Council Minutes (Draft) --- October 16-18, 1998

**Council participants:** Margo Anderson, Charles Betsey, Kenneth Bollen, Heinz Eulau, Stephen Fienberg, Diane Geraci, Kent Jennings, Paula McClain, Edward Nelson, Huey Perry, Elizabeth Stephenson, Wendy Watkins, Halliman Winsborough.

**ICPSR staff participants:** Zack Allen, Chris Dunn, Peter Granda, John Gray, Hank Heitowit, Michelle Humphres, Peter Joftis, JoAnne McFarland, Jim McNally, Mary Morris, Richard Rockwell, Kathleen Thomson, Mary Vardigan, Janet Vavra.

**Additional participants:** David Featherman, Director, Institute for Social Research; Peggy Norgren, Assistant Director, Institute for Social Research; Hans Jorgen Marker, Danish Data Archives.

Approval of June 1998 Minutes

The June 1998 Council minutes were approved as written.

Introductions and Announcements

Richard Rockwell announced that two interns from the University of Michigan School of Information are working on a pricing model for ICPSR information products and services.

George Myers, who has been with NACDA since its inception, has become ill. Hal Winsborough made a motion to send a card to George on behalf of ICPSR. Ken Bollen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Memorandum of Agreement and Bylaws

Council was presented with a revised Memorandum of Agreement; this document is the result of considerable input from ICPSR staff and Council, ISR administrators, and lawyers on both sides. The ISR Executive Committee has approved it, and it is now before Council for their approval.

A question was raised about the section pertaining to the appointment of an interim or acting ICPSR Director. Although the language does not require the ISR Director to involve Council in the appointment of an interim or acting ICPSR Director, that has been the case previously and would, in all likelihood, continue to be the procedure.

Hal reviewed the sections pertaining to intellectual property rights and the required reserves. This agreement recognizes that Council is an oversight body for ICPSR; it appoints the Executive Director and approves the budget. The language with respect to budget indicates that if Council does not approve a particular budget after two tries, Council will be deemed to have given one year's notice of its intent to terminate the agreement. Two scenarios for Council's failure to approve the budget were presented: if ICPSR is asked to contribute an amount to ISR that Council considers unfair, or if Council does not agree with the program direction evidenced by the budget.

After discussion the Council voted unanimously to approve the Memorandum of Agreement.

The Bylaws had been modified within the past year by Council to make them consistent with the organizational placement of ICPSR within ISR.

Council requested that charges to the committees be recorded. This should not be part of any of the instruments discussed, but needs to be documented.

Council's Role

Hal turned to the general issue of Council's oversight responsibility. Ideas and suggestions for Council's consideration were presented in an open-ended, free-flowing format. Is ICPSR doing the right mix of things in terms of substantive breadth of the archive, distribution activities, and training? Should ICPSR be doing research on, for example, issues of confidentiality or archiving?

In terms of ICPSR's intellectual mission, a comment was made that the Consortium has lost its intellectual focus over the past ten years. ICPSR needs to participate in research and to be more than a service agency delivering data. Possible research activities could focus on research interests of individual staff, archival functions, or group projects.

It is possible that the new Memorandum of Agreement will make it easier for UM faculty to join with ICPSR on collaborative projects. ICPSR currently is collaborating with a few universities on various proposals. Growth in the number of projects, topical archives, and research activities often involves more physical space. That needs to be a consideration when deciding on collaborative arrangements or research proposals. Also, the decision as to whether a collaborative project goes forward should be a Council decision.

In terms of topical archives, does ICPSR have the ones they should and how are decisions made as to which archives to start up in the future?

In terms of efficiency, how efficient is ICPSR and how is efficiency measured? It’s more than dividing the budget by the number of collections processed or the number of files distributed. Federal funding agencies have asked ICPSR to identify the marginal costs of enhancing a dataset or providing training. Should ICPSR try to collect data on the usefulness of preparing SPSS and SAS data definition statements, or whether a person’s involvement in a summer training session resulted in a funded proposal?

Is Council's structure appropriate for what it needs to do? Is the extent of oversight adequate? Council doesn't exercise much oversight over external funding at this time. Should it? Is Council optimally organized in terms of its meeting structure and committee structure?

Concern was expressed about budget oversight and the extent of Council members' understanding of budgets. The formation of a Budget Committee was proposed. It was noted that under the Memorandum of Agreement ISR also has responsibility for the budget and will be diligent in its financial oversight responsibility. The proposed budget committee will be discussed by the Administrative and Governance Committee. It was also noted that the current budget doesn't contain programmatic allocation information. Council will need that information in reviewing financial figures.

Issues of authentication and protection of privacy and confidentiality were raised and discussed. The Information Technology Committee was asked to include these topics on their agenda.

ORs' familiarity with confidentiality and privacy issues was also raised. The Bylaws indicate data can only be used for statistical analyses and reporting of aggregate information. Are ORs and users aware of this? Should users be required to sign a statement to that effect? The Fall 1998 issue of the ICPSR Bulletin addresses these issues to some extent. The Member Relations Committee was instructed to include these issues in planning for the OR meeting. The committee was also instructed to propose ways of increasing communication and outreach with member schools.

In response to the comment that each committee contains too few Council members, the Administrative and Governance Committee will review the committee structure. That committee will also consider establishing an Executive Committee that could advise the Executive Director about responding to RFPs, thus bringing Council into a more active role in decision-making about external funding opportunities.

Archival Development Committee

The committee discussed the following items on Saturday morning and provided a summary of its discussions and decisions to the full Council on Saturday afternoon:

1. **Acquisitions Policy:** An early working draft of the beginnings of an acquisition and collection development policy was circulated and discussed by the committee. Members expressed a need to have as much input and information as possible before formulating a final policy statement. Professional organizations within the academic community will be contacted and consulted to get recommendations for the kinds of data ICPSR should acquire and the requirements necessary for submission of such data. Committee members will seek guidance on such a policy from all types of ICPSR member institutions. Committee members will also focus on the general issue of how to handle qualitative data and geocoded data and what role these special types of data might play in future archival acquisitions. Another important issue centers on the question of data quality: how should it be judged and who should make the judgments?

The committee felt that a meaningful acquisition policy must include specific recommendations regarding selected research areas in which to actively seek new data collections and which areas to de-emphasize. Any policy adopted must continually evolve within the context of a strategic plan for the whole organization. The committee will recommend that ICPSR seek advice and information from several sources in this regard, e.g., a special expert seminar, a survey of users, a review of the professional academic literature, and an analysis of usage from ICPSR member sites.

The committee will meet in Los Angeles in early March to develop a draft of an acquisitions policy to present to the full Council at its June meeting.

1. **NAPA update:** The committee discussed an interim status report on the activities of the New Acquisitions Preservation Archive. A database, maintained in Excel, now contains information on over 400 data collections and 650 discrete acquisitions of study materials. Approximately 130 new collections have been processed by this method and are currently available to users. Plans are under way to develop an additional feature of NAPA — the creation of a "virtual archive" which would allow users of the ICPSR website to find information on other websites that might distribute additional data collections of interest. ICPSR staff would be knowledgeable about these sites and be available to assist users.
2. **Confidentiality and Private-Use Datasets:** The committee felt that ICPSR should develop a uniform set of principles and guidelines on this issue which will apply to all types of datasets currently in the archive, e.g., surveys, administrative data, and aggregate data. Staff will prepare a general statement/pledge of confidentiality for the June Council meeting with the intention that a final statement be submitted for approval at the meeting of Official Representatives in October. This statement will then appear on the ICPSR website before any data collection is downloaded.
3. **Instructional Datasets** (Subcommittee on Instructional Materials and Information — SIMI): Ed Nelson, chair of the subcommittee, distributed a statement that announces the new depository for teaching resources in the social sciences. The statement encourages researchers to deposit instructional datasets as well as to provide references to relevant websites for undergraduate and graduate education. These materials will be submitted to the ICPSR Web Committee for approval and announcement of this new service.

Information Technology Committee

Present: Steve Fienberg, John Gray, Peter Joftis, Hans Jorgen Marker, Janet Vavra

The Information Technology Committee meeting began early with a breakfast meeting on privacy, which was attended by the committee members and Hal Winsborough, Libbie Stephenson, Richard Rockwell, and JoAnne McFarland. The breakfast meeting topic was the growing concern about the appropriate handling of privacy and confidentiality by ICPSR data users and how ICPSR can respond to some of the concerns that are starting to be raised by funding agencies and others. This has become especially important in some of the topical archives as funding agencies are requiring that signed privacy statements be submitted before certain data collections can be publicly downloaded.

Upon request ICPSR has implemented release statements for some of the collections in the topical archives, such as for those collected by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) in the National Archive of Computerized Data on Aging (NACDA). Before these data can be downloaded by anyone, an online privacy pledge must be completed. This requirement partially reflects the concern that the large amount of related collections in the public domain may make it easier for users to identify respondents by cross-referencing data among these collections. Although difficult to do in most cases, in theory it still can be done given time and persistence. Also, every recent session of Congress has considered bills that, if enacted into law, would make publicly-funded data more easily accessible and with more detailed information about respondents.

Among the issues raised was the responsibility of researchers when they discover information in a given data collection that could compromise the identity of the respondents. As noted earlier, ICPSR was asked to implement a privacy statement for any NCHS data publicly available on our website. It is understood that ORs are already aware of the need to protect respondent confidentiality and thus have not been required to sign such a pledge prior to downloading data. The concern includes an expectation that as pressure is brought to bear to release more detailed information about survey respondents and other previously restricted items in studies, there will need to be better procedures in place that safeguard the respondents in the surveys or the individuals in any given study. This means being able to reach the ultimate user of the data and to communicate the seriousness of the matter. The question arose whether ORs should be required to sign on behalf of their institutions and how this would be implemented. It was noted that it would be appropriate to seek ways to relieve ORs of this burden and to pass it on directly to the end user, which may ultimately mean direct contact between ICPSR and the end user.

Steve Fienberg asked that for the next Council Meeting in June 1999, the Consortium staff prepare a list of the items they use to check data for confidentiality/privacy prior to release. The privacy issue must be pursued further by Council. We should use the October 1999 Biennial Meeting as an opportunity to get input from ORs. It was also suggested that ICPSR look at developing a research agenda on privacy and confidentiality issues; it should be seen as a natural successor to the preparation of formal ICPSR documents on privacy.

The regular committee agenda was then started with John Gray reporting on the pending move by ICPSR from the ISR Building on Thompson to ISR Wing 4 (aka Borders) on Maynard. The move is scheduled for the last weekend in October. The move has been preoccupying the staff and in particular the Computer Support Group who are striving to make the move as seamless as possible to the users and the staff. John indicated that he did not expect the servers to be down for more than 24 hours and that the Website would be functional 24 hours after the move. There will, however, be many details that need to be tended to and will occupy the staff for some time after the move, although they should not impact service nor access to the data.

There was a discussion about the need to look ahead to how technical support would change in ICPSR as the organization changes over the coming years. The future for all holdings is access from the Web, and there will be a move toward allowing extractions, subsets, etc. directly from the Web. An intelligent agent that would provide support to users could help cope with the resulting need for user assistance.

There is a need to expand the holdings and to archive and distribute data that are not available anywhere else. One example is large business data collections. Currently there already are large data collections available from ICPSR that users can download directly and without having to go through ORs. Therefore, the public release of large data collections by ICPSR should not be presenting the organization with problems it has not already solved.

John Gray noted that ICPSR now has two initiatives on the technology development front that are responding to future technology needs: the Electronic Document Conversion project and the Document Development Initiative (DDI). The Electronic Document Conversion project is converting paper copy documentation for all released ICPSR studies into Portable Document Format (PDF) in addition to preparing PDF documentation for all new releases and updates. Peter Joftis reported on the status of the DDI project, indicating that tools for DDI have been under development over the past two years and that it all has been going well. The next phase of the project would take about six months with the system ready in time for demonstration to the Council at the June 1999 meeting.

John Gray reported on network security at ICPSR. He noted that over the past three to four months there have been several incidents of "spam". With the assistance of the University of Michigan Information Technology Division, steps have been taken to prevent this from happening again by implementing several changes to the "send mail" configurations on our servers.

Member Relations Committee

The Member Relations Committee met on Saturday, October 17, 1998, with Heinz Eulau, Diane Geraci, Hank Heitowit, Mary Morris, and Mary Vardigan in attendance. Wendy Watkins was present via phone.

A written summary of the 1997 OR survey was reviewed. It will be distributed through the ICPSR Website, and an announcement to that effect will be placed in the next Bulletin and on OR-Announce.

Richard Rockwell appointed Hank Heitowit as ICPSR marketing coordinator. His task is to determine how to position ICPSR to increase both resources and outreach. This will involve expenditures for a market analysis, which could show a different clientele than we currently serve and divert current priorities.

The second component of a marketing plan is member recruitment and retention. A more proactive approach in both recruiting and retaining members is envisioned. Increased personal involvement, including on-site visits by ICPSR staff, is needed.

The final component is funding. In the past, many members justified Consortium membership by the amount of data provided. Because of the topical archives and the provision of free data, this argument no longer is compelling. Membership may drop in the future, necessitating additional funding. ICPSR is often viewed as a major part of the national social science infrastructure, yet doesn't have significant contributions from the federal government. Heitowit suggests assembling a prestigious group of social scientists to meet with the National Science Foundation officials to explore this issue. Another possible funding source is an endowment. Preliminary discussions are under way at the ISR to determine if this is an avenue that is available to ICPSR.

An end-user survey has long been on the agenda of this committee. Use of ICPSR data in publications, dissertations, grant applications, proposals, classroom instruction, policy- setting, etc., can be a persuasive argument for the centrality of ICPSR to the social sciences. Information of this nature can be convincing in Washington in terms of better documenting the major role that ICPSR plays in the social science community. Likewise, information of this type can be compelling in convincing university administrators to join the Consortium or retain Consortium membership. Heitowit plans to measure researchers’ use of ICPSR data by asking Official Representatives for names of five to ten end users who can then be surveyed, and by surveying groups within professional associations.

Finally, the committee discussed plans for the upcoming 1999 Official Representatives meeting. Suggestions for session topics included confidentiality, the 2000 Census, instructional data use, Year 2000 data problems, federal initiatives of the statistical agencies, the Data Documentation Initiative, international data, NARA and automated archiving, SPSS and SAS packages, and cooperative ventures. Suggestions from ORs will be sought and planning will continue.

Quantitative Research and Training Committee

The Committee report was presented by Bollen and Heitowit.

The Summer Program Advisory Committee met the day before the Council meeting. The main points covered in the Summer Program Committee report included:

* Adjust the four week Categorical Analysis workshop to increase the coverage on logic/regression type models
* Change and reorient the Nonlinear Systems lecture series to place greater emphasis on computer-intensive and adaptive change modeling
* Reorganize the Dynamic and Longitudinal Analysis lecture series to emphasize panel design and event history analysis models
* Add a short workshop on Latent Growth Analysis

The Summer Program Committee also reemphasized its commitment to include elements in the curriculum on missing data, Bayesian statistics, ecological inference, and computer-based experimental designs and methods.

There was also a recommendation that ICPSR be more proactive in attracting to the Program graduate students who are likely to be major contributors to and developers of advances in quantitative research methods.

The Council Committee on Research and Training endorsed this idea and recommended that the Council earmark specific additional funding in the Program budget for this purpose. The Council voted unanimously to do so.

The Council Committee also reported on the following items:

* The planning for a special advanced topics conference on methodologies to deal with the issues of missing data is proceeding but at a slower rate than anticipated. The participation of several key actors has been more difficult to schedule than was earlier thought to be the case. The conference is most likely to be held in the spring of 2000.
* The Committee endorsed ICPSR’s sponsoring one-day short courses in conjunction with various national professional meetings.
* No fee increase was requested for the Summer Program for 1999.

The Committee and the Council as a whole discussed the creation of a new series of workshops/working conferences. The goal would be to bring together small groups of young, outstanding scholars to work on the intercept of substantive and theoretical issues with advanced empirical methodologies. The conferences would be established in the name of Warren Miller. Funding efforts would be led by ISR development officials with initial targeting of Warren's friends and colleagues in the field of Political Science.

The Committee reported that the Summer Program had been displaced by the University of Michigan from its traditional home base at Helen Newberry House. Council passed a resolution calling upon university officials to aid ICPSR in finding a suitable location for the Program (text below).

"The ICPSR Council wishes to express its concern that the Housing Division of the University of Michigan has decided to displace the ICPSR Summer Training Program from its traditional summer base at Helen Newbury house. This Program is internationally renowned for its training of scholars and graduate students. Helen Newbury House has been the center for ICPSR's Summer Program for over 25 years. It has come to symbolize this successful educational activity that brings prestige to the University of Michigan. It would be mutually beneficial to ICPSR and the University of Michigan to continue this collaboration by working together to find a suitable place to house the ICPSR Summer Program."

Administration and Governance Committee

Council approved the FY99 budget in March 1998. Minor changes were made, and final approval was received in June of 1998. The budget for FY 2000 will be circulated for approval in June of 1999.

The format of the budget (now in "accountant" format) was discussed. The ICPSR Council Chair would like to see, for example, space cost-parceled out by function rather than bundled as one administrative cost; this would help show general archive/funded archive splits. The current budget is in ISR format.

Exhibit 5 shows that approximately $1 million is in the "checking" account. It was suggested to move some portion into University mutual funds and then move interest from mutual funds into the operating budget to be spent in two ways: (1) capital purchases, (2) new projects.

Funding for the Summer Program scholarships was approved by the Administration and Governance Committee. The motion to approve was made by Hal and passed unanimously.

Council discussed creating a Warren Miller scholarship. Heinz Eulau reported that this had the "enthusiastic endorsement" of Warren Miller. A scholarship of ($60-90K) would fund a two-three week conference. Fundraising for the scholarship would be continuous. Warren Miller was not so enthusiastic about a Summer Program scholarship or naming an archive in his name.

There was a proposal to Council to endorse this activity, which would be located in ISR, not just ICPSR. A motion was made by Margo Anderson; it was supported by four Council members, opposed by two. Those opposed questioned how this conference would help ICPSR; they stated that this is a great way to honor Warren Miller but didn't see how it would help with the future/direction of ICPSR. They thought that other things would help the membership more and that the conference would not help the 350 member organizations. Heinz Eulau stated that the conference would help utilize more ICPSR data. Richard Rockwell added that the conference would try to tie in benefits that would help the Consortium as a whole.

The Administration and Governance Committee discussed looking for fundamental and ongoing support for ICPSR. Social scientists see us as the national data archive, and this leads to pressure on ICPSR to make data easily accessible. We need to look at an acquisitions policy as a national archive, not just for universities. Universities provide fundamental support, and ICPSR cannot divert those funds for national archive focus (e.g., Nielsen market research, bank data). There is a lot that a national data archive might do that we do not do because of our membership structure. Winsborough and Rockwell have discussed some of these issues with David Featherman and Steve Fienberg. There needs to be a meeting held that raises the question about how to establish/become a national data archive. This can't be done on the backs of the member organizations. It was suggested that we contact the government to participate. Hal will write a letter to the Russell Sage Foundation which will be circulated to Rockwell and Featherman before sending. ICPSR needs to find a way to be more public without claiming to have the totality of social science data.

It was suggested that the Archival Development Committee prepare a statement that could be presented at this conference. The document should present the issues, and how to approach these issues.

Council discussed the formation of new standing Committees:

1. Budget Committee
2. Planning and Policy Committee

A possible plan for future Council sessions included:

* Friday afternoon--Three Committee meetings:
  + Planning and Policy
  + Archival Development
  + Training
* Saturday morning: Reports from above Committees.
* Saturday morning/afternoon--Three Committee meetings:
  + Budget
  + Member Relations
  + Information Technology
* Saturday afternoon/Sunday morning: Reports from above Committees.

Some Council members may need to serve on more than one of these committees.

Discussion of Collaborations

ICPSR should not be in competition with its member organizations with the exception of proposal having to do with ICPSR's core mission. It was suggested that when we're successful, we announce that with a statement about our openness to participate with member organizations. ICPSR needs to define a strategic plan, and determine what benefit proposals have for meeting an archival and other organizational goals.

Health Promotion Archive

This proposal would be a joint activity of ICPSR and the University of Illinois-Chicago Prevention Research Center (PRC). Hal raised the following questions: (1) Does this fit with our strategic plan? (2) What are the real costs? (3) What are the opportunity costs (for staff time), and will this mean a reduction in resources available for other things (e.g., the national archive proposal)?

Future Meetings

The ICPSR Council is scheduled to meet June 4 - 6, 1999, in Ann Arbor, Michigan.