Council Minutes -- April 12-14, 1996

**Present:** John A. Garcia, Ann S. Gray, Charles Hirschman, M. Kent Jennings, Margaret Levi, Michael S. McPherson, Edward Nelson, Carole Shammas, Elizabeth Stephenson, Wendy Watkins, Halliman A. Winsborough

**Guests:** Michael Baer, Provost, Northeastern University; Harold Jacobson, Director, Center for Political Studies; Ekkehard Mochman, Zentralarchiv, as the CESSDA representative

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

Introductory Remarks

Council Chair Carole Shammas opened by welcoming everyone to the meeting. She noted that there had been problems setting a firm date for this meeting for a variety of reasons. Because of the lateness of this meeting, no meeting will be held in June, but there will be one in October; dates for future meetings have been distributed. If necessary, unfinished business may be taken up in June through conference calls or a video conference.

New members of Council attending their first meeting were welcomed and introduced by the Council Chair:

**Edward Nelson** is Professor of Sociology at California State University at Fresno and the OR for his campus.

**Elizabeth (Libbie) Stephenson** is a Data Librarian and Archivist at the Institute for Social Science Research at the University of California in Los Angeles. She is the OR for her campus.

**Wendy Watkins** is the head of the Data Center at Carleton University and is the OR for her campus.

**Hal Winsborough** is Emma Welch Conway-Bascom Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

**Ross Matsueda** is replacing David Card who resigned from Council after being appointed to the U-M Institute for Social Research External Review Committee. Matsueda is a criminologist and Professor of Sociology at the University of Iowa. He was unable to attend this meeting.

Approval of the October 1995 Minutes

Approval of the minutes of the October 1995 Council meeting was taken up after the introductions. A draft of these minutes was put up on the ICPSR Website and was circulated via a listserver to ORs. This procedure had been agreed to at the October meeting and will be followed again after this meeting, with minutes appearing as soon as Council gives preliminary approval.

Former Council member Chuck Humphrey posted some corrections to the minutes relating to the sections on Financial Matters and Federation Issues, which he believed did not reflect the full discussion of these matters. Ann Gray also asked for a clarification of the minutes regarding federations and federation fees.

The following amendments to the Federation Issues section were proposed:

(1) First paragraph, last sentence, should be corrected to read:

"It was noted that aggregating across all federations, we are undercharging federated members by about $46,000 per year." [The end of this sentence was stricken: "based on the current (and perhaps illogical) federation algorithm."]

(2) The last paragraph of the section should be broken into two paragraphs to clarify the discussion. The text should read as follows [added text in caps]:

"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)?"

Regarding the Financial Matters section, Edward Nelson relayed Chuck Humphrey's comments that this section did not cover the point that ICPSR's net worth as shown in its financial statements did not include capital assets, as discussed by ISR Assistant Director Peggy Norgren. Council had asked that depreciation be included in future budgets, and that was not reflected in the minutes.

It was proposed that the following sentence be added after the second paragraph in the Financial Matters section:

"Regarding the financial health and the net worth of ICPSR, the capital assets were not included."

During the discussion of this amendment to the minutes, it was noted that including depreciation costs in budgets is time-consuming; it may be adequate to indicate that ICPSR will have to incur equipment costs each year. It was further noted that there is a technical problem in this kind of reporting since ICPSR is not a legal entity. All of ICPSR's equipment belongs to the Regents of the University of Michigan and not to ICPSR.

Ann Gray moved and John Garcia seconded that the minutes be approved as amended; the motion passed.

Report of the Executive Director

Richard noted that reporting on ICPSR was well done and represented in three documents in the Council's packets: the ICPSR Programmatic Review, the CPS Self-Assessment, and the ICPSR Annual Report.

Richard welcomed Ekkehard Mochman from the Zentralarchiv as the CESSDA representative to this meeting.

Richard introduced Zack Allen as a new member of the ICPSR senior staff. Zack has assumed responsibility for the scanning operation, a critical activity for ICPSR. It is estimated that at least 300,000 pages of hardcopy documentation remain to be converted to computer-readable form.

Richard extended his and the Council's gratitude to Peter Granda for taking over responsibility for the aging project during the time that Nancy Fultz will be on maternity leave. Peter will also be working with Chris Dunn and Erik Austin in setting up the Substance Abuse Archive. This will all be done in addition to Peter's regular responsibilities.

It was reported that the ISR External Review Committee would be coming to ISR the following week to interview staff. Their report will be ready by the end of May, and our response is expected by June 10th. Council needs to be involved in ICPSR's portion of CPS's response.

Lawyers for the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics have been in contact with staff regarding our use of the NACDA acronym. We may change NACDA's name to Archive of International Data on Aging (AIDA) to reflect the truly international nature of the holdings that we expect to develop. A task force convened in March identified several important international datasets for ICPSR to acquire. This could become a trademark dispute. ICPSR should be compensated for making the name change; our lawyers are talking to their lawyers.

Richard indicated that Council needs to pay serious attention to the budget materials; Council can help ICPSR greatly by setting goals and priorities. Budgets should reflect the emphases of the organization.

Richard noted that for the upcoming fiscal year we are projecting a deficit. Council can guide us two ways: (1) increase income, keeping in mind that any increase in member dues does not take effect until a year later, and (2) make budget cuts. Council can be of enormous help to the ICPSR staff in helping set priorities for these cuts. More cuts may need to be made after the first round is agreed to.

Richard noted that the current Council meeting is organized differently from past meetings. Committees play a more prominent and central role than in the past.

Council was asked to look at the budgets carefully and to try to determine in the committees what kind of budgetary information they would like to see in the future. Thinking should be done with a five- to ten-year time period in mind. Historical data and updated budgets from the ICPSR staff will be distributed later.

The overlap in agendas between the new Membership Relations Committee and the Computing and User Services Committee (a combination of the previous Computing Services and Member Services Committees) was noted. Some of these same items are also on the Archival Development Committee agenda. There is a need for a "shakedown" as to what is appropriate for which committee so that the same items are not taken up by several committees. Carole urged the committee chairs to meet to determine how best to parcel out items.

The Council and staff then proceeded to break up into committees and the afternoon was spent in committee sessions.

Discussion of ICPSR Programmatic Review

Michael Baer (Northeastern University), chair of the ICPSR Programmatic Review Committee, was in attendance for the Council discussion of his committee's report. Other members of the Baer committee included Ilona Einowski (University of California, Berkeley), Kenneth Organski (University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies), and Rachel Rosenfeld (Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences). Baer emphasized that the committee does not see the report as a perfect document since information in the report comes from evolving databases; the committee worked with data available to them at the time.

Baer has noted that the report is critical of the previous administration of ICPSR, but he does not view the report as a review of that regime. If the report were a review of the old regime, it would have included material that emphasized the previous administration's contributions and successes as well.

The ICPSR Senior Staff and Richard Rockwell want it on the record that a great deal was accomplished during the previous administration, particularly by Jerry Clubb, who had the vision that led ICPSR to where it is today and who laid the funding foundation we were able to build on. His was a term of accomplishment for which the Consortium should forever be grateful.

Two issues on which Council must make major decisions are part of the report:

1. the re-appointment of the Executive Director
2. the relationship between ICPSR and CPS

The question of intellectual linkages between ICPSR and CPS was raised. Should new linkages be sought, and are there ways to reinforce the intellectual links that exist? The Associate Directors have been appointed to their positions to honor their role in the creation of the Consortium; could directors of CPS possibly become ICPSR Associate Directors to foster further intellectual exchange?

The Baer committee discussed the intellectual component of the ICPSR-CPS relationship at length. The committee encourages both formal and informal intellectual linkages with CPS to enhance methodological and substantive research, and the report includes suggestions that may help in this regard. Visiting scholars could become involved in ICPSR, as in the Essex model; other faculty with sabbatical support could locate here. Such linkages with scholars could lead to additional funding.

It was noted that a tremendous amount of intellectual energy was present at the founding of the Consortium, which the Associate Directors participated in. ICPSR needs more of that kind of intellectual energy today.

There are two basic issues with respect to CPS: the organizational, structural link and the intellectual link. The organizational structure was to be addressed by a different committee, so the Baer committee did not directly take up this issue. There is also the question, which has been on the table for the last eight or nine years, of the financial connection and the transfers of funds between CPS and ICPSR. The Baer committee decided that to include in its report figures and tables relating to the financial issues would make the report less readable.

Another important issue is the relationship of ICPSR to the social science community at large. Many types of research are conducted within ISR; perhaps ICPSR sits more comfortably as a component of ISR rather than under CPS, although CPS has broadened beyond just political science.

CPS welcomes an intellectual connection with ICPSR and also links between ICPSR and ISR. Administratively, ICPSR has to have a "home," and Richard Rockwell has tenure in CPS. The lack of an intellectual link between the two organizations is usually seen as the fault of ICPSR, but initiatives from CPS to ICPSR would also be welcomed; this is a two-way street. Whatever intellectual links are established between ICPSR and CPS, it is important to avoid any appearance of favoritism resulting from the location of ICPSR.

For some ICPSR staff, the changes in the past two or three years in CPS and ISR have made their jobs easier in terms of personnel matters, interactions with the U-M bureaucracy, etc. It was pointed out that it takes a great deal of effort to foster the kind of intellectual cooperation being discussed, and Council has many other issues to deal with. It is part of the charge to the Long-Range Planning Committee to address CPS-ICPSR relations, especially the intellectual connection.

Within ICPSR, NACDA and NACJD have close intellectual ties with their respective fields. NACDA has its own advisory committee that oversees the project on aging, and there is an agency-administered committee for crime and justice programs. In addition, the Summer Program has connections with methodologists. But how do we create connections with the rest of the social sciences? Council has traditionally seen this as their role.

It was suggested that ICPSR might benefit from more constant interaction with others in ISR, which may be difficult given the balkanized character of ISR. In fact, ICPSR staff do not work in isolation and are in touch with other researchers in the building often. But there is not always a match between what ICPSR does and what CPS and other programs do.

There are some models for intellectual cooperation between ICPSR and other scholars. The State Legislative Election Returns project, for instance, involved an externally-funded conference and a lot of interaction with researchers at member institutions.

A certain passivity was noted. At the beginning of ICPSR, the research community turned to the organization for intellectual leadership. These are new times and we have to re-conceptualize the organization, but the sense from the profession is that same excitement does not exist today in ICPSR. The organization is more technically proficient, but it needs more of an intellectual component. We don't want to administer just technical services.

During its early years, ICPSR also appeared to bring a real energy about what to do with data, e.g., the NES, and the socialization studies. This amounted to a sea change in the profession; there was more integration between the people using and presenting and archiving the data. But there is no evidence of this kind of intellectual leadership at the present time. Council has to bring that intellectual energy.

The point was made that the structure of ICPSR is sound, but a shift in accent is necessary. There may not be the time and capacity for the ICPSR staff to conduct their own research.

The Baer report states that things are reasonably good between CPS and ICPSR right now. Can we move on from here to maintain and enrich the intellectual connections? It was pointed out that the report does not give direction on the shape of the relationship between ICPSR and CPS. The Long-Range Planning Committee will consider this further; the financial and intellectual arrangements have to come together.

The Council thanked Mike Baer and his committee for the extraordinary amount of time and energy they put into the report.

It was suggested that a cover letter be added to the report to clarify some of the numbers contained therein. Concern was expressed regarding the characterization of some components of the budget; specifically, the figures for grants and contracts seemed too high. The numbers reported were probably grants awarded during a year, as opposed to funds available to spend in a given year.

There was also concern about the characterization of deficits. There is a question of whether management has operated within Council-approved budgets over the past several years, since ICPSR has dipped into the reserve.

Such a cover letter needs to be approved by Council; a vote is needed on circulation of the report also.

It was moved by Hal Winsborough and seconded by Margaret Levi that a "cheery and forward-looking" cover letter be prepared thanking the Baer committee for all its work and focusing on three issues: the characterization of Jerry Clubb's term, interpretation of the budget figures in the report, and ICPSR-CPS relations. The motion passed.

Regarding circulation of the report, the committee wrote it to be a public document. So far, it has been circulated to CPS Research Scientists, ICPSR Senior Staff, and Council. The ISR External Review committee will see it next week; the Executive Committee of ISR wants to see it, as do the ORs.

Council agreed to put the report up on the Website with the cover letter agreed upon earlier and to offer to send a hard copy to anyone who requests one.

Administration and Governance Committee Report

This committee is composed of chairs of all Council committees and a representative from the ICPSR Summer Program. It deals with issues of budget, personnel, and governance.

Council Chair, Carole Shammas, focused on the budget, leading Council through each line of the 1985-1996 historical budget table. There was agreement that this historical report should be updated and reviewed at each Council meeting. Rockwell noted that some budget definitions and calculations changed over the time period and need to be acknowledged when interpreting the table. In particular, he outlined accounting procedure changes in 1991-1992 that resulted in a deficit for that fiscal year.

The committee expressed concern with the deficits for the past three years, while acknowledging that Council approved them for computer equipment and the FTP conversion. ICPSR has no endowment fund and the equity fund stands at about $250,000 after expenses. The budget lines dealing with the financial relationship between ICPSR and CPS and CPS's current financial situation were noted. The 1996-1997 draft budget shows a projected deficit of $138,000, although the CPS portion of the budget is tentative.

The committee does not want another year of deficit spending and asked for a vote from Council as to whether or not a deficit budget would be allowed.

The question was raised as to how firm the figures in the proposed budget were and whether cuts should be mandated on figures that might change. A suggestion was made that Council consider two components of the budget, a consumption component that would be balanced and an investment component that could be used to garner future funding and might not be balanced. The point was made that Official Representatives need to know the ramifications of budget decisions so they can plan accordingly. Rockwell recommended that Council vote for a balanced budget and, at the same time, indicate to staff where cuts should be made.

Hal Winsborough moved that ICPSR make an effort to produce a balanced budget for 1996-1997. Michael McPherson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Long-Range Planning and Special Projects Committee Report

The first meeting of the new LRP Committee was largely devoted to organizational matters and consideration of potential agenda items for the coming year. The charge to the Committee is very broad: to advise the Council on the role of ICPSR in the advancement of empirical social science research and program initiatives. The Chair of the Council has asked the committee to study the organizational structure of ICPSR, especially the relationship between CPS and ICPSR. This issue was discussed in a preliminary way at the initial meeting. Because of the scope of this assignment, the committee will return to Ann Arbor for two days of interviews and meetings with the staff of ICPSR, CPS, and ISR on June 26 and 27.

Other ideas were discussed, such as the publication of reference works on ICPSR data holdings, including questionnaires and reviews of methods of measurement of important social science concepts. The European data archives have some good examples that should be considered.

The committee also discussed the need for creative thinking on how to define ICPSR as both a membership organization and a national archive for all of social science. There may be some examples of other organizations that have comparable dual features that may offer some ideas.

The question of the role of the Associate Directors was also raised. What is the role of the Associate Directors? Should their terms be limited and for how long? What kinds of duties should they be assigned?

The committee would welcome suggestions for other agenda items.

Summer Program Report

Heitowit reported on the Summer Program Advisory Committee held in Ann Arbor, November 3, 1995. The summary of those minutes follow:

Report of the ICPSR Summer Program Advisory Committee  
November 3, 1995

**Present:** Bollen, Fox, MacKuen, Raudenbush, Rosenstone, Stimson, (Absent: Long)

**ICPSR Staff:** Rockwell, Heitowit

**ISR Invited Guests:** Featherman, Lepkowski

The first half of the meeting was devoted to an extended discussion of broadening the reach of ICPSR training activities. This included holding workshops in locations other than Ann Arbor, and in exploring the use of interactive video transmission. It was generally agreed that it was a desirable goal to explore options for "distance-learning." ICPSR and ISR have been approached by a number of groups over the last few years, from Eastern Europe, Latin America, South Africa, and from California inquiring about short-term, on-site, training workshops. It was also pointed out, as a cautionary note, that off-site activities are expensive, and that logistical support(e.g., computers) is often difficult to provide. The Survey Research Center has had some experience with video transmission of courses to the Washington, DC area, but this technology is new, problematic, and expensive.

While several institutions have expressed interest in hosting an ICPSR training activity, none have offered to pay for, or even subsidize, such a venture. No one at this meeting volunteered any information about likely funding sources to underwrite off-site workshops. The ICPSR budget is sufficiently constrained, and training outside of Ann Arbor would have to be at least partially subsidized by external funding. Nevertheless, there was a strong agreement that ICPSR should actively pursue the possibility of outreach programs, perhaps in partnership with the ISR Director's office and the Survey Research Center.

The afternoon portion of the Advisory Committee meeting was spent reviewing the Summer Program courses, including the curriculum, syllabi, and instructor evaluations. There was general satisfaction with overall content, coverage, and instruction in the statistical course offerings. However, a number of suggestions were made:

1. new texts were recommended for several courses
2. following on the advice of previous committees, a new course was suggested for the area of "advanced topics in limited dependent variables"
3. the Program should continue and, if possible, expand offerings in the areas of Bayesian modeling and also missing data analysis
4. continuing an evolving trend in the Program, the Regression courses should loosen the "econometric" approach and strengthen the "data analysis" (e.g., diagnostics and graphing) components, as well as increase attention to ANOVA topics, arriving at a more balanced general linear models perspective
5. it was also noted that the proportion of the instructional staff from Political Science appeared too high in relation to Program content and clientele

There was a lengthy discussion of a major omission in the Program's curriculum: this is in the general area of "measurement." It was acknowledged that measurement issues were poorly covered in most current graduate school programs. The Summer Program emphasis has historically been almost exclusively in the "technical" area of statistical analysis. Various attempts at infusing into the Program offerings on measurement and research design issues have consistently been met with indifference on the part of participants. Most either assume that they already know the material (which they usually do not), or they feel that they do not need to know much about these issues. Some take a narrow statistical view, assuming that scaling and "LISREL" techniques solve the measurement problems.

The Committee was in agreement that there was not a great deal that ICPSR could do to solve or meet this problem (given that few students would volunteer to attend a course or series of lectures on the topic). One of several ideas that emerged was that one day of class be canceled and that it be replaced with a mandatory, all-day symposium on measurement. This rather unorthodox suggestion was indeed adopted by the staff and will be tried on June 25, the second day of the 1996 Program.

Heitowit then presented an overview of the 1995 program:

Briefly, some of the points to be summarized from the 1995 Summer Program include: 536 individuals attended the forty-five courses (workshops and lecture series) offered. This is the second highest attendance in the history of the Program, exceeded only by the 545 participants in the 1994 Program. Fee and tuition recovery increased modestly between 1994 and 1995 due in part to an increase in the participation of graduate student from CIC (Big Ten) schools. Participants from the fields of Political Science, Social Work, and Psychology increased slightly, while those from Education and Sociology, and those with faculty/Ph.D. titles decreased slightly. As it has in recent years, participation by international scholars continues to be robust.

Heitowit then made some comments on the upcoming 1996 Program.

New elements in the 1996 Program include: a four-week workshop in Quantitative Analysis and the Study of Africa, a one-week module (in Dynamic/Longitudinal series) on Adaptive Systems, and one-week workshops on Analysis of Discrete Data from Complex Designs, Criminal Justice Data: Violence Across Settings (sponsored by NIJ). Study of Aging: Use of Multiple Surveys (sponsored by NIA), and Research Methodology for the Study of Comprehensive Interventions for Severe Mental Illness (sponsored by NIMH).

It was noted that the Hierarchical Linear Models workshop was filled and closed earlier than any other course in the history of the Program. The course reached maximum enrollment on March 25. In addition the staff has received much positive feedback, especially on the University of Michigan campus, on offering a course on Spatial Analysis/GIS.

There then followed a Council discussion on possible future offerings and additions to the Program curriculum. One topic strongly endorsed was a course on Comparative (cross-national) Research Methodology. Another suggestion was on the general topic of Constructing Databases, especially on Relational Database Design.

Archival Development Committee Notes

The committee addressed the request by Paul Bergen of Harvard University to make public a website developed around the ICPSR study 0003. The site was announced earlier this year and removed from public access due to the limitations imposed by the ICPSR By-Laws regarding re-distribution of ICPSR materials.

The site is currently set up to be a browse-only site, and no actual data can be downloaded. Bergen is willing to work with the Consortium to ensure that no unauthorized access is possible.

The committee suggested that links to and from ICPSR be set up between the sites and that ICPSR be given credit for the data as part of the Harvard site.

The committee felt that this project would be good to use as a test site for evaluation of similar projects which will undoubtedly be presented in the future. The data collection itself is a value-added format, enhancing its potential use. Users can access the site, and then Consortium members can acquire the full data from ICPSR.

The committee recommended to the full Council that this should be undertaken.

The committee was asked to help develop a policy or guidelines for relationships with other organizations for development of ICPSR archives. The committee felt that projects such as the one being established between ICPSR and Harvard should be explored before a concrete policy can be developed. A set of criteria for evaluating projects will be developed and this will in turn help in the final development of a firm policy.

The committee was asked to consider a proposal for ICPSR to take over management of a file server of mental health data. None of the actual data will likely ever be available for ICPSR members. There was some discussion about the staffing needed and costs, which the researcher is willing to cover. The committee recommended that ICPSR not agree to this proposal since no data would actually be available to members.

The committee discussed a possible proposal to NSF for converting printed codebooks to electronic form. A sample CD-ROM of NACDA files using Acrobat software is to be tested by committee members and some members of Council: Stephenson, Nelson, McPherson, and Levi. Testers should report back to ICPSR staff by the end of May 1996.

The committee was asked to help in the prioritization of archival projects:

1. on-line bibliography of research using ICPSR data
2. development of integrated datasets for comparative research.

There are currently no funds to accomplish either project at this time. To do either would mean re-allocating current funds away from some other project or raising funds.

The discussion turned to acquisition. Over one-half of the files acquired are government- produced files. For the most part, top priority is given to serial data collections; there are about 90 titles collected serially. To stop acquiring these files would not free up much in the way of resources, since these files receive the least amount of processing.

The ICPSR staff wants to do more cooperative projects; subcontractors do not always provide all funds needed to do such projects.

Returning to the idea of a bibliography, the committee discussed how difficult it is to get people to provide information on publications using ICPSR data. The idea of a non-print format for the bibliography, such as a website link was discussed. Perhaps there could be an electronic means (such as a template) for authors to enter bibliographic information. The Consortium needs to take a stand to encourage publishers to relay bibliographic details to ICPSR. The major social science associations need to be lobbied to provide better reporting of publications using ICPSR data. ICPSR would like to use the publications list as a way to see how the collection is being used. More publications would indicate the importance of a particular collection and would help in planning how to allocate resources.

Discussion returned to the topic of acquiring data, especially government data. If ICPSR does not archive such files, who will? ICPSR provides protection from extinction, especially for comparative, historical files. It is difficult to get outside funding to support this. The committee asked for a "wish list" of files to be acquired. The list should indicate which files would be useful to have in the collection, which acquisitions are pressing, etc.

The committee then discussed the impact acquisition has on the ORs. It was suggested that the ICPSR announce acquisition plans to ICPSR members. Not everyone will be happy, but this is to be expected. An attempt should be made to identify OR priorities; this has been done in the past and there is never a clear set of titles to be acquired. Efforts this time around could focus instead on subject areas desired, services needed for certain types of files, and which files could be acquired after some delay.

A deficit of around $189,000 is projected. The committee was asked to make an effort to find places where the archival development budget could be cut, by 6.7%.

The following spending areas could be reduced.

Data Purchases $10,000

Postage 500

Printing 800

Books 400

TOTAL $11,700

This is about a 3% reduction. Data purchase cuts could be accomplished by deferring some acquisitions. Deferred hiring may be possible, but is not likely. There are some potential grants coming in, but they cannot be counted upon.

The committee discussed the impact this would have on ORs and stressed the need to inform ORs in advance to make members aware of Council recommendations and support of any deferred data purchases. The committee can find ways to work with ORs to be sure that subject areas are covered adequately and no research is unduly affected. It is possible that members will be able to deposit their own copies of purchased files in the event some purchases are deferred.

Archival Development Committee Report

Libbie Stephenson reported on the meetings of the Archival Development Committee, and noted that three items had been added to the agenda:

Item IV was the request from Paul Bergen of Harvard for permission to put part of ICPSR 0003 up on the World Wide Web. It was the sense of the committee that ICPSR should accommodate this request and that the "technology is upon us."

Item V was a proposal from the University of Michigan that ICPSR assist in maintaining a file server for an international research group investigating mental health. The committee felt that this was not of benefit to ICPSR and recommended against it.

Item VI was a possible proposal to NSF and/or others for converting selected portions of the ICPSR holdings of technical documentation to searchable electronic form. Committee members were given CD-ROM with Adobe pdf files for their evaluation.

On agenda item IA, proposed criteria for guidelines will be circulated at a later time.

The committee attempted to cut 6.5% from the proposed budget for Archival Development, and determined that $10,000 could be cut from data purchases and minor amounts from the books and postage lines for a total of $11,700, or some 3%.

It was commented that deferring the purchase of data will have serious consequences for some research communities. It was also noted that Council is not at a final place with budgets. The budget priority is in the work force, and minor amounts were cut from other lines.

Ed Nelson reported on the topic of developing instructional and teaching materials. The committee discussed forming a subcommittee to discuss the following: the acquisition and distribution of existing data; Chipendale files were cited as examples of instruction datasets that might be identified and archived; developing a course in the development of computer-based instructional materials; using part of the Bulletin for this topic; putting materials on the ICPSR Website; a call for data available in portable SAS files that ICPSR could collect and distribute.

Ed Nelson moved that an ad hoc committee be formed to discuss these proposals.

It was questioned whether this was to be a subcommittee of the Archival Development Committee, which it is. There was concern expressed about adding to the deficit by forming a new committee. It was replied that it would not be costly, and that we could seek funds for this activity. It was also noted that this will cost money and must be weighed against other projects. It was pointed out that the committee was not planning to meet physically, and that it should be able to conduct its business at little cost via email. The proposal passed.

Member Relations Committee Notes

I. Dues Structure and Federations

A. The committee approved the 3% dues increase suggested by the Executive Director for the next fiscal year.

B. Progress in adjusting federation fees: The staff reported that all of the federations have been contacted about the fee adjustments. The 1997 invoices will reflect the new fees. The description of the algorithm was disseminated to the federation members. It is the committee's understanding that the only federation that still requires adjustment is the Florida federation.

C. Committee on federations: The committee discussed the need for an ad hoc committee to explore the range of issues that seem to be endemic to federation members as opposed to other categories. The committee voted to recommend to the Council the creation of an ad hoc committee on federations. The committee charge would include: examination of the roles and rationale for the dues structures of federations; the impact of new technology within the context of the federation and; the responsiveness of the hub to its "satellites"; additional roles and/or working relationships between the hub and ICPSR for outreach and training; and what ICPSR can provide in federation support services and membership incentives.

II. Data and Documentation

Fees for data to nonmembers: The committee discussed charging a set fee -- eg., $25 per dataset for publicly-funded data on FastTrack. The committee felt that the $25 fee was too low. It does not take fully into account charges related to billing, retrieval, marginal costs, first copy costs, etc. For example, the Census Bureau fee for data sets is $150.00. There was some discussion of subscriber costs.

Access to nonmembers should be limited to publicly funded-data sets. A license agreement would be part of any transaction, and the individual would have an account and an access code. There should be a cap to institutions and the record-keeping system should be able to connect the institution with the person ordering data. The website could be used for monitoring nonmember requests.

The staff would need to work out more details for the process and a higher fee schedule than the one suggested. Also the staff can provide the committee and Council an idea of the plusses and minuses of non-members. Finally, a separate charge for documentation should be part of the final recommendations. This could become an income generator.

III. Membership Drive:

The committee felt that the ICPSR should develop some plans to initiate a membership drive. There are numerous institutions in the existing categories that are not currently ICPSR members. Because there are several categories the committee felt that focusing on one category would be a more efficient strategy to pursue. The target category would be B. Staff would be involved in the development of materials describing the advantages of joining ICPSR and would identify the contact persons. ICPSR could work with federations (especially hubs) to identify additional prospective members. Also, the staff could try to tap into the network of researchers to promote the benefits of membership. Endorsement or insights from existing memberships can provide an understanding of why they chose membership in ICPSR. The identification of support services available would also be highlights.

IV. Communication with Members:

A. The committee discussed the current mechanisms for communication between ICPSR and members. These include publications, ORL, OR-announce, the website etc. ties. The committee felt that active communication through ORL and OR-announce is critical, but the use of a federal list-serv is another avenue.

B. The biennial meetings and ICPSR participation in other professional meetings have also been used and should be used in the future. Use of additional or expanded training and workshops at the meetings was suggested. The question of maintaining the subsidies for biennial meeting attendance was raised; It was felt that the subsidies MAY not be essential. The ICPSR should move in the direction of greater presence and activities at professional meetings.

C. ICPSR Bulletin: The committee decided that the number of Guides published should be diminishing over time. It is available through the website, and eventually it should be available only on electronically. The Bulletin should be downsized in length, and of descriptions of new data acquisitions should be presented instead on the website. The Bulletin content will be limited to articles and announcements.

D. Email and phone contacts: There is a significant amount of e-mail correspondence between ICPSR staff and ICPSR data users. Given the type of inquiries made through this medium, the committee suggested providing those queries that might be of general interest as a part of the general information available through the website.

E. Survey of members: The committee felt that a general survey of members ought to be conducted. The content of the survey should be focused on the pluses and minuses of existing services and the quality of services. In addition, information should be gathered on other needs and desired services. It could also include current limitations of existing institutional links. Warren Miller is interested in working on such a questionnaire. The chair of this committee will contact him.

V. Other member/nonmember issues:

A. Beta tests: The current testing of individual subscriptions involves the University of Michigan and Penn State University. The only real issue is the costs to cover the individuals participating.

B. Support/consultation services via 900 number: The primary concerns were an assessment of the demands for such services and the costs associated with a 900 number. It was felt that some basic background information is necessary, and a specific plan should be presented to the committee before any action is taken. The kinds of services might include technical assistance, data updates, codebook assistance, etc. The committee discussed whether the first three minutes should be free with the charges beginning thereafter.

C. Fairness to member institutions: The committee understood this issue to revolve around the conditions placed by some public funding agencies for general access to ICPSR data. Member dues have supported many of the value-added services ICPSR provides. If anyone can get access to data, then what are the benefits to member institutions in return for their dues? The committee felt that the previously mentioned marketing campaign should address and accent the specific benefits of membership.

Membership Relations Committee Report

The committee tackled an ambitious agenda consisting of dues structure and federations, data and documentation pricing for nonmembers, membership drives, and communications with members.

The committee supported both an inflationary dues increase and the progress in adjusting federation fees and also recommended the establishment of an ad-hoc committee to examine the rationale and role of federations within ICPSR.

Reasonably priced publicly-funded data and documentation should be available to nonmembers, but the price and term "dataset" need to be defined. A price of $25 per dataset is too low but no other price was recommended. Nonmember access should be on a rental basis with an institutional cap on the amount of data nonmembers can obtain.

Although ICPSR has never conducted a formal membership drive, it was recommended that one be initiated and targeted at type B research institutions. Suggestions for contacting such schools included Web page promotions, personal contacts with researchers at those schools by ICPSR staff and Council, and ICPSR product advertisements in professional journals.

Current ICPSR-member communication methods, e.g., ORL, OR-ANNOUNCE, email, Web home page and phone contact, were endorsed, along with a recommendation that ICPSR move away from costly printed publications. Specifically, reductions in the number of Guides printed and the extent of study description material in the Bulletin were proposed. These materials can be found, in their entirety, on the ICPSR Web page, and substantial savings can be realized with these changes. Possible new communication mechanisms are training and workshops, more of a presence at professional meetings, informal meetings with ORs at professional associations, and a survey of members' needs and environments.

John Garcia moved that an ad-hoc committee be formed to examine federation issues. Ann Gray moved that the motion be deferred until after the IASSIST May meeting, since federation members will be meeting at that time and eventually reporting to Rockwell and Council. Wendy Watkins seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

John Garcia then moved to transition from a printed Guide to a machine-readable Guide over the next year or so and to remove study descriptions from the printed Bulletin. The motion was seconded and passed.

Computing and User Services Committee Notes

At the initial session, the organization of the committee and the various roles of the staff were reviewed. The committee will be joined by Council member, Ross Matsueda who was unable to attend this session. Regarding external members -- persons who are not on Council and whose attendance is not funded -- the opinion was expressed that these persons are put at a disadvantage and not well served by being listed as members. Should any unit feel the need for outside consulting and advice, individual consultations or ad hoc committees could be appointed.

The non-Council members should be thanked for their support and provided with updates of the activities taking place within the units. The ICPSR units involved in this committee are:

1. Archival Operations. This unit processes incoming data and handles the technical aspects of preservation of the data in the ICPSR Archive.
2. User Support deals with data distribution and the placement of released data on storage devices for FTP access and for the preparation of removable media custom orders, as well as the distribution of associated documentation for the files.
3. Computing and Network Services (CNS) handles both ICPSR's internal computing needs and operates a computing and support facility for data storage and distribution. It provides technical support for all of the ICPSR units, including Archival Operations and User Support, when requested.

All of the units represented in the committee handed out status reports and use statistics. These reports covered most of the areas mentioned in the agenda. This allowed the committee to discuss other operational issues.

Changing technologies have had both direct and indirect effects on these units. One change has been that queries from users used to be handled primarily by the User Support staff but now are directed to a number of persons in various units via electronic mail, correspondence, or by telephone. The same is true with technical questions that were once directed primarily to the Computer Support Unit and which now can potentially arrive on any staff person's desk. It was suggested that user queries could be handled by a "virtual" person who would route and track the queries.

Incoming data arrive at ICPSR on a variety of media, and undoubtedly will continue to do so with FTP becoming more frequent as everyone becomes more comfortable with and appreciates the economics of using FTP. It was noted that 10 percent of the cost of collecting data should go to preservation. There should be a network of archives with an active policy to promote standards. There should be incentives, payment even, to principal investigators to prepare data and documentation for archiving.

The conversion to FTP as the primary distribution media and the shut down of MTS was discussed. It is hoped that the conversion will be finished by June 30th. John Gray will negotiate stop-gap measures if there are problems. Tapes stored at MTS will have to be moved off-site. There are thousands of tapes that will require off-site storage. The entire User Support unit (at present 7.5-8.0 permanent FTE and about 1.5 FTE temporary) and the system used by User Support will have to move off of the PRIME --another conversion project. Archival Operations will have to move off of MTS. The databases and systems used on the PRIME will have to be converted to UNIX.

Because it is expected that MTS will go away June 30th, converting 9-track tapes to 3480s (for archival storage) and moving the rest of the public collection to FTPable disks is a priority. If the conversion to 3480 tape cartridges is not complete, ICPSR may need to resort to out-sourcing. While 3480 tape cartridges are a reliable archival media, connecting 3480 tape drives to SUN UNIX workstations is not reliable. Problems with 3480 SCSI connections are widespread and have been encountered at ICPSR as well. It is believed that 3480 tape cartridges will be the archival storage media for the next five years, at least. As for a replacement media, the staff was advised not to be on the "bleeding edge" of new technologies.

FTP disk storage issues were also addressed. None of ICPSR's disks is currently configured as a RAID system. Time-critical periods of 12 to 24 hours to restore disk failures are considered reasonable. Staff was advised to consider the possibility that "free" FTP may not last and a "real cost" for FTP may be imposed at some time.

Other distribution media were mentioned. There is a task force within ICPSR dealing with customized CD-ROMs. Periodic issue of new holdings on CD-ROM will begin shortly. The customized products will allow individuals to select datasets (probably from the Web server) to be bundled on a CD-ROM. The same method could also apply to other removable media. [In order to automate this process, FAST or its equivalent will be needed -- the databases used on the PRIME and the software to automatically move the data to be staged to write the customized CD product.] Although ICPSR has the capacity to write CD-ROMs, additional equipment will be needed if the demand is strong. [Members of the Committee were given test versions of the first periodic release CD-ROM.]

At present, ICPSR has contractual obligations with the U.S. Department of Justice to provide customized CD-ROMs for their clients. Because the use of the Justice Archive homepage is so heavy -- 400 to 500 accesses per day -- it is expected that demand will exceed capacity. Capacity is estimated at 11 CDs per day. Furthermore, the database to support automated staging is not complete. For the time being, human intervention to write these CDs will have to be employed. Also, there are other CD-ROM services and products in the plan:

1. Topical CDs such as the ANES with a Search engine -- the Aging Archive will be working on this model
2. the Department of Justice projects will produce a CD with an Adobe Acrobat interface, and
3. is the customized CD, mentioned above. Cost for the necessary hardware will be $35K - $50K. Regarding customized CD-ROMs, the units were urged to work with Archival Development and the funding agencies to plan for and fund the necessary hardware and software.

Another issue facing CNS is that of coherent networking within the ISR building. ISR runs a Novell network, ICPSR uses a TCP/IP network. ICPSR does not want to convert to Novell. This issue was not discussed in detail, but could have serious implications for the future.

Where do we go from here? What is the next archival media, what other removable media will emerge, what new storage devices will be available? Much of this will involve separating market hype from reality. It was pointed out that ICPSR is NOT the archive for all of the social sciences. Some valuable collections, such as the World Fertility Surveys and the Demographic and Health Surveys, have no archival home. Can ICPSR turn this into a funding opportunity and save these data?

The final word of advice, during the initial session, was to promote the use of FTP over non-standard removable media and to provide a limited number of types of removable media.

The meetings on the 13th were devoted to budget issues. The units had distributed their budgets to Council. The Administration and Governance Committee had reviewed the budget of the ICPSR for 1996/1997. The proposed budget contained a deficit of some $180,000. Considering that ICPSR has run a deficit for four of the past five years and that it had been decided in the Fall meeting that there would be no additional draws on equity, a deficit budget was unacceptable. Each committee was asked to find about 6 to 7 percent reductions to close the gap.

The committee did discuss the budget details. It was noted that changes in Technical Services included the return of one permanent employee from educational leave and the transfer of .5 FTE from ISR to ICPSR (a courier whose services were no longer needed by ISR). CNS needs to add one FTE for internal PC support and one FTE for database management and the SAMHSA project. SAMHSA, it seems, will be a series of contracts with a great deal of uncertainty regarding the amount of data, the amount of processing involved, and the timing of the data releases and funding.

The Committee decided not to find 6 to 7 percent reductions, but to provide a set of guidelines for the units. First, ICPSR must fulfill its obligations to the membership to take in data, preserve it, and distribute it. ICPSR must fulfill its contractual obligations with NORC, Justice, Aging, and SAMHSA, but it should negotiate with these agencies to insure that future projects are fully funded. Additional services can be deferred, if necessary, and testing of new media, such as a replacement of 3480 cartridges for archival storage, have a lower priority. Finally, the Committee feels that future contractual obligations must include full funding support needed to meet those obligations. If funding agencies are unwilling to provide full support, ICPSR should seriously consider termination of the contracts.

The Council members expressed their appreciation to the staff for their efforts in the conversion process and recognized the tremendous amount of work involved in such a large undertaking.

Computing and User Services Committee Report

The committee noted the increase in data collections appearing on the FTP server. Most of the collections not on the server contain unusual formats or structures and will require additional time and resources before they will become available.

Completing the transition to full FTP service was given high priority among all of the activities of the Computing and Network Services and User Support units. The committee assigned the activities related to these two units to three general categories of priority: areas of high priority, areas that while important could be delayed, and areas that could be postponed in the short term. In addition to completing the FTP transition, the committee included resolving the changes caused by the upcoming demise of the centralized computing environment (Michigan Terminal System) among its items of high priority. These changes include the conversion of archival media for all datasets and the enactment of new procedures for archiving and preparing data for distribution to members. The committee also stressed the need to meet contractual obligations for those projects supported by outside grants including NACDA, NACJD, SAMHSA, GSS, and NES and to be particularly mindful that new initiatives in these areas be fully funded.

Projects/areas considered important but less crucial than those previously listed include the production of periodic CD-ROMs and various Web initiatives (compute server, development of subsetting and statistical facilities). Development work should continue on certain features related to the documentation scanning operation (SGML and Acrobat), but resources will not be available to bring these features fully on-line in the short term.

Projects occupying a lower priority that could be postponed in the short term include the purchase of a replacement system that would be able to read and write tapes as had existed under MTS, the production of custom CD-ROMs, and any decision about what the next archival medium would be. While a proposal, already submitted to NSF, might involve ICPSR in the use of a massive parallel processing machine, the committee expressed concern about possible disruptions to other work if the Computing and Network Services unit was heavily involved in such a project.

A strong recommendation from the committee focused on the importance of looking at computing equipment as a basic supply that was consumed each year and that had to be continually upgraded and replaced.

Winsborough made a motion that Council agree with the priorities set forth by the Computer/User Support subcommittee; Anne Gray seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Future Meetings

The June 21-23 Council meeting has been canceled. In its place the Council will speak via telephone conference on June 27th, 2:30-4:00 p.m. Eastern time. The next regular Council meeting is scheduled for October 4-6th in Ann Arbor.