Council Minutes
June 18, 2025

Council Members (In-Person): Claire Bowen, Jon Cawthorne, Susan Frazier-Kouassi, Sandra Marquart-Pyatt, Jeffrey Morenoff, Gisela Sin, Michael Steeleworthy, and Esther Wilder

Council Members Remote: Randall Akee, Courtney Bell, Michael Cafarella, Janet Stamatel

Council Members Absent: David Armstrong

ICPSR Staff (In-Person): Trent Alexander, JD Alford, Ambyr Amen-Ra, Katherine Baisden, Shanelle Boluyt, Megan Chenoweth, Alina Conn, Linda Detterman, Aalap Doshi, Robert Gessner, Jeannette Jackson, Jeff Jones, John Kubale, John Lemmer, Maggie Levenstein, Jared Lyle, Michelle Overholser, Holly Neilson, Rujuta Umarji, and Candice Wilson

ICPSR Staff Remote: Annahita Akbarifard, Chinedu Amadi-Ndukwe, Emily Arents, Katherine Baisden, Annie Beaubien, Zachary Bennett, David Bleckley, Shanelle Boluyt, Sarah Burchart, Stephanie Carpenter, Megan Chenoweth, Swetha Chigurupati, Robert Choate, Rebekah Chu, Tessa Coleman, Gin Corden, Evan Cosby, Dom Coschino, Edward Czilli, Dominic DiFranco, Vasudha Doppalapudi, Amanda Draft, Julie Eady, Wendi Fornoff, Robert Franzese, Aubrey Garman, Robert Gessner, Chelsea Goforth, Nishit Gopani, Marcell Hawkins, Hassan Hodges, Bill Horvath, Rachel Huang, Samuel Imbody, Meghan Jacobs, Euijin Jung, Veena Kannan, Kevin Kapalla, Jennifer Koski, John Kubale, Reyna Lee, Jenny Li, Scott Liening, Daphne Lin, James McNally, Vrinda Mahishi, Phillip Markee, Gary Mazzeo, Erin Meyer, Elizabeth Moss, Holly Neilson, Nadya Neuhaeusler, Justin Noble, Abigail O'Keefe, Michelle Overholser, Sarah Pearson, Katey Pillars, Darleen Poisson, Sarah Rush, Chelsea Samples-Steele, Joseph Saul, Mike Shallcross, Bing She, Elisabeth Shook, Mike Shove, Kyrani Simon, Alison Sweet, Sandra Tang, David Thomas, Alexandra Toma, Lia Trapaidze, Meg Valade, Sridhar Viswanathan, Melissa Wlodkowski, Sandy Zalmout, and Laura Zimmerman

Approval of Minutes

Gisela Sin, ICPSR Council Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming attendees, both in person and online. The first order of business was the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting. Sin motioned to approve the minutes. John Lemmer proposed an amendment to the minutes: to add JD Alford to the Budget section. Specifically, on page 90, in the first paragraph, JD Alford's name should be included. There were no other amendments. Sin moved to approve the minutes with the proposed amendment. Jon Cawthorne seconded the motion.

Action: Minutes were approved unanimously with the amendment.

The Strategic Vision that was in the June 2025 Council Binder for a vote was addressed. Sin indicated that Council had already voted on this online and it passed. No vote was needed at this meeting. [This is now posted as the ICPSR Strategic Plan, 2025-2030.]

We took a moment to acknowledge Margaret Levenstein being named a Fellow of the [American Association of Advancement of Sciences](#) this year.

Director's Report

Margaret (Maggie) Levenstein, Director of ICPSR, opened the meeting by warmly welcoming attendees, both in person and online, acknowledging the challenge of virtual engagement. She reflected on the past 8 months, noting it has been an intense and rewarding time for ICPSR, filled with both challenges and opportunities. She expressed pride in how the ICPSR community has come together, supported each other, and continued to advance the organization's mission. Levenstein emphasized that ICPSR is not in financial distress despite previous changes in the federal funding landscape; ICPSR is financially stable. ICPSR remains true to its values particularly in supporting each other and the broader community. ICPSR remains committed to its mission and vision through collaboration across staff, faculty, council, and members.

Levenstein outlined key events during upcoming the Biennial Meeting, including the welcome reception, the State of the Consortium presentation, the awards dinner, and ongoing activities at the Michigan League and Michigan Union. She encouraged attendees to engage with posters, sessions, and the ORs, emphasizing the opportunity for council members to interact with the broader ICPSR community.

New staff and transitions were announced. Notable return was Anna Shelton as Membership Development Director. New hires include additions to IT, Metadata, and Curation units. Retirements include Jim McNally after 26 years of service and the upcoming retirement of John Marcotte. Summer interns and staff are actively contributing across departments.

Levenstein announced the recipients of ICPSR's Communicator Scholarships, recognizing undergraduate students who created videos using ICPSR data. This program replaces the previous paper prize.

The financial and funding environment at ICPSR was then presented. Discussions touched on recent funding challenges:

- Terminations of grants from IMLS, CDC, and NSF.
- The CDC termination was particularly painful, reflecting broader federal shifts away from certain types of data.
- ICPSR has managed these impacts, maintaining financial health, projecting a year-end surplus of $1.6 million.

Levenstein led a thoughtful discussion on the changing climate around academic freedom. She highlighted increased pressures tied to federal funding, leading to self-censorship and constrained research agendas. She noted concerns over data degradation (removal of measures

on gender identity and sexuality) and limitations on data from or about vulnerable populations. This raises broader issues about the trade-offs ICPSR faces in preserving its mission within these constraints.

Levenstein reaffirmed ICPSR's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, acknowledging shifts in the national and higher education climate. She emphasized ICPSR's ongoing investment in accessibility infrastructure and the importance of creating a supportive community, particularly for international and vulnerable staff.

Discussion also touched on the ongoing federal interest in scientific data preservation and AI developments. ICPSR sees opportunities to shape the discourse around responsible AI, despite policy shifts removing certain guardrails.

Leventein reported on ongoing initiatives. The Summer Program continues, though smaller, with about one-third in-person participation. Over 300 new data releases in the past year, with high engagement from the research community. MLK Day activity coding racial covenants was a meaningful project, aligning with ICPSR's values and community engagement with creation of high quality data.

She also reviewed the updated strategic vision. Reaffirming ICPSR's mission and operational pillars: access, sustainability, privacy, preservation, innovation, interoperability. The focused priorities are membership service, targeted acquisition, data stewardship best practices, restricted data access improvements, and global leadership in data preservation.

There was active discussion of ICPSR's role in federal data rescue. Staff mobilized to preserve datasets at risk of deletion, downloading over 1,500 datasets. The community contributions via DataLumos have significantly increased. ICPSR is now receiving data transfers from federal staff preparing for closures. An ongoing challenge ensuring access for international researchers, particularly from countries whose data is covered by the new Bulk Data Regulation.

Discussion covered substantial IT progress.
- Website redesign launching July (possibly August) to simplify navigation and reduce redundancy
- Improved search functionality in development
- Streamlining deposit processes under a single system
- Integrating AI tools for metadata enhancement
- Migration to RDE data platform underway to expand functionality and modernize infrastructure

Financial results were discussed positively by Levenstein indicating a strong year-end surplus projected due to higher revenues and lower expenses. The conservative budgeting remains in place to ensure sustainability beyond the end of current projects like RDE. Projected surplus for next year: $450,000. Levenstein acknowledged Alford's impact as improved financial forecasting processes are key to current stability.

Levenstein reiterated ICPSR's commitment to fiscal responsibility, mission-driven work, and community care. The meeting concluded with thanks to staff, council, and members for their contributions through these complex times.

Vote: None at this time
Action Items/Next Steps: None at this time
Slides: Director's Report

Budget and Finance Committee Report

Jon Cawthorne opened the session by presenting an overview of the ICPSR budget, which is scheduled for a Council vote later today. He extended his appreciation to committee members Courtney Bell, Gisela Sin, Susan Kouassi, and Jeffrey Morenoff for their contributions.

Cawthorne highlighted that ICPSR currently is in a strong financial position, including a budget surplus of $1.7 million. He attributed this success to the dedicated work of the Budget and Finance team, specifically recognizing John Lemmer, JD Alford, Fillippo Stargell, Darleen Poisson, and Holly Neilson. Special recognition was given to JD Alford for his outstanding work in developing a detailed Excel tool that has significantly improved budget forecasting and transparency.

Cawthorne provided context by reflecting on the origins of the current budgeting process, which was restructured in 2021 following questions raised by Jared Lyle (back in 2016) as well as by earlier Council members. The goal was to enhance Council members' understanding of the ICPSR budget, especially the distinctions between sponsored programs and the core operating budget. More recently, and more urgently, there has been an effort to develop these tools to improve financial clarity—particularly regarding indirect cost (IDC) percentages and how changes in IDC rates would affect funding for ICPSR.

Alford and his team created a robust Excel tool that now allows for detailed project-level analysis across more than 160 sponsored projects. This has enabled more accurate financial planning and improved decision-making.

Cawthorne presented the Consortium operating budget to Council for its approval:

- Proposed Operating Budget (expenditures): $15.5 million
- Projected Surplus: $450,000

John Lemmer emphasized the need to differentiate between the $15 million operating budget and ICPSR's total organizational budget, which stands at approximately $30 million. The total includes both operating revenue and funding from sponsored programs and memberships. He noted that ICPSR holds $10 million in reserves, demonstrating strong financial stability—an important asset given future uncertainty.

Levenstein stressed the importance of building long-term financial resilience. Drawing from best practices in financial planning, she suggested that ICPSR aim to maintain reserves equal to at least 50% of the annual budget (~$15 million). She proposed a discussion with the development office about establishing a strategic fundraising plan to achieve this reserve goal. Maggie noted that while ICPSR has not previously launched a capital campaign, such an initiative might be warranted in the future.

Lemmer referenced Levenstein's earlier comments regarding [DataLumos](), a program that has seen a notable increase in individual donor support. Maggie confirmed that ICPSR has received more individual donations in the past six months than ever before, a direct result of targeted outreach efforts related to DataLumos.

Vote: ICPSR Operating Budget
Action Items/Next Steps: None at this time
Slides: None at this time

Vote:
Gisela Sin called for a vote on the ICPSR Proposed Operating Budget Fiscal Year 2026. Sin moved forward the motion to approve the ICPSR Proposed Operating Budget Fiscal Year 2026, Michael Steeworthy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Membership, Acquisitions, and User Support Committee Report

Esther Wilder, chair, Membership, Acquisitions, and User Support Committee introduced the committee members.

Wilder commented that there are some exciting updates from the CAT Health program. CAT Health is holding its second in-person NIH workshop this summer. The first was hosted at the University of Michigan, and it's now open to a wider audience for a fee. The workshop has also been made more interactive. The CAT Health IT team created a new brochure that answers common questions NIH researchers have. It's part of the effort to be more supportive to this group of researchers.

Regarding the COVID-19 Trends and Impact Survey, ICPSR has released the restricted version of the dataset, and it has already been downloaded 1,000 times since February. A public-use version is on the way before year-end.

ICPSR is in the middle of a website overhaul. ICPSR is also updating and expanding our teaching resources, especially tools to help users find and evaluate data. The Data-Driven Learning Guides still available. They are a bit dated, but still heavily used. We are keeping them up and we are developing a new instructional video series called "No Stupid Questions."

There were changes with the Undergraduate Research Competition. The focus has shifted from papers to multimedia submissions like videos. The winners came from various disciplines, so it is broadening ICPSR's engagement across its membership.

ICPSR is finalizing a multi-year agreement with Zillow for property tax data. Because of its size, it will be hosted on University of Michigan servers but managed by ICPSR.

ICSPR has datasets looking at links between civil rights monuments and things like crime or public sentiment. ICPSR also released new presidential and state election data, and a new wave of the Detroit Metro Area Community Study. ICPSR added several personnel climate surveys, including on DEI and harassment—one from Michigan, one from UC across multiple campuses.

Data rescue efforts are also progressing. David Thomas and Lynette Hoelter have been working hard to recover lost data on sexual orientation and gender identity. Their work has been well received.
ICPSR also added datasets on research data services at universities and interventions in postsecondary science education.

ICPSR is working on a new Community College Data Hub. It could become a standalone archive. It already includes PACE climate surveys and pandemic recovery data.

Committee members noted the CAT workload is increasing and data is being released faster. ICPSR is navigating challenges from shifting federal priorities. Despite changes in DEI policy, ICPSR remains committed to inclusive data access. ICPSR has also revised its mission statement (approved by the Council) to better reflect this commitment. Amber Amen-Ra commented that from July to March, ICPSR handled over 5,200 support tickets—that is up from 3,400 last year. There were 166 tickets related to the new Researcher Passport login system, but that has stabilized. ICPSR distributed 164 restricted data packages to 81 institutions and conducted 439 disclosure reviews.

Linda Detterman provided information about the Membership financials which are $200K over projections, thanks in part to prepayments. ICPSR currently has 824 active members. One international update: Sweden will end its national membership after FY2026 due to budget cuts. ICPSR is in negotiations with large data-using institutions to retain memberships under financial pressure. ICPSR is also consulting legal on compliance with U.S. restrictions for sharing "bulk data" with users in "countries of concern" (Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, China, North Korea, and Russia).

The FY2026 revenue goal is $5.15 million. ICPSR is forecasting to collect about $4.9 million, so roughly 95%. For FY2027, the recommendation is for a flat 3% price increase across all categories, with tiering still based on institutional classification and data usage.

Vote:	Membership pricing increase
Action Items/Next Steps:	None at this time
Slides:	Membership, Acquisitions, and User Support

Vote:
Gisela Sin called a vote on the 3% increase for Membership fees for Fiscal 2027. Sin moved the motion to approve the 3% increase for Membership fees for Fiscal 2027. Jon Cawthorne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Summer Program Committee Report

Gisela Sin, chair, Summer Program Committee, began by thanking committee members and the Summer Program team for their work on the 2024 program and preparations for 2025.

Sin reviewed the Summer Program that was presented at the October 2024 meeting. She outlined changes for the upcoming year and indicated that there was a very slight increase in the pricing. The Summer Program is still paying for Helen Newberry which should end soon. The Summer Program structure remains "1+3" (1 week of math/computing lectures, 3 weeks of methods courses). All courses and lectures will be hybrid; most topical workshops will be online-only. The Summer Program has implemented cost-saving measures that include a 25% reduction in TA costs, 12.5% reduction in number of courses, and 37.5% reduction in temporary staff. Estimated total cost savings of approximately $160,000.

Changes in the courses being offered were discussed. Rob Franceze would like to review all the classes to see if there is any overlap with the classes and workshops. Predicted attendance is slightly lower than 2023 but still higher than 2022. At the time of reporting, there were 286 students enrolled across both general sessions and topical/sponsored workshops. This number is encouraging, given recent cuts to university funding tied to federal budget changes.

With respect to scholarships, it is basically the same as last summer. Scholarship offerings are consistent with 2023 levels. Scholarships: All funds from SumProg2023 continued or increased, allowing replication and expansion of our scholarship programs in SumProg2024. The following scholarships were awarded in 2025:
- 50 ICPSR ($100,000) +2 Miller ($10,716) +1 Owen ($424) +1 Heitowit ($2,847) scholars
- 38 Diversity scholars ($180,000: $60K each from ICPSR, ISR, & UM Provost): includes dorm, meals, and travel subvention
- 64 Rackham Scholars (UM grad students only) ($65,625) – up from 36 RGS-funded at this same amount in 2023, augmented by side-deals made with Rackham units (departments) resulting in an additional $48,318 of registrations (unknown what share of this would have registered anyway in year's past)
- 10 EITM ($30,410) [NSF] – we thought this would be cancelled at some point, but the funds were reinstated
- 14 Ukrainian scholars ($28,000) – up from 10 and $10,000 [ISR & Weiser CEE]
- 6 UM African Studies Center ($10,000) – up from $6,000 in 2023 (offered 10; 6 matriculated)
- 11 UM Provost Postdoctoral Fellows ($17,500) – up from 4 and $10,000.

Sin mentioned a few new initiatives. Norfolk State (a Virginia HBCU) is planning a one-week, three-workshop pilot in August. Local hosts unexpectedly secured funding, so this happening quickly: program is budgeted to break even. City University of Hong Kong is planning a two-week program in January 2026, positioned as an East Asia hub. Designed for fiscal benefit to the Summer Program. University of Algiers3 is planning visit during the summer to explore a potential MENA-region satellite. There are early ideas to form a coalition of resource-sharing institutions in the region.

Vote: None at this time
Action Items/Next Steps: None at this time
Slides: Summer Program Committee

Technology Standards Committee Report

Claire Bowen, chair, technology standards committee. Bowen introduced the committee members.
Bowen presented an outline of what Curation, Metadata & Preservation (M&P), and Computing Network Services (CNS) do at ICPSR and reviewed the key achievements of each unit.

Beginning with Curation, their key achievements were they onboarded three curators and two supervisors in the Spring 2025. They updated salary and titles to better align roles and responsibilities for non-supervisory staff to address equity and role recognition in the organization. Curation continued work on the Unit's Career Path Grid, including supplemental documentation to contextualize promotions and advancement. Bowen also noted that Curation's efficiency was increased by a "reset" of curation levels. Internal professional development is improving processing time.

There are still challenges. Curation has non-standardized curation workflows and project prioritization and hiring.

Their goals are
- Improving high level curation processing
- Doing single quality checks
- Strategies for improving retention and what to improve
- Develop a new set of levels of qualitative data curation and build in flexibility

They are trying to improve the group with training to develop skills and to increase collaboration with PuMus to address standardization.

Bowen presented M&P's key achievements. They revised 33 study-level metadata properties; introduced 12 new ones. M&P standardized many fields with existing controlled vocabularies (e.g., geodata, MESH headings) and emphasized PIDs whenever possible. M&P hired two new staff. M&P had significant improvements to systems that make ICPSR holdings findable in other

catalogues (e.g., API, export templates, user guide). Metadata enhancements (DDI Lifecycle) for several NACDA studies: over 29k variables enriched. Added 3,854 new citations. Enabled related publication metadata in DataCite DOIs. They introduced new "preprint" reference type and updated records accordingly. M&P's challenges are staff turnover, required retraining, and temporary workload shifts. Their goals are testing of full-text search of the ICPSR Bibliography, establishing machine-actionable licensing to improve data FAIRness, completing addition of related publications in DataCite DOI metadata, preparing for transition of openICPSR oversight from M&P to another ICPSR unit.

Bowen reviewed CNS's key achievements. CNS had a successful organizational merge with product management; they cleared over 70 legacy technical debt items, implemented a portfolio management system, and aligned agile processes with organizational goals and funding realities. CNS is also on track for all seven RDE Products, launched the Archive as a Product platform and multiple touchstones including new scalable archives platform, and enhancements to researchdatagov portal.

CNS's challenges are funding uncertainty and planning horizon, dual platform maintenance costs (legacy ICPSR platform and RDE platform), team health and well-being (e.g., Visas, LGBTQ+), and looking into code quality. Their goals are releasing single stream deposit system, launching new, sustainable ICPSR website, and a new search from RDE.

Bowen reviewed the ICPSR single stream and ongoing challenges related to multiple data deposit and data workflow systems. She emphasized the importance of transitioning to a single, streamlined deposit process. This aligns with broader goals of improving resource discoverability across ICPSR and simplifying user access.

DataLumos, the repository for at-risk government data, has been particularly plagued by inconsistencies in scraping practices from many volunteers. These have led to variations in dataset quality, duplicate entries, and timestamp discrepancies. The need for standardized data collection and preservation methods was highlighted, particularly in response to concerns such as the slowdown of CDC data releases, which had prompted emergency "doom scraping" by some.

A key takeaway was the importance of proper attribution and citation, not only for original data creators but also for those who enhance data usability—for example, through code development or accessibility improvements. There was consensus that multiple versions of datasets, including those modified for accessibility or analytical purposes, deserve distinct recognition and should be incorporated into a thoughtful citation framework.

The discussion reinforced that while technical solutions are in development, thoughtful policy and community standards around versioning, citation, and credit are equally critical.

Vote: None at this time
Action Items/Next Steps: None at this time
Slides: Technology Standards Committee

The Council meeting was adjourned the at 4:58 p.m. on Wednesday, June 18, 2025. The next Council meeting is scheduled December 4-5, 2025.