Council Minutes ---March 27-29, 1998

**Council participants:** Margo Anderson, Kenneth Bollen, Diane Geraci, Gary King, Paula McClain, Edward Nelson, Huey Perry, Carole Shammas, Elizabeth Stephenson, Wendy Watkins, Halliman Winsborough.

**Council not able to participate:** Charles Betsey, Heinz Eulau, Stephen Fienberg, Norval Glenn, Kent Jennings, Warren Miller.

**ICPSR staff participants:** Zack Allen, Chris Dunn, Nancy Fultz, Peter Granda, John Gray, Hank Heitowit, Peter Joftis, JoAnne McFarland, Mary Morris, Richard Rockwell, Pam Schwarzman, Mary Vardigan, Janet Vavra.

**Staff not able to participate:** Erik Austin.

**Additional participants:** Lennart Brantgarde, Swedish Social Science Data Service, Goteborg, Sweden.

Approval of October 1997 Minutes

Wendy Watkins moved to approve the October 1997 Council minutes as written. Diane Geraci seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Proposed Financial and Reporting Relationship with ISR

As of July 1, 1998, it is proposed that ICPSR will no longer report to the Director of the Center for Political Studies but instead will report to the Director of the Institute for Social Research (ISR). The Director of ISR, David Featherman, will join Council on Sunday morning, March 29, to discuss new ideas and the future reporting relationship.

To reflect the new reporting arrangement the ICPSR Constitution and Bylaws will need to be revised, along with the Memorandum of Agreement. Legal representation in the interest of the membership should be involved in the revisions.

The Planned Move of ICPSR Off Site

ICPSR is growing, and current space allocations at ISR are not meeting organizational needs. The Institute for Social Research is working with the University to plan for additional space.

ICPSR has formed a space committee that is working with ISR's Assistant Director, Peggy Norgren, to locate potential off-site space. The committee is currently looking at space above Borders bookstore. The Borders location is close to ISR and keeps ICPSR within the University of Michigan campus area. Technical and logistical questions regarding the move are being worked out. ICPSR should expect to be housed at the chosen off-site location for 3-5 years with a tentative move date of October 1998. The Institute for Social Research will make a special effort to keep off-site departments integrated within ISR.

Update on Executive Director's Sabbatical Plans

ICPSR Executive Director, Richard Rockwell will start a split six-month sabbatical in August of 1998. In order to sustain organizational stability, the Executive Director will be out of the office for short periods usually of 2-3 weeks (no more than 6 weeks) at a time teaching courses currently scheduled in South-east Asia and Bonn, Germany. It was subsequently announced that Erik Austin, Director of Archival Development, has agreed to serve as Acting Executive Director during these periods.

Developments at Member Institutions

Gary King reported on developments in the Harvard/MIT data center which are resulting in delivery of data directly to the authenticated user's desktop, even when the data must first be retrieved from ICPSR by FTP. He intends to make this software widely available and to cooperate with ICPSR in doing so.

A Review of Where We Are

Council offered their support to staff and discussed the goals and accomplishments of the organization. ICPSR has grown steadily with an enormous amount of work accomplished over the last several years. This is an exciting time with a large amount of things to do. The new reporting relationship to ISR on 7/1/98 should offer new opportunities and a positive future for ICPSR.

Archival Development

**Attendees:** Libbie Stevenson (co-chair), Margo Anderson (co-chair), Ed Nelson, Chris Dunn, Peter Granda

The Committee discussed the following items on Saturday morning, March 28, and reported a summary of its discussion and decisions to the full Council on Saturday afternoon:

1. Electronic Document Conversion (EDC): Zack Allen, ICPSR staff member who manages this unit, presented a report which summarized EDC activities. He stated that his unit now uses a combination of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and image scanning technology to convert hard-copy documents into electronic form. During the period from September 1, 1997 to February 26, 1998 almost 100,000 pages of documentation had been converted. However, it is still the case that a majority (c. 55%) of the NEW documentation ICPSR received during that period was in hard-copy form. The Archival Development Committee was asked to provide input for prioritizing the conversion process. This issue also applies to the extensive backlog of older collections which require conversion as well. ICPSR currently has a grant from the National Science Foundation which will allow us to image scan our backlog but must also assign priorities for further processing of the scanned images into PDF documents.

The Committee agreed to develop a set of general decision rules and guidelines that ICPSR staff can use in making priority decisions about the document conversion process for individual data collections.

2. New Acquisitions Preservation Archive (NAPA): Staff reported to the Committee on the start of the implementation of this archive which is to function as the initial repository of most data coming into ICPSR. A flow chart was prepared for the Committee meeting to demonstrate what happens between the time a data collection arrives at ICPSR and its release to the research community. Several data collections (including national media polls from ABC and CBS and monthly surveys from the Survey of Consumer Attitudes and Behavior data series) have been released in the form in which they were received under NAPA policies. The Committee made the following suggestions:

* As staff gains greater experience with NAPA, they provide more detailed information to quantify the amount of time spent on various stages of the process.
* Staff should provide additional information in its flowchart and also in Figure 1 of the Archival Development Policy report and, in particular, highlight that NAPA is not a separate activity but one completely integrated into the activities of the ICPSR data archive.
* After examining a list of potential ‘virtual' link sites, the Committee requested staff to contact each site to seek permission for each linkage. The Committee will then choose a final list of sites to begin this experiment.

3. Specialized data products and services: Staff reported to the Committee about the increasing number of specialized products (principally CD-ROMS) which ICPSR is now currently distributing. While these products have been well received by the research community, some do include a variety of software systems that are not supported by ICPSR. Requests for involvement in additional products are occurring with greater frequency. The Committee reviewed three current requests for involvement in such products:

* Juan Diaz-Nicholas, one of the principal investigators of the World Values Survey project, is producing a CD-ROM version of this data collection which will incorporate the newest wave of surveys, conducted during 1995-1997. He asked ICPSR to consider providing financial support for the development of this product. The Committee did not approve such support but asked staff to consider purchasing multiple copies of the finished CD-ROM if they thought that it would benefit the membership.
* The Committee urged staff to explore the possibilities of producing a Eurobarometer CD-ROM in conjunction with the Zentralarchiv and other interested European archives.
* The Committee approved an expansion of the web-based statistical service being provided by Paul Bergen of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Computing Services at Harvard University. This service provides statistical tables to all users based on data in ICPSR 0003: Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-1970. Prior approval had been given for use of data before 1860 and the request now approved included use of data after 1860.

The Committee decided that it should formulate a general policy about value-added products in general, which might include some kind of licensing policy for existing ICPSR datasets. A crucial aspect of this issue is setting the proper balance in the expenditure of archival development funds between value-added products and purchases of new data resources.

Computing and Technical Services

The Computing and Technical Services Committee met on Saturday morning, March 28, 1998, with Ken Bollen presiding as Chair. In attendance were Gary King, Paula McClain, John Gray, Henry Heitowit, and Janet Vavra.

Richard Rockwell, Hal Winsborough, and Zack Allen each joined the group at different times during the meeting.

The first order of business was to discuss the feasibility of splitting the committee into two more workable ones. Ken Bollen felt strongly that there should be a committee that focuses on technical issues and one that deals with methodology and training. The group came to the conclusion that the needs of the ICPSR would be better met by having two separate committees: 1) Information Technology, chaired by Gary King and 2) Quantitative Research and Training, chaired by Ken Bollen.

The Information Technology Committee will assume responsibility for issues including setting standards for ICPSR's data interface; developing metadata standards; implementing application programming interfaces (APIs) for automated systems; connectivity; oversight of the technical operations; consideration of hardware upgrades; technical issues related to the impending move to another building; electronic document conversion; specific funding opportunities (i.e., the NPACI grant, NSF's Knowledge and Distributed Intelligence program, etc.); and a proposed National Laboratory on Digital Information.

In addition to Gary King, members of the committee include Stephen Fienberg, John Gray, and Janet Vavra.

The Quantitative Research and Training Committee will assume responsibility for issues including a proposed Conference on Methodology; outreach activities (i.e., proposals to videotape summer courses, distance learning initiatives, etc.); monitoring the Summer Program; issues relating to the technology of teaching; and the application of supercomputing and other advanced technology to social science research. The committee will work closely with the Summer Program Advisory Committee.

Members of the committee in addition to Ken Bollen are Paula McCain and Henry Heitowit.

The remaining time was spent with the two committees meeting separately and organizing their agendas. The Information Technology committee briefly discussed further developments and augmentations of the ICPSR website, future developments in the collection of metadata by ICPSR, ways to develop and promote research activities in the areas of data preservation and distribution, the need to develop more sophisticated variable-level databases for ICPSR data, and the linking of user-developed systems with ICPSR products such as the website.

For the ICPSR website, King proposed that a stable API be defined with the following primitives:

* get study-level metadata
* get part-level metadata
* get file
* get list of changed files

Rockwell reported on the status of the NPACI project and the proposals in preparation for NSF's KDI program.

Allen briefly described the status of the electronic document conversion initiative.

Since the bulk of the time was spent on the reorganization of the original committee into two committees, it was decided that the above issues would be further explored at the June Council meeting.

Membership Relations

Fall 1997 Official Representative Survey

Item frequencies for the Official Representative survey were provided, along with responses to the open-ended questions. Discussion centered on the results, how to use them, and what other analyses could be done. Suggestions included coding some of the open-ended questions and including them in the analyses, and analyzing the data by length of membership, federation status, and possibly data usage. Some needs that could be addressed were identified in the open-ended responses, such as the need for more ICPSR promotional materials for use by Official Representatives. Once any additional analyses are done, the survey results or a summary of the results should be provided to the Official Representatives.

End-user Survey

The topic of a user survey was revisited. Rockwell noted the importance of getting feedback directly from data users, both for internal use and in proposal writing. As before, issues of sampling and response rates were raised. The committee suggested different ways of getting to the end-user but each had drawbacks. Since the committee does not have sampling expertise and since survey items cannot be developed without knowledge of the sample, this item is being removed from the Member Relations agenda.

Membership Figures

Membership figures were provided by the administrative unit. Most movement was within Category B, which has historically been the case. The marketing of ICPSR, recruitment of new schools, and the attractiveness of adding a marketing position to the administrative staff were covered.

Official Representatives Meeting Evaluation

Results of the October 1997 Official Representative meeting evaluation were distributed. Evaluations were positive. Attendance increased 12.5 % from 1995 and there were 60% more presenters. Issues of concurrent sessions and individual session attendance were raised and will be considered in planning the next OR meeting.

Access for University of Michigan

Previously Council approved an experiment to give access to ICPSR data for the entire U-M campuses. This arrangement has not yet moved forward, but the issues of user support in this kind of configuration were discussed.

Administration and Governance

The Administration and Governance committee met to review proposals made by ISR Director David Featherman. A response will be drafted by the ICPSR Council Chair and past Chair.

A 2.5% increase in membership dues was recommended unanimously.

Carole Shammas made a motion that the Council with advice of the staff authorize the ICPSR Executive Director and Senior Financial Analyst to invest reserve funds, partitioned as seen fit, in instruments available now and in the future at the University of Michigan. Huey Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Changes in Reporting to ISR

ISR Director David Featherman, joined Council and staff on Sunday morning of the ICPSR Council meeting. He reported that initial negotiations and the planning of a new relationship seem on track. The Memorandum of Agreement will be revised. The Constitution will require a 2/3 in-favor vote from the membership.

Carole Shammas and Libbie Stephenson made a motion to amend the Constitution as follows:

New text in the Constitution would read:

The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research is an organization of member institutions founded at the University of Michigan in 1962. This Constitution and the accompanying Bylaws establish the organizational identity for ICPSR. The Bylaws authorize ICPSR to affiliate for specific purposes with a host institution.

Council passed this motion with a unanimous vote.

A memo and ballot from the Executive Director will be mailed to the membership on April 1, 1998. A 90-day recording period will end on July 1, 1998. However, if sufficient ballots have accumulated, results will be announced at the June Council meeting.

Council inquired about the review process at the ISR and University of Michigan levels. It was noted that a five-year Programmatic Review may be the best timeframe, depending on what level of depth Council was suggesting. A committee composed of ISR representation, senior ICPSR staff and three ICPSR Council members should perform upcoming reviews. An equal voice from all parties involved is desired. The review of the Executive Director was also discussed, with the intent of bringing it more into line with other reviews at ISR.

A new position of ICPSR Administrator will be posted. This position will work with issues of personnel, finances, training, and other ICPSR organizational needs. This position will also represent ICPSR at the ISR level by sitting on the Center Administrators task force. This position will report to the ICPSR Executive Director and the Assistant Director of ISR. The ICPSR Executive Director will have final decision-making authority for the individual in this position.

A discussion of the sources of the Executive Director's salary took place. The University of Michigan has honored an agreement to pay 40% of the ICPSR Executive Director's salary for several years. Discussion surrounding the new reporting relationship to ISR has brought this subsidy to the table for discussion. It was felt that negotiations with ISR should start at ground zero and move forward, without assumptions regarding this subsidy. In addition to this subsidy, the University also pays a portion of the Executive Director's salary when that person teaches; this is unaffected by whether or not the 40% subsidy stands.

The new reporting relationship provides the ICPSR Executive Director with a seat on the ISR Policy Committee without voting rights. A seat on the ISR Policy Committee will allow ICPSR's voice to be heard at an ISR level that currently doesn't exist.

Moving ICPSR out of the ISR building was discussed. The Director of ISR affirmed that no one in ISR sees moving departments off-site as desirable. However, the Institute is out of space. Discussions of a new building or an addition to the current building are under way. This could be estimated as a 5-7 year building plan.

Council unanimously accepted the recommendation of the Administration and Governance Committee concerning an annual increase in member dues.

Issues Surrounding Council Meetings

The ICPSR Council currently meets three times a year in March, June, and October. Starting in 1999, Council will meet twice a year in the months of June and October. Council committees will meet during the year in addition to meeting at regular scheduled Council meetings.

Next Meeting

The next Council meeting is scheduled for June 12-14, 1998. Council will meet and stay at the Campus Inn in Ann Arbor, Michigan.