ICPSR Council Minutes --- March 17-18, 2005

**Council members present:** Darren Davis, Ilona Einowski, Charles Franklin, John Handy, Mark Hayward, Paula Lackie, Sam Myers, Jim Oberly, Ruth Peterson, Walter Piovesan, Ron Rindfuss

**ICPSR staff present:** Erik Austin, Rita Bantom, Bryan Beecher, Dieter Burrell, Linda Detterman, Peter Granda, Bree Gunter, Myron Gutmann, Hank Heitowit, Peter Joftis, Stacey Kubitz, Jim McNally, Mary Morris, Asmat Noori, JoAnne O'Rourke, Mary Vardigan, Cole Whiteman

**Visitors:** David Featherman (ISR Director); Pam Smock (ISR Associate Director); Diane Geraci (ICPSR Faculty Associate)

Approval of Minutes

One change to the October 2004 Council minutes was proposed: substitute "James Oberly and Paula Lackie" for "staff" on the bottom of page 17. With this change acceded to, the October 2004 Council minutes were unanimously approved.

Director's Report

Personnel and Facilities

Myron Gutmann noted several personnel changes that ICPSR has implemented recently, including the hiring of CNS Assistant Director Asmat Noori and the recruitment of Felicia LeClere as the new Director of the Demography Archive. LeClere will be in attendance for the June Council meeting, but does not begin her official appointment until September 1. Gutmann also reported that Janet Vavra retired on February 28, and that Amy Pienta will be on maternity leave until April.

Gutmann gave a brief description of the reclassification project that is under way at the University of Michigan, noting that Rita Bantom is chairing the ISR committee to reexamine job descriptions and reclassify 1,200 staff.

Gutmann also reported that the foundation of Perry II is almost complete and that the steel is currently being erected. The construction team is still on schedule for a 2006 completion date.

Collections and IT

Since October 495 files have been released, 141 of which are new collections. The Collection Delivery Unit has implemented a new file naming system, a new downloads page, and has successfully launched the new ICPSR Web page. Gutmann also reported that ICPSR has a new file server and a new Oracle server.

Proposal Update

The following proposals were recently funded:

* NICHD Historical Demography Training
* ICPSR/SRC Joint Project for Web-Based Documentation (CPES)
* Detroit Area Study Compilation
* National Institute of Justice (in negotiation)
* SAMHDA (in negotiation)

The following proposals are pending:

* Population and Environment in the U.S. Great Plains (resubmitting)
* Chinese Historical Demography (pending)
* NEH Founding Moments with Arizona State (pending)
* NSF Digital Preservation Research (pending)

New Publications

ICPSR has recently published a Guide to Social Science Data Preparation and Archiving. There is also a new ICPSR conference booth, which will be presented at PAA in April.

Comments by David Featherman

Gutmann introduced David Featherman, who is finishing his eight-year term as the Director of ISR. Featherman noted that one of the main challenges during his tenure has been improving the relationship between ISR and the ICPSR Council. Featherman praised the Council for their hard work over the last several years, and thanked them for helping to improve this relationship. He also stressed the importance of maintaining the symbiotic relationship that has developed and continuing the working partnership in future years.

Budget Report

Stacey Kubitz gave a brief overview of the budget, commenting on five areas: the FY05 budget, ICPSR reserves, the proposed FY06 budget, overall trends, and trends in revenues generated by both membership and grants and contracts for the 1989-2006 period.

Currently the FY05 budget shows a $50,000 surplus and Kubitz forecasts a $100,000 surplus at the end of the fiscal year. As of 6/30/04, ICPSR had $2 million in reserves. Almost half of that amount is earmarked for specific activities, but $701,549 is in discretionary funds and $429,463 is in a quasi-endowment. The proposed FY06 budget will be presented to Council in June for formal approval. The current presentation of that budget shows a $154,000 surplus. Since building reserves continues to be a top priority, surpluses are targeted for ICPSR reserves. In terms of overall trends, ICPSR's volume of business has grown in the past four to five years, driven primarily by growth in sponsored activities. The substantial increases in revenues from grants and contracts should slow and level off in the immediate future. Membership income has been fairly constant over the last five to six years. That may change with the marketing and promotional activities that are being put in place now and over the next few years.

Membership and Marketing Report

Linda Detterman presented a comprehensive marketing strategy for ICPSR. She began by talking about the importance of such a plan in staying ahead of the curve and maintaining relevance to the community that ICPSR serves. This is an era of budget constraints in higher education, which makes having a coherent marketing strategy all the more important. In addition, we need to address our changing audience and ways to connect with people and communicate our relevance in the Internet environment.

Linda went on to define the focus of the Marketing Plan. It ties into the ICPSR Strategic Plan in the sense that we are seeking to grow the membership and provide access to data to more institutions in accord with our mission. We need to sustain current members and find new ones. To do this, it is important to understand what our unique data resources are and to articulate the benefits of membership. We will be looking at growth in membership in our traditional market, providing new products and services, and investigating new and underserved markets.

Since September 2004 when Linda arrived at ICPSR, she has accomplished a great deal. She has used ICPSR's membership database and NCES data to do some member profiling and has also created internal customer and product advisory groups to gather more information. She has also conducted a review of ICPSR's conference marketing program. As part of this effort, ICPSR has created a new exhibit booth in an effort to break through the "noise" at conferences and to provide a welcoming environment for people to come to talk to us. Linda has also worked to identify ICPSR competitors and to ensure that we have adequate support materials to address fee restructure issues.

We have learned that we need to better understand the needs of members and users; proactive relationship management may help in this regard. We need to trumpet the things we do especially well, such as user support and training, and we need to develop a cohesive brand identity for ICPSR. It is also important to identify trends and to proactively meet the challenges they bring.

Linda's strategy is to look first at "low-hanging fruit" -- members who have dropped who might be encouraged to rejoin, nonmember schools offering relevant degrees, etc. The current membership contains 8 percent of the Carnegie institutions: 91 percent of Extensives, 29 percent of Intensives, 28 percent of Bachelors Liberal Arts, 10 percent of Masters, and 0 percent of Community Colleges. We have only 5 percent of HBCUs, and this might present an opportunity to create a new federation. We have members in nearly every state, and 26 percent of our members are in federations. Eighty percent are participating in ICPSR Direct. One hundred percent of institutions that confer greater than 25 PhDs in social science and history are members.

We want to learn more about current members, their OR profiles, their satisfaction with our services and products, their views of the brand, etc. This quantitative research will take place in late spring or early summer of 2005. We will also undertake some qualitative research at the OR Meeting in October.

We need to be strategic in making decisions as we move forward with our marketing plans. The following are important guidelines to consider in terms of new initiatives:

* Does this support our mission?
* Does it benefit the current membership?
* What is the size of the market and what does the market want?
* What are the costs?
* Will it generate revenue and how will it generate that revenue?
* Do we have the right distribution mechanism?
* What type of promotions will be required to achieve awareness and what are the costs of those promotions?
* How will it impact staffing?
* Are there formidable competitors?
* Should we partner with another group?
* Can we find a good leader for the initiative?

We will be turning next to look at pricing and the membership structure for the non-Carnegie portion of the membership.

Council was pleased with the plan and had several comments and questions. One issue raised was whether "ICPSR" is considered a good brand name. Because of its length as an acronym, it can be hard to remember. We also need to think about our name and potential product names as we look at new markets.

In terms of new markets, we might look at county and state policy units, nonprofit organizations, and public opinion companies, whose leadership comes from all of our member institutions. We don't necessarily have to market memberships per se. We may be able to provide stand-alone products or a subscription service. It is important to test new products thoroughly before launching them. As we move forward in refining our marketing goals, we will continue to ask for Council's views on what our priorities should be in reaching out to new markets.

Online Analysis

Staff presented a slide show summarizing the major points of a paper that was distributed at the Council meeting. The presentation highlighted the installation and use issues associated with Nesstar, SDA, and VDC, and also covered the strengths and weaknesses of each package. Staff noted that the installation of VDC took much longer than expected (staff from Harvard eventually performed the installation for us), and so VDC did not receive as much attention as the other two packages. The conclusion of the presentation was that while the SDA system is attractive due to its batch-processing and strong analytic capabilities, ICPSR's end users may prefer any one of the three systems depending upon their specific needs. Council elaborated on this latter point by articulating several different use cases for an online analysis tool:

* Complex online analysis (where SDA might be a good choice)
* Quick fact checking (where SDA or Nesstar might be good choices)
* Instruction and exploration (where Nesstar or VDC might be good choices)

Staff concluded with a brief demo of SDA and Nesstar, showing a number of the strengths and limitations of each package.

Council noted that one goal of any online analysis package should be to lower barriers for accessing and using data, and Council also recommended that ICPSR review its goals for selecting any package (or set of packages).

Budget Committee

**Council:** John Handy (Chair), Mark Hayward, Walter Piovesan

**Staff:** Myron Gutmann, Stacey Kubitz

FY2005 Year-End Projection

ICPSR staff reminded Council that we budgeted for a Fiscal Year 2005 $500,000 gain. A couple of sponsored projects were awarded later than anticipated. Actual revenues and expenses are projected to be under budget, resulting in a forecast of $100,000 gain. Year-end projections include the $460,000 loan to ISR for the Perry II construction project.

Although ICPSR has a total fund balance of over $2 million, staff reminded Council that only roughly $700,000 is discretionary, and the rest is earmarked for various obligations. Staff and Council are still working toward the goal of building reserves with annual gains. Staff pointed out that if a situation arose, the $430,000 quasi-endowment funds could be liquidated.

FY2006 Budget

Staff presented a draft budget for Fiscal Year 2006. Council will formally approve the budget at the June meeting. Highlights of the draft budget included:

* $154,000 gain anticipated
* Stable membership dues revenue ($2.8 million expected)
* $2.2 million in indirect cost recovery revenue expected
* $128,000 General Fund salary support for ICPSR leadership
* $50,000 proposal development budget that could support minority archive start-up costs
* $74,000 budgeted to host Official Representatives meeting
* $10,000 to support the Official Representative Sabbatical
* $10,000 membership dues investment in courses to be taught outside the usual Summer Program timeframe
* $20,000 for a seat in the University of Michigan's Research Data Center

Some time was spent on discussing potential financial risks. Three were identified. It was noted that current topical archive funding may decrease in the coming years. ICPSR needs to be proactive in securing funding in new and creative ways. The University of Michigan's Classification project was also identified as a potential risk. The project will transition all professional/administrative, clerical/office, technical, and allied health positions at the university to market-based system through a three-phased approach. The risk most discussed was that of the impending ICPSR membership restructuring. It is staff and Council's expectation that the adoption of the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education will benefit the members and ICPSR without impacting our fiscal health.

The committee also briefly discussed potential investments that could impact the Fiscal Year 2007 budget, such as senior staff recruitments.

Quantitative Research and Training Committee

**Council:** Charles Franklin, Paula Lackie, Sam Myers, Jim Oberly (Chair)

**Staff:** Dieter Burrell, Hank Heitowit

Summer Program Report

Hank Heitowit reported on the 2005 Summer Program. Enrollments are on pace with those of other recent years. The curriculum for the four-week and eight-week courses has remained stable. There are seven new short courses added to the Program this year:

* Data Sharing and Dissemination
* Aging and Health in Latin America
* Using Data from the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES)
* Introduction to CrimeStat 3.0
* Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN)
* Social Network Analysis: Theory and Methods
* American Community Survey

On the day before the Council meeting, an ad hoc committee met to formulate ideas about increasing the course offerings in the Summer Program to reflect research interests on ethnic diversity and minority issues. The committee was composed of Heitowit, Ruth Peterson, Darren Davis, and Charles Franklin. Heitowit reported on a proposal for the 2006 Summer Program, which included two types of courses. The first would be a four-week course on the general topic of "Methodological and Measurement Issues in the Study of Race and Ethnicity." This course might cover such areas as: group identity and consciousness, sampling issues, biases in statistics and data, measurement error, and reliability and validity of racial and group attitudes. A second type of course would be of shorter duration with a more narrow focus. One-week courses might be offered organized around analyzing a specific dataset such as: National Study of African Americans, National Black Election Studies, Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, Detroit Area Studies, etc.

SIMI Report

Jim Oberly reported on the SIMI Committee meeting at Rollins College in January. The QRT discussed four items that the SIMI Committee recommended to the ICPSR Council:

* ICPSR should investigate developing an online toolkit targeted at urban community colleges in the U.S., which often serve students from underrepresented groups. Urban community colleges often have a civics/citizenship course requirement, and SIMI suggested that ICPSR data would be especially appropriate for these courses. This proposal was forwarded to the QMUG Committee for discussion.
* ICPSR should investigate developing a data-related instructional project with American Indian Tribal Colleges, possibly in collaboration with the Newberry Library. Gutmann requested that this initiative be deferred until after the SIMI evaluation in October.
* ICPSR should create a special prize competition for the best instructional module or instructional innovation in the social sciences and in social science history. The winner should receive a cash prize of $500, and the winner's institution should receive a credit of $500 toward the next year's ICPSR membership dues; the winner should also be invited to present his/her work at the 2005 OR meeting. This initiative was approved by the Council.
* ICPSR should provide support for SIMI committee members or staff to attend professional association meetings in order to promote the SIMI initiative. Gutmann requested that this idea be part of a broader discussion, to include the Marketing Director, about the role and costs of pre-conference workshops in ICPSR outreach activities.

Dieter Burrell reported on the second annual APSA Conference on Teaching and Learning, held in Bethesda, MD, in February. He reported that there was great deal of interest in undergraduate teaching. However, few of the presentations at the conference linked in a direct manner to SIMI-related activities.

QMUG Report

John Handy reported on the QMUG meeting in Washington in January 2005. The Committee met with representatives of AERA and the United Negro College Fund. It was agreed that ICPSR would move ahead to create a proposal for a "planning grant" to establish a set activities for "training the trainers" as well as for recruiting first-year graduate students to the Summer Program. A series of foundations will be identified for possible support of the proposed activities.

Archival Development Committee

**Council:** Darren Davis, Ilona Einowski, Ruth Peterson, Ron Rindfuss (Chair)

**Staff:** Linda Detterman, Peter Granda, Peter Joftis

Ways to Acknowledge Data Depositors

The Committee recommended that staff establish a mockup of a Web page that would recognize new data deposits. Council would view the page at the June Council meeting and offer suggestions for its implementation. The following items were discussed as specific strategies and methods to increase recognition of the deposit process:

* Whenever possible, acknowledge the entire research team and funding agency as well as the Principal Investigator
* Make distinctions among data deposits to award special recognition for those that are significant and adhere to high technical standards
* Consult with data depositors to craft an appropriate letter to their home institutions recognizing the value of the collection for future research
* Increase the importance of the ICPSR bibliographic citation in the minds of researchers by allowing them to download it as a separate link on the ICPSR website
* Regularly provide download statistics to depositors so that they know how many times that their collection has been used
* Consider providing one-year individual memberships for depositors who are at nonmember institutions
* Establish a review committee to discuss providing special recognition for select data collections
* Work with professional associations to consider awarding prizes, which ICPSR would fund, for important data collections
* Ecards: Contact depositors once a year to ask if they know about recent publications which used their data

Staff Committee to Revise ICPSR's Collection Development Policy

Staff reported to Council that the internal Committee had been formed and will submit a draft policy for Council to review in June. The Committee reviewing the policy also needs to consider how any changes in the policy might affect the work of the various topical archives.

NICHD Study of Early Child Care

The Committee reviewed the structure of this data collection, which includes both qualitative and quantitative components. The Committee considered the collection to be a key dataset in its field, enthusiastically supported archiving it at ICPSR, and suggested that staff seek money from NICHD for the project. This will give ICPSR the opportunity to highlight the importance of its forthcoming enclave as a key component for future archiving practices and explain in more detail why some data collections need to be restricted.

AERA/ICPSR Education Archive Meeting

The meeting occurred in Ann Arbor on February 7 and included Felice Levine, the Executive Director of AERA, scholars from several universities, and ICPSR staff. The aim of the meeting was to explore ways that AERA and ICPSR could work cooperatively to increase the number of data collections available to the educational research community. The Committee was strongly supportive of this initiative and asked staff to proceed to seek initial funds for this purpose.

ICPSR Summer Program Workshop for Data Producers

The Committee supported the idea of this workshop and believed that it offered many possibilities, including conducting it at different venues and at varying lengths from as short as an hour or two to a full week. The Committee suggested staff also consider a funding workshop as part of such a presentation or even as a separate workshop altogether. A person from a funding agency should be included in a workshop for data producers as a way of emphasizing the responsibilities of grantees to share their data. Consideration should also be given to the development of a Web-based course on this topic.

Confidentiality and Restricted Data

The Committee added this item to the agenda to express the need for ICPSR to produce a document that would clearly delineate its policies on confidentiality and restricted data and to address the concerns of depositors who have not placed their data in the Archive. The document should clearly lay out the issues involving why some data collections require restricted distribution and how ICPSR would protect confidentiality. This document should appear in a variety of forms: on the website, as a Bulletin article, and as an academic paper. Sessions at professional meetings should debate this topic. Staff will develop a statement on confidentiality and present the mechanisms involved in restricted-use data at the June meeting.

Planning and Policy Committee

**Council:** Charles Franklin, Mark Hayward (Chair), Jim Oberly, Ron Rindfuss

**Staff:** Erik Austin, Rita Bantom, Myron Gutmann

Census Research Data Center at ISR

Director Myron Gutmann negotiated a new arrangement with the Michigan Census Research Data Center (MCRDC), per instructions from Council at the October 2004 Council meeting. Due to light use of this facility by scholars from ICPSR member institutions, Gutmann and MCRDC Director Margaret Levenstein agreed to a reduced annual payment from ICPSR of $20,000 for a "seat" in the MCRDC facility. It was agreed that if usage of this facility by ICPSR members grew, ICPSR would be willing to pay more at some time in the future (and similarly, if usage dropped even lower, ICPSR could reduce its annual expenditure for this purpose). The committee expressed its satisfaction with this new arrangement.

ISR Director Search

Gutmann announced that James S. Jackson had been selected as the next Director of ISR, following a national search. Jackson, a prominent social psychologist who has been at ISR since the early 1970s, is currently Director of ISR's Research Center on Group Dynamics, and Director of the University of Michigan's Center for Afroamerican and African Studies. Jackson will begin his duties on April 1, 2005, with current ISR Director David Featherman stepping down at that time to devote his full energies to the new Center for Advancing Research and Solutions for Society (which Featherman directs). Gutmann expects that Jackson will introduce changes into the leadership structure and philosophy at ISR. In addition, the imminent University of Michigan Provost transition may cause ISR's arrangement with the University to be reviewed.

Gutmann reported that he had already met with James Jackson, and had outlined some priorities that ICPSR had in the months and years ahead. Among those were the need to regularize the ICPSR Director's position in an academic department at the University, which is particularly time sensitive due to the ICPSR Situational Review now under way, and the possible reappointment of Gutmann as Director.

The committee applauded the choice of Jackson as ISR Director. Council Chair Hayward will send Jackson a note of congratulations on behalf of the Council.

ICPSR Fellows and Interns Programs

Due to the pace of other activities, the staff has not done further planning of these programs. We will bring it back to the committee when we have made further progress.

Perry Building Construction

Erik Austin and Rita Bantom briefly discussed the progress of construction on the Perry Building addition under way since last fall. Many tons of earth have been removed, foundations poured, and steel erected. The construction is nearly back on a schedule that would see completion of the addition in January of 2006, with occupancy by the Survey Research Center's Survey Research Operations (SRO) staff in March of that year. Additional SRO staff (employed by the telephone interviewing facility) will be relocated to the Lower Level of the current Perry Building, now largely unoccupied. Austin and Bantom reported some disruptions to ICPSR staff, chiefly from diesel fumes, dust, and construction noise; a few staff have had to be relocated to offices on the side of Perry I furthest away from the construction.

Flanigan and Miller Awards Publicity

Staff has now created a portal on the ICPSR website to publicize the Warren E. Miller and William H. Flanigan Awards. It describes the awards and documents all of the past winners of each award. The committee reviewed this new feature, and expressed satisfaction that it increases public awareness of these important ICPSR awards.

Current Senior Recruitment Activities

Gutmann reviewed for the committee the efforts to recruit a senior scientist/administrator to lead ICPSR's Data Sharing for Demographic Research (DSDR) project. A strong pool of candidates was assembled by the search committee that Gutmann appointed. The top candidate was Dr. Felicia LeClere of the University of Notre Dame. She accepted ICPSR's offer to become director of the DSDR project, and hold appointments of Associate Research Scientist in both ICPSR and ISR's Population Studies Center (PSC). LeClere will begin her duties at ICPSR on a fractional basis on June 1, 2005, and will become full-time with us on September 1. Dr. Amy Pienta, ICPSR's Acquisitions Director, will continue to manage this project on an interim basis until LeClere comes aboard on a full-time basis.

ICPSR's work on the DSDR project began in July of 2004. Its main goal is to provide assistance to NICHD-funded demographic data collection projects in making their data more widely available to the demographic research community. One of the most pressing needs of these data collection projects is assistance with administration of restricted-use data agreements; the DSDR project is focusing on this element as its top priority. Staff on the project are also assembling a database of all NIH-funded behavioral science projects over the last 30+ years that have produced research data. Project plans call for contacting the principal investigators of these data collections to offer them assistance in making their data readily accessible for secondary analysis. ICPSR staff are also creating website technology that will permit the export of certain data archiving functions to data producers.

Gutmann noted that LeClere intends to relocate some grants that she is actively working on to ICPSR. In passing, he also called the committee's attention to a joint ICPSR/Population Studies Center effort that will seek funding to create a harmonized series of U.S. fertility studies back to 1955. This effort is being led by Dr. Pamela Smock of PSC.

OR Sabbatical

Dr. Donald Davison, an Official Representative and Political Scientist at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, has been chosen for ICPSR's 2005 OR Sabbatical. Davison will be in residence at ICPSR for most of June 2005, and while here will work on two instructional modules that will be deposited in SIMI. Those modules deal with American national elections from 1952-2004, and crime and punishment in the U.S.

Staff briefly noted that a team of scholars responsible for developing another instructional module will also be in residence in Ann Arbor during the time of Davison's OR sabbatical. Dr. Charles Prysby (University of North Carolina-Greensboro) and Dr. Carmine Scavo (East Carolina University) are being supported by ICPSR to create a Web-based version of their popular Supplementary Empirical Teaching Unit in Political Science (SETUPS) based on the 2004 U.S. National Election Study.

ICPSR Council Elections/Nominating Committee Activities

Staff reviewed the progress of nominations for the 2005 Council election. Sixteen nominations have been received so far, and biographical information has been assembled on each of the people suggested. Two Council members filling unexpired terms (Nancy McGovern and Sam Myers) have been asked to run for full, four-year terms; they have agreed to do so. The Nominating Committee will conduct a "virtual" meeting by phone in April or May to consider nominations and construct an electoral slate. That slate will be presented to Council at its June 2005 meeting. The election will be held after the OR meeting in October, and will be conducted electronically, utilizing the Campus-Vote system that was employed for the 2003 Council elections.

New Topical Focus on Minority and African American Populations

Committee discussion then focused on a position paper prepared by Gutmann entitled "Planning for Additional ICPSR Activities Related to Data About Minority Populations" (included in the March Council briefing book). Three priorities were outlined in the position paper: additional offerings on minority populations in the Summer Training Program; creation of a topical archive featuring data about minority populations; and recruiting senior staff to coordinate activities around this new focus. Some developments in this area had already begun by the time of the March Council meeting. A four-person planning group (Charles Franklin, Darren Davis, Ruth Peterson, and Hank Heitowit) met the day before the March Council meeting to plan a course to be offered in the 2006 Summer Program. Gutmann has had conversations with incoming ISR Director James Jackson about recruiting a senior faculty member to head up this ICPSR activity, with Jackson agreeing to seek University of Michigan assistance in this recruiting effort.

The committee extensively discussed the nature and shape of courses that might be offered in 2006 and beyond. Darren Davis volunteered to establish and lead an advisory committee to develop this course concept. A number of ideas were put forward, including a focus on health and educational outcomes disparities of minority populations; partnerships with book publishers to get widespread visibility for data resources developed by the minority affairs activity; outreach efforts such as professional meeting presentations and exhibits and a symposium at the 2005 OR meeting on minority-related research and its impact on public policy; and Collection Development efforts to acquire more empirical research data relating to minority populations.

The committee enthusiastically endorsed the concepts put forward in the position paper, as well as the timelines for accomplishing the several goals discussed in the paper.

Membership Relations Committee

**Council:** John Handy, Sam Myers, Ruth Peterson (Chair), Walter Piovesan

**Staff:** Linda Detterman, Mary Morris, Mary Vardigan

Membership Activity Report

Membership activity since November has been positive with a total of six schools joining, including two returning members. One member was dropped for non-payment and one member announced their intention of dropping at the conclusion of the 2005 fiscal year.

Marketing Report

The Marketing Report can be found in the plenary session notes.

The key discussion topic during the committee meeting was the request for any additional research topics/questions that Council or Staff would like to see included in the upcoming member and user research. Research is planned for late spring/early summer (OR) and in fall (user) of 2005. Research topics of interest are to be forwarded to Linda Detterman.

User Support Discussion

Overall goal of the User Support document and resulting recommendations is to enhance user support services already in place.

Recommendations already implemented include:

* Incorporation of a "Need Help" button on the top navigational bar of the website designed to highlight the user's local campus contact as well as provide online documentation help options (Help pages and FAQs) and staff contact information
* Highlighting of ICPSR Direct Information -- the word Direct is prominently and continuously displayed during the entire Web session for users connecting from ICPSR Direct institutions
* Update of the Contact Us Web page to provide more information on modes of contact, hours of operation, and expected response time
* Implementation of Web-based software called FootPrints to track, respond to, and learn from Web-based and email requests. The advantages of this software include: a centralized database for all user requests; the assignment of a unique ticket number to each request such that tracking of the inquiry through resolution can be achieved; a knowledge base feature that allows staff to enter information that can be searched by other staff; and the ability to generate reports along several dimensions.
* Adoption of a three-tiered staffing model in which the first tier of support is provided by junior staff members who are responsible for answering routine questions (e.g., Is my school a member? Who is my OR?). Non-routine inquiries are passed along to mid-to-senior level staff for resolution. If it is determined the question is one that s/he cannot answer, the third tier of support contact is offered, which is the study principal investigator or the study staff.

Recommendations that are in development include:

* Consideration of extending hours of operation for customer contact. Analysis of the volume of requests after 5:00 EST, as well as funding requirements, is in process, and recommendations for both hours of operation and staffing will be developed from these analyses.
* Exploration of instant chat, a feature offered through FootPrints
* Additional training and support for ORs
* Integrating user support systems across the various archives

The committee requested that staff communicate with ORs about possible additional support they want from ICPSR. It was noted that feedback mechanisms to garner this type of information will be available at the OR Meeting in October and could also be incorporated into the scheduled market research.

Fee Restructure

Staff presented a memo and documentation that articulated the history of the restructuring effort, the goals for the new fee structure, transition and inflation adjustment simulations and recommendations, and response to the announcement of the proposed fee structure based upon the Carnegie Classification system set to begin in 2007.

The committee acknowledged that issues of equity and fairness are still somewhat unresolved, but that more discussion would likely not resolve these issues, since a consistent need-based formula for member institutions does not exist. Additionally, the Carnegie system was found to be used by several other organizations as a mechanism on which to base fees.

The committee recommended that significant proactive support be offered as the fee restructure is implemented. Efforts are to include:

* A letter announcing the adoption of the fee structure that reiterates offers for support information, such as making better use of ICPSR services on your campus
* The implementation of a "softening campaign" that will be executed several months prior to issuance of the 2007 invoice. The plan for this campaign will be presented at the October 2005 Council meeting.
* Identification and personal calls to support institutions undergoing significant increases in fees, particularly those that demonstrate lower rates of utilization
* Consideration on a case by case basis of alternate transition periods for those member institutions that make special transition requests
* Personal contact for any members who contact to cancel to offer support, lobbying ideas, and fee options prior to acceptance of membership cancellation

The committee discussed the feedback received from member institutions resulting from the three requests for feedback (two in December 2004 and an additional request in January 2005). The committee voted to endorse the Carnegie-based fee structure and to forward it to Council for adoption.

During the reporting out, Council voted unanimously to adopt the recommended fee structure.

OR Meeting 2005

Discussion related to the 2005 OR Meeting revolved largely around scheduling and content of the meeting sessions. Diane Geraci joined the OR Meeting planning discussion.

Session timing was altered somewhat to accommodate a Welcome "Rally" Friday morning followed by the Symposium and related break-out sessions.

The Symposium topic will focus on Underrepresented Groups: Data, Research and Policy Issues. Sam Myers agreed to lead the development of the symposium and contacts of potential presenters and panel members. Sam articulated four areas of focus for the topic:

* Methodological issues: Ensuring minorities are in the database
* Measuring race: Issues of multi-race and non-responses to race questions
* Policy issues: Why we should be concerned about race
* Confidentiality issues

Due to time constraints, the development of a full list of potential organizers/participants slated to lead each session was not finished, and development of the list will continue over the coming weeks.

It was noted that as in the past, staff will plan to chair all sessions.

Information Technology Committee

**Council:** Darren Davis, Ilona Einowski (Chair), Paula Lackie

**Staff:** Bryan Beecher, Asmat Noori, Cole Whiteman

SANS Certification Update

Staff reported that three ICPSR staff members are preparing to take an exam for SANS (SysAdmin, Audit, Network, Security) Institute certification. SANS announced earlier in the week that they are dropping their research project requirement; passing the exam is still required. Council asked for a brief written report on what staff learned from the certification experience, and whether there would be value in having others at ICPSR take SANS training.

Warm Backup Location Update

Staff and Council discussed the need to arrange warm backup for the ICPSR website -- a backup site that could be brought online quickly if the primary site were to become unavailable. Several possible locations and partners were discussed, including other archives and commercial backup services. During the 2005-06 fiscal year, Staff and Council will develop detailed requirements, solicit written proposals, and pin down a workable arrangement for implementation during the 2006-07 fiscal year. This may involve payment in dollars, in kind (with reciprocal backup of another archive), in free ICPSR membership, or some other creative agreement.

Server Architecture

Staff described the current technical architecture that supports ICPSR internal and external services, primarily from two server machines. The machines' reliability has been good but expensive, and staff is concerned that any downtime for either machine would take down most or all services. Thus staff is planning a shift from a small number of large expensive machines that each provide many services to a larger number of small inexpensive machines that each provide focused service. This will require more system administration effort but this can be mitigated by automated tools. The current server room can accommodate a few more machines, but we might investigate server space in another nearby location. The shift will happen in phases over Fiscal Years 06, 07, and 08.

Open Session

Hayward reviewed the action items from the meeting by committee:

Archival Development

The organization needs a way to acknowledge data depositors. The staff is directed to prepare a statement that outlines a strategy to acknowledge and perhaps reward individuals that decide to deposit their datasets with ICPSR.

The organization needs a policy statement on data confidentiality and we need to publicize that stance. The staff is directed to create such a document that outlines and describes the mechanisms that ICPSR employs to protect data and for using restricted data.

Information Technology

The staff should produce a report on the benefits of the computer security training and who else in the organization might profit from similar training.

Member Relations

Staff need to develop materials to assist the ORs and other individuals on member campuses to explain and defend the coming changes in membership categories and the resulting changes in annual membership fees. This is especially necessary for those at institutions that face significant fee adjustments.

The recent creation of (electronic) Web-based services for individual users may have cost the organization in establishing and maintaining direct (personal) communication with ORs, faculty, and students. We need to create mechanisms for better interaction with clients and data users.

The staff should present a report at the next Council meeting on the use of the new "My Data" service.

Member Relations

Staff need to develop materials to assist the ORs and other individuals on member campuses to explain and defend the coming changes in membership categories and the resulting changes in annual membership fees. This is especially necessary for those at institutions that face significant fee adjustments.

The recent creation of (electronic) Web-based services for individual users may have cost the organization in establishing and maintaining direct (personal) communication with ORs, faculty, and students. We need to create mechanisms for better interaction with clients and data users.

The staff should present a report at the next Council meeting on the use of the new "My Data" service.

Planning and Policy

The Council Chair will write a letter to James Jackson congratulating him on assuming the position of Director of the Institute for Social Research.

Quantitative Research and Training

The staff should produce a short report on the potential market or utility of ICPSR's sponsoring one-day preconference workshops in conjunction with national, academic conferences (such as ASA, APSA, AERA, etc.) -- what aspects of the organization should be showcased, to which particular audiences, for what end.

In general one of ICPSR's goals is to lower the barriers to data use. The organization needs to articulate how its efforts in the area of online analysis further this and other ICPSR goals.

The QRT Committee recommended the creation of an award for the winner of a competition for the best new teaching/instructional package. There was no real discussion of how to promote this activity, but Council did vote to set aside money for the award winner. The SIMI committee was designated to review the submissions, and the award is to be presented at the OR meeting.