

# SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND INSTRUCTIONAL COUNCIL

*State of California*

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

1978-79 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Social Science Research and Instructional Council (SSRIC), a state-wide body of the California State University and Colleges System, was first organized in 1972. Its objectives are:

1. To encourage the use of quantitative methods in the teaching of social sciences to undergraduate and graduate students.
2. To support and implement the collection and distribution of social science data as well as information about these data.
3. To support and implement the use of computerized projects in the CSUC curriculum.
4. To support and implement the quantitative skills of students and faculty in the California State University and Colleges.

This Seventh Annual Report of the Council Chair describes briefly major SSRIC activities and programs during the 1978-79 academic year.

- I. By-laws Revisions. Several changes were voted to the Council's by-laws. The Field Poll Questionnaire Committee was restructured in order to simplify its operation. Language referring to the Official Representatives' meetings of the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) was changed to reflect the fact that such meetings are now held biennially rather than annually. A new article was added permitting the Council to suspend, by a two-thirds vote, all or a part of its by-laws.
- II. CSUC Membership in the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). The impetus for formation of the Council in July 1972 occurred when the CSUC joined the ICPSR, becoming the first multiple-member (or "federated") affiliate of the Consortium. Betty Nesvold, the first Council Chair, and others foresaw that a mechanism needed to be established for coordination and sharing of information among campuses. Since then the Council's interests and activities have broadened considerably, as indicated elsewhere in this report. Nevertheless, the relationship with the ICPSR continues to be at the center of the Council's concerns. The DIS publication, Data Bases at the State University Data Center, shows that there are now 348 ICPSR data bases maintained by DIS, and that these constitute the bulk of all data sets at SUDC. In addition, the ICPSR, in cooperation

with the American Political Science Association, continues to expand the Supplementary Empirical Teaching Units in Political Science (SETUPS), which have had a significant impact on the political science curriculum within the CSUC. Advanced training for CSUC faculty and students is provided by the ICPSR Summer Program at Ann Arbor, Michigan. This summer's program will include two faculty members who will be supported by ICPSR funds administered through the Council.

- III. CSUC Membership in The Field Institute (TFI). In June 1977, the CSUC became the first academic institution to affiliate with the California Opinion Research Consortium (CORC), a component of the non-profit Field Institute. CORC was organized to provide for access to contemporary economic, political, and social data obtained by the California Poll, access to archival data from past California polls, and inclusion of faculty or student developed questions in a specified number of California Polls to be administered statewide. In 1978, the CSUC was joined in CORC by the University of California.

In the Sixth Annual Chair's Report, the 1977-78 academic year was described as "a 'shakedown' one in relation to CSUC affiliation with CORC." It is fair to describe AY 1978-79 as one in which an ongoing relationship was firmly established, and in which substantial progress was made on several fronts, though some significant goals have yet to be attained.

- A. Liaison. Several mechanisms have been developed for maintaining communication among TFI, the SSRIC, and the State Data Project, which serves as the CORC contact for the University of California. Representatives from TFI and the State Data Project were present at the Fall Council meeting at San Jose, and Peter Sherrill, Technical Director of TFI, attended the Spring meeting at San Francisco. The Questionnaire Committee was empowered by the Council at the Fall meeting to serve also as a liaison committee with TFI and the State Data Project. On May 25, TFI held its second annual workshop. CSUC participants at the workshop included representatives from Educational Programs and Resources, the Division of Information Systems, and the SSRIC.
- B. Data Acquisition. When the CSUC first joined CORC, dissatisfaction developed over the formatting of California Poll data, which was designed for analyzing data for preparation of press releases rather than for academic instruction and research, and over timely delivery of data documentation. Thanks to the efforts of Paul Strand, Chair of the Questionnaire Committee, Chuck Wilmot, of Educational Programs and Resources, and TFI personnel, considerable progress has been made in these areas. Codebooks are now provided in machine readable form, which will facilitate timely dissemination, agreement has been reached on several coding problems, and dialogue on further improvements continues.

- C. Faculty Fellowships. TFI has offered to provide at least one \$2,000 faculty fellowship per annum to the CSUC. The first of these fellows will be selected in the very near future.
  - D. Student Internships. When the CSUC joined CORC, the Council hoped that membership would provide a vehicle for development of student internships with Field. TFI is concerned, however, about the implications of such a program. The Institute does not wish to assume instructional responsibilities appropriate to faculty, and is leery of involvement in a program whose benefits it views as unclear and which might consume scarce Institute resources. Though regarding these concerns is entirely understandable, the Council's view is that an internship program would be of benefit to both TFI and the CSUC. The Council hopes that the Faculty Fellowship program will serve to familiarize both organizations with one another's operations, and that out of this will develop mutually satisfactory mechanisms for student internships.
  - E. Archival Data. California Polls conducted subsequent to CSUC membership in CORC have already had heavy usage. For example, several of the papers presented at this year's Student Research Conference employed California Poll data. In the long run, however, the greatest value of the CORC membership may be in making available to CSUC students and faculty the historical archives of the California Poll. These data constitute a unique record of public opinion in the State over an extended period of time. This wealth of information remains virtually untapped. While the data are presently available in raw (card image) form, extensive use, especially by less sophisticated users, is not likely to occur until the archives become available in the form of SPSS system files. As a practical matter, conversion of the entire archive is not likely to occur for some time, but progress in this direction is an important objective.
- IV. Computer Procurement. Replacements for the aging mainframes at SUDC and at individual campuses is a matter of great concern to the Council. Shortly after the start of the academic year, the Council learned that the procurement alternative preferred by DIS called for a decentralized system of relatively large mainframes at local campuses, but with no communication network linking the campuses to a central site. At the Fall meeting, the Council expressed concern that a decentralized system would make it extremely difficult for campuses, especially smaller ones, to continue to use large data sets for instructional purposes. Even with adequate hardware, many members felt that there would be much duplication of effort and that staffing would be insufficient to maintain properly data sets and supporting software.

On December 12, 1978 a meeting was called at Chancellor's Office headquarters by Dr. Laurence Baker, Director of DIS, to obtain input from various interest groups. The SSRIC was represented at this meeting, as was the Association for Biological Computing (ABC), and the Business Instructional Computing Council (BICC), which had expressed similar concerns.

Whether as a result of such input, cost considerations, or a combination of these and other factors, the Request for Proposal (RFP) for computer procurement under consideration at this writing calls for a distributed network similar in general concept to the present system, but with state of the art equipment.

- V. Utilization of Data Bases. It is not possible to obtain a precise quantitative measure of social science data base utilization in the CSUC, since such utilization involves both central and local computers, and both DIS supported and user supported data files. What is clear is that the SSRIC goals quoted at the beginning of this report are increasingly being realized. This is a long term trend in CSUC social science instructional programs, but two developments that have occurred during the past year are especially worthy of note.
  - A. The number of DIS supported data sets on central timesharing has been significantly expanded to a total of thirty-seven, as of the date of this report, including ten California Polls, eighteen SETUPS, and nine ICPSR Instructional Subsets.
  - B. Codebooks for ICPSR and California Poll data at SUDC have been put on microfiche by DIS and distributed to campuses. This will greatly facilitate use of these data, especially by greatly reducing the cost of making available multiple copies of codebooks for class use.
- VI. Student Research Conference. The 4th Annual SSRIC sponsored Student Research Conference was held on May 4, 1979 at San Francisco State University. The Conference was clearly a success, the quality of presentations, most by undergraduates, was high and, like its predecessors, the Conference provided CSUC students with an exciting opportunity to test and demonstrate recently acquired skills in an environment similar to that of a professional meeting. Spotty attendance at panels continues to be a problem, however.
- VII. Election of Chair. At the Winter meeting, Professor James Ross, Department of Sociology, CSC Bakersfield, was elected Council Chair for the 1979-80 Academic Year.
- VIII. Chair's Comments. At least as important as the tangible accomplishments outlined elsewhere in this report is the social psychology of participation in the Council by its members, and this fact deserves acknowledgment. The members of the Council are among the brightest, best trained, and most professionally committed to be found in the system. Simply by bringing such people together on a regular basis, the Council serves an important function in the diffusion of innovation throughout the CSUC. The selflessness with which members have dedicated themselves to shared goals have, over the past eight years, produced achievements remarkable to anyone familiar with the status quo ante. Such a spirit of cooperation has made the occasionally frustrating role of Chair one that has been both personally and professionally rewarding.

Candor requires that, in addition to outlining achievements, this report must take note of some problems that have continued to resist solution.

- A. External Support. In an environment of increasingly limited State support, help from outside sources is critical if badly needed new programs or projects are to be undertaken. Thus far, the Council has been unable to secure grants either from outside agencies, or from innovative funds available within the system. Even more vigorous efforts to acquire such support are clearly indicated.
- B. Travel Funds. Despite constriction of funds for faculty travel, attendance at Council meetings has been high during AY 1978-79. Attendance by the nineteen Council members at the Fall, Winter, and Spring meetings was seventeen, twelve, and fourteen, respectively. That this was possible is attributable to the persistence of members and, in not a few cases, to willingness of members to expend personal funds to attend meetings. While this is a tribute to the importance of the Council, it is hardly an acceptable solution.
- C. Chair's Workload. In the Sixth Annual Report, Bruce Haston noted that:

As SSRIC activities and programs have increased, so has the workload on the Chair. It seems imperative that, at minimum, reimbursable assigned time be granted the Chair, preferably at the central office level since SSRIC activities are systemwide in scope. . . . In addition, if the workload continues to increase, SSRIC may want to re-examine the organizational structure--possibly creating some type of executive council that could act on behalf of SSRIC or to delegate more responsibilities to committees.

There is little that can be added to these comments except to note that the problem remains.

John L. Korey  
Chair, SSRIC  
June 30, 1979

Attachment: SSRIC Membership

## SSRIC MEMBERSHIP

<u>Campus</u>	<u>1978-79 Representative</u>	<u>1979-80 Representative</u>
Bakersfield	Jim Ross (Sociology)/ Charles McCall (Political Science)	Jim Ross (Sociology)
Chico	Jon Ebeling (Political Science)	Jon Ebeling (Political Science)
Dominguez Hills	Richard Palmer (Political Science)	Richard Palmer (Political Science)
Fresno	Edward Nelson (Sociology)	Edward Nelson (Sociology)
Fullerton	Philip Gianos (Political Science)	Philip Gianos (Political Science)
Hayward	Daniel Graves (Political Science)	Bernard Hennessey (Political Science)
Humboldt	Bruce Haston (Political Science)	Bruce Haston (Political Science)
Long Beach	Jay Stevens (Political Science)	Jay Stevens (Political Science)
Los Angeles	Ken Wagner (Political Science)	Ken Wagner (Political Science)
Northridge	Roger Harrell (Political Science)	Roger Harrell (Political Science)
Pomona	John Korey (Political Science)	John Korey (Political Science)
Sacramento	Ron Fox (Sociology)	Gail Tom (Management)
San Bernardino	Sheldon Kamieniecki (Political Science)	Sheldon Kamieniecki (Political Science)
San Diego	Paul Strand (Political Science)	Paul Strand (Political Science)
San Francisco	Gene Geisler (Political Science)	Theodore Jitodai (Sociology)
San Jose	Larry Brewster (Political Science)	Michael Otten (Sociology)
San Luis Obispo	David George (Political Science)	Richard Shaffer (Social Sciences)
Sonoma	Donald Dixon (Political Science)	Donald Dixon (Political Science)
Stanislaus	Larry Giventer (Political Science)	Larry Giventer (Political Science)

### Council Associates

Betty Nesvold, Political Science, San Diego (1972-73 Chair)  
Loy Bilderback, History, Fresno (1973-74 Chair)