budgetary situation, and passed the following motion: "Council authorizes the Executive Director to expend the $80,000 from savings which is the remainder of the $150,000 authorized in the Fall of 1994. There should be no further draw on in savings beyond this amount without authorization from the Council."

The Council discussed ways of communicating about its deliberations and actions with the membership. Council came to the view that a summary of actions taken and topics discussed at both open and executive sessions should be shared with the membership.

The Executive Director sought clarification on whether documents provided to Council in advance of meetings should be treated as confidential. Council concluded that staff should stamp as confidential all documents that required that status, and that other materials would not be treated as confidential.

# Executive Session

## Sunday, October 15, 1995

10:45-12:00 noon session

**Present:** Kenneth A. Bollen, William H. Flanigan, John A. Garcia, Ann S. Gray, Bjorn Henrichsen, Charles Hirschman, Charles K. Humphrey, M. Kent Jennings, Margaret Levi, Michael S. McPherson, Carole Shammas

The Acting Chair reviewed with Council the procedure outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement concerning the respective roles of the Council Chair and the Council following the completion of the Programmatic Review. Council discussed briefly future directions for Council activities.