

**Social Sciences Research and Instructional Council
California State University
2006-07 Annual Report
Edward Nelson, Chair**

The Social Science Research and Instructional Council (SSRIC) is the oldest of the CSU Discipline Councils. It is composed of representatives from each of the CSU campuses. The Council supports teaching and research for faculty, staff, and students in all social science programs and departments throughout the CSU. Our focus is on the use of quantitative data in the classroom and in research. We do this by:

- managing and supporting the use of social science data in teaching and research,
- adding to the value of these data by developing instructionally related materials and making these available on our web site (<http://www.ssrlic.org>),
- providing a forum for sharing information about social science data and instructional materials;
- initiating and conducting training programs, and
- sponsoring an annual student research conference for undergraduates and graduates.

Social Science Data Bases

The SSRIC works diligently to make sure that faculty and students have access to social science data necessary for teaching and research. The CSU currently subscribes to three social science data archives:

- The Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) located at the University of Michigan,
- The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research located at the University of Connecticut, and
- The Field Institute located in San Francisco.

The Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research is the closest we have to a national social science data archive in the United States. It is a consortium of member institutions, which include virtually every major university and college in the United States and Canada and many universities throughout the world. The ICPSR data holdings serve a broad spectrum of disciplines including political science, sociology, history, economics, geography, demography, gerontology, public health, criminal justice, education, international relations, business, and education. Currently the ICPSR's archive includes over 6,500 studies with over 500,000 associated files including the General Social Survey, the American National Election Studies, U.S. Census data from 1790 to the present, the World Values Survey, Current Population Surveys, the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, U.S. election returns from 1788 to the present, the Monitoring the Future Surveys, the National Survey of Black Americans, the National Crime Victimization surveys, the Household Survey on Drug Abuse, and the National Health Interview Surveys. More information about the ICPSR is available on its web site at <http://www.icpsr.org>.

The Field Institute in San Francisco conducts the Field Poll, which is one of the major state polls in California. Membership in the Field Institute provides access to all current Field Polls within

90 days of their completion and to the archive of past Field Polls which date back to the 1950's, and provides the opportunity for CSU faculty to include their research questions in the Field Poll. The combination of the Field archival holdings and the current Field Polls provides historical data and current information on important social and policy issues in California that are not available through the ICPSR. More information is available on the Field web site at <http://www.field.com>.

The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research is one of the leading archives of public opinion data and includes a large collection of international data. It is a vital supplement to ICPSR data, which does not include many state-based public opinion surveys. More information is available on the Roper web site at <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu>.

These three archives provide high-quality data sources that are unique in their scope, longevity, and accessibility. ICPSR data have been available to CSU faculty, staff, and students since the early 1970s; Field data have been available since the mid 1970s; Roper data have been available since the early 1990s. It is essential that they remain available to all faculty, staff, and students in the CSU in order to meet the instructional and research functions of a major university and to successfully recruit new faculty.

In addition to the availability of these data, the CSU's federated or centralized membership in these archives provides considerable cost savings to the CSU. Cost savings was \$179, 489 in 2006-07. Technological advances over the last decade make it possible for faculty, students, and staff to download these data directly to their computer without any time lag. Instructions for downloading the data are available on our website at <http://www.ssrlic.org> (see the "Data" section) and are covered in our training workshops described later in this report. Utilization data are available on our website at http://www.ssrlic.org/annualreports/sssc_reports.

Instructionally-Related Materials

The Social Science Research and Instructional Council has been instrumental in promoting the classroom use of these data archives, and data obtained from other sources, and has focused on providing added value to these data.

The SSRIC received funding from the Chancellor's Office in 1997-98 to create a repository of instructionally-related materials. Since then we have been developing new instructional materials for classroom use. During 2006-07 we offered stipends to three faculty members to develop additional instructional materials. Dr. Eugene Turner (Northridge) developed materials to introduce students to the use of Census data. Dr. Elizabeth Bigham (San Marcos) developed instructional materials for the use of SPSS. Dr. Lori Weber (Chico) developed materials to introduce students to the analysis of quantitative data.

The ICPSR offers a sabbatical program for its members. Dr. Lori Weber was selected to be part of the ICPSR's sabbatical program during the summer of 2006. She developed an instructional module based on Robert Putnam's book, *Bowling Alone*. Her module focuses on social capital and civic engagement and provides students with the opportunity to develop skills in quantitative reasoning and data analysis and is now on the ICPSR's website.

These instructional materials are on our website (see the “Teaching Resources” section) and can be downloaded by faculty and staff for their use. In addition, *SPSS for Windows: A Basic Tutorial*, a primer (authored by CSU faculty, most of which are SSRIC representatives) in the use of a widely used statistical analysis package is available on our website. Dr. John Korey (Pomona) has developed an instructional site, also accessible via our website, for teaching research methods in political science.

The SSRIC has long been a leader in developing instructional materials for use by faculty and students. By providing additional value to the data available through the ICPSR, Field Institute, and the Roper Center, we provide critical resources for teaching quantitative analysis in the social sciences.

Faculty research

These data are essential for faculty research. Faculty in the CSU are required to publish in peer-reviewed scholarly journals to receive tenure and promotion. Social science faculty receive increasingly sophisticated training in quantitative analysis in graduate school and need access to high quality data provided by archives at the ICPSR, Roper Center, and The Field Institute. As an example of the scholarly work that comes from these data, Dr. John Korey (Pomona) and Dr. Edward Lascher (Sacramento) published an article in *Public Opinion Quarterly* on macropartisanship in California that was based on an analysis of Field Poll data from 1980 to 2001.

As part of our membership in The Field Institute, at least two faculty each academic year are able to pursue their research agenda by taking advantage of the opportunity to include research questions on the Field Poll. This year, the SSRIC recommended to The Field Institute that Dr. Deborah Baskin (Los Angeles) and Dr. Alexandra Cole (Northridge) be awarded question credits for the Field Poll.

Forum for sharing information about social science data and instructional materials

The Social Science Research and Instructional Council meets three times a year. This year we met at Humboldt in October, at San Diego in February, and at East Bay in April. Each meeting consists of a one-day business meeting where the SSRIC discusses how it can best meet its goals as described in this report. During the fall and winter, the second day of our meeting is devoted to a workshop in which SSRIC representatives learn about new developments in the social sciences. This year at our fall workshop Andrew Roderick (San Francisco) showed us how to use Diva (the Digital Information Virtual Archive) and Stafford Cox (Long Beach) described AMOS, a structural equation modeling software program distributed by SPSS. At our winter workshop Gene Turner (Northridge) and Rich Taketa (San Jose) conducted a census data workshop. These workshops provide representatives with information that they take back to their home campuses and share with other faculty and students.

Training workshops

The SSRIC offers campus workshops that provide training in accessing and analyzing data. During 2006-07 we offered workshops on eight campuses that focused on accessing and utilizing data from the three social science archives to which the CSU subscribes. These campuses were Humboldt (October 5), Long Beach (November 3), San Diego (February 8), San Luis Obispo (March 2), Stanislaus (March 24), San Bernardino (April 7), East Bay (April 26), and Los Angeles (May 4). In addition to our social sciences data base workshop, we also offer introductory and intermediate workshops on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) which is the most widely used statistical package in the CSU for both teaching and research.

During 2007-08 we will begin offering a workshop on SDA (Survey Documentation and Analysis). SDA is a statistical package that can be used without a site license by anyone with an internet connection. While it is not sophisticated enough for most faculty research, it is ideal for introductory courses where the instructor wants to be able to introduce students to quantitative data analysis without spending too much time showing students how to use the program. The CSU purchased a site license (necessary for creating SDA data sets) which is housed at San Francisco State University. SFSU will annually convert a number of data sets to SDA format which will be housed on our website and will be available for faculty and student use in their classes. A request for proposals was issued to CSU faculty this year requesting them to suggest data sets that should be converted to SDA format. Three proposals were selected and these data sets will be converted to SDA format by SFSU.

The ICPSR annually offers summer workshops in social science data analysis. As part of our membership, the ICPSR provides \$3,000 to support faculty and graduate student travel to their summer program to learn important methods of quantitative data analysis. During the summer of 2006, Carl Stempel (East Bay) and Robert Williams (San Francisco) were funded to attend the ICPSR Summer Workshop.

Student Research Conference

The Social Science Research and Instructional Council has hosted an annual undergraduate and graduate student research conference since 1977. This year our research conference was held at East Bay in April. Twenty-four students from eleven campuses presented their research at this conference. This provides students with an important opportunity to share their research findings with their peers. For many students, this is their first professional presentation. We make every attempt to provide a supportive environment that will make students eager to pursue their research interests.

Awards are given for the best undergraduate paper, the best graduate paper, and the best paper using quantitative social science data. The Charles McCall Award for the best undergraduate paper went to Paula Wright (Economics, Fresno) for her paper on "Breathing and Wheezing: The Effects of Home Environment on Asthmatics' Income." Patrick Lynch (History, Los Angeles) won the Betty Nesvold Award for best graduate paper for his paper on "Sheridan Downey and the 160 Acre Limitation." The Gloria Rummels Award for best paper using quantitative data went to Lucinda Winward (Public Policy and Administration, Sacramento) for her paper, "Emergency Room Overcrowding: Policy, Problems and Potential Solutions."

Personal reflections

I want to thank all the SSRIC representatives (see <http://www.ssrlic.org/reps>) for their dedication and hard work during this academic year. They provide their services without additional compensation or released time. It's their effort that makes all this work.

The SSRIC's Executive Committee provides important leadership. I want to thank them for their commitment during this year. The Executive Committee includes Dr. John Korey (Pomona), Dr. Edward Nelson (Fresno), Dr. Mike Reibel (Pomona), and Dr. Lori Weber (Chico).

I also want to thank Dr. Gerry Hanley (Chancellor's Office) for his support of our efforts. His support has been essential to the success of the SSRIC.

Dr. Lori Weber (Chico) was elected chair for 2007-08. The Executive Committee will consist of Dr. Ed Nelson (Fresno), Dr. Steve Stambough (Fullerton) and Dr. Lori Weber (Chico). Meetings will be held at San Francisco State University (October), Pomona (February) and Long Beach (late April or early May). Our annual student research conference will be in Long Beach.