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We pledge to you our fullest efforts to continue in the tradition of College & University— a quality, informative journal in which the members of AACRAO can take pride.

Winter 1998
How to Use Focus Groups in Higher Education Research

Brenda J. Ponsford and Lance A. Masters

Abstract

Focus group research is a qualitative research method designed to gather in-depth thoughts from a small discussion group of people selected from a particular segment of the population. Social scientists from many disciplines have used focus groups to develop a better understanding of key issues ranging from political attitudes to the concerns of patients in nursing home environments. Focus groups are commonly used by marketing professionals to ascertain the wants, needs, and concerns of members of a target market segment. Focus group research is properly used as a starting point in a greater research project. In this paper, the process of focus group research is discussed in the context of researching higher education issues using students as subjects. Examples of the processes and pitfalls are presented, drawn from the collective experiences of the authors at several universities.

Introduction

Focus group research is used primarily for exploratory purposes with a small group of subjects drawn from the segment of interest. A focus group typically ranges in size from six to twelve participants. The focus group discussion usually lasts between one to two hours, led by a moderator who asks open-ended questions of the subjects. The moderator's task is to keep the discussion on track without discouraging the free flow of ideas. One important benefit of focus group research is the generation of new ideas that had not occurred to the researchers. The results of the focus group research are then typically used to develop questions for larger scale quantitative research. Less commonly, focus groups are used later on in the research process to interpret or clarify other results, especially when unexpected answers come forth and the researchers are uncertain of the basis of the results.

Focus Group Research in Higher Education

The purpose of this paper is to provide general advice on how to conduct focus group research in the context of an institution of higher learning. The practice of conducting focus groups will be discussed using examples from the authors' experiences with focus groups in several universities, primarily with business school students. The steps involved in conducting focus group research are:

1. Determining the Research Questions
2. Determining the Sampling Frame
3. Selection of a Moderator
4. Developing a "Script" or Discussion Guide for the Moderator
5. Recruiting Participants
6. Conducting the Focus Group
7. Recording the Focus Group
8. Analyzing the Focus Group Data
9. Using and Interpreting the Focus Group Data

**Determining the Research Questions**

While focus groups may appear to consist of a free flow of discussion, the research effort is best used to identify the purpose of the research project by first determining the problem of interest. The purpose is to “focus” the participants’ interest toward discussion topics on a specific agenda without posing highly structured questions that preclude the introduction of new ideas. Instead, the stimulation of new ideas and group synergy is desired to bring out multiple points of view.

In many of the authors’ projects, the research questions centered on determining undergraduate business students’ interest in pursuing an MBA degree, and what concerns they had about enrolling in the MBA programs at various universities. Simultaneously, focus groups comprised of current MBA students were also conducted to determine how and why already enrolled students selected their MBA programs as well as their impressions of these programs. These broad discussion areas were accompanied by more specific topics such as obtaining the reactions of students to a variety of MBA recruiting brochure materials.

Focus groups need to explore the issues broadly and to stimulate spontaneous responses that may provide insights beyond what the researchers initially held. Questions are purposely open-ended to encourage discussion as opposed to highly structured questions that limit the scope of the answers. However, without the direction of even a broadly stated topic, focus groups can often turn into “gripe sessions” about individual concerns, or they can become directionless. Therefore, a subtle but purposeful “discussion management” of the open-ended questions is aimed at keeping the group on the topic.

The insights gained from the focus groups can form the basis of subsequent formally structured quantitative survey research, such as a large scale mail questionnaire. While a formal survey could be initiated without prior focus group research, the possibilities of missing issues are far greater because of the lack of initial current input from the sampling frame. For an overview of how to conduct a larger, more formal market research study, see Walters (1994) and Kotler and Fox (1995).

For institutions that are not prepared to conduct larger research projects, focus groups can be used to keep tabs on student attitudes. If focus groups are used in this minimalist way it is very important to take into consideration many of the issues raised in the analysis and interpretation portions of this article. The ability to generalize from focus group research is highly limited.

An important consideration in research question development is to conduct a formal problem analysis to help separate symptoms from problems. Symptoms can indicate a problem, but as in medicine, symptom relief may not necessarily help solve the underlying problem or eliminate the cause of the symptom. Additional probing may be necessary to enable problem identification (Martin and Moore 1991). For example, at one university, some MBA students felt they had been treated rudely when they first called the school office to inquire about applying to the MBA program. Yet, the office staffers had conducted themselves courteously. Additional probing revealed that the students felt “abandoned” when transferred on the telephone too many times (which averaged about three transfers). The underlying problem was not a lack of courtesy, but instead the lack of a priority strategy governing to whom the inquiring student would be initially transferred. Likewise, the designation of a primary office staffer to help with initial inquiries raised the quality of the responses, because the “pointperson” now could devote more time to remaining current and providing appropriate information.

**Determining the Sampling Frame**

The sampling frame refers to the list of potential subjects from which the researcher can draw focus group participants. For example, if the research question involves studying the interest of engineering undergraduates in continuing at the institution to pursue an MBA, the sampling frame would start with the list of engineering majors. This list could be narrowed based on some useful criteria such as acceptable grade point average (GPA) range or being within twelve months of graduation. From this list of potential subjects, focus group participants could then be recruited.

When determining the sampling frame, it is important to consider the richness of the research question. If we start with the broad idea of learning about potential MBA students’ wants and needs, it is convenient to consider recruiting just from the institution’s pool of current undergraduate students. However, for a graduate program, such as the MBA, it is highly desirable to recruit students from many undergraduate institutions, alumni who have had several years of work experience, and working professionals who graduated from other institutions. Likewise, insights from accepted applicants who failed to matriculate and applicants who were unsuccessful can also be useful. It is important to determine not only who are current students, but also to consider groups that could be potential students as well. Geographic barriers can be overcome with teleconferencing.
Studying the applicant pool of non-matriculating students can be beneficial. Following up with successful applicants who were accepted but declined admission may be useful to see if they declined for reasons that the institution could easily change. A focus group is an ideal forum for this because the reasons for declining acceptance can be based on misconceptions that do not properly fit into the survey format. Focus groups can also tease out information gaps such as ignorance about the availability of financial aid. Likewise, information from applicants denied admission may help in developing successful recruiting strategies. Sometimes, students from nonbusiness backgrounds need preliminary coaching on how to prepare to be successful applicants. Based on focus group exploration, one of the author’s MBA directors now routinely asks students about their undergraduate major and advises review work in less emphasized study areas. For example, English Literature undergraduates are encouraged to take math review classes before attempting the GMAT. Identifying potential problem areas ahead of time has helped some of our MBA programs assist applicants in gaining admission.

Sometimes application problems begin further back. One highly successful MBA student shared the following saga with one of the authors during a focus group when asked why she chose this particular MBA program. Although a self-reliant Phi Beta Kappa, this student had inquired about an MBA program at a major research institution only to be intimidated by jargon. She was immediately asked about her GMAT score. She was familiar with the GRE and had a vague notion about the GMAT, but mentally identified it, letter-by-letter, as the G-M-A-T in the same fashion as the G-R-E. When asked about the GEE-MAHT [GMAT], she replied, “What’s that?” The MBA office assistant assumed she was not “MBA material” and dismissed her call by proclaiming that until she had a GEE-MAHT score, not to bother calling back. The student would not have been easily put off by curtness, but was frustrated by the jargon confusion. Five years later, she inquired at one of the author’s MBA program and was asked if she had “already taken the entrance exam, known as the GEE-MAHT [GMAT], which is akin to the SAT.” Immediately, the student knew what was being asked and replied that she had not. The MBA office then offered to mail her a booklet on the GMAT, winning the student’s loyalty through this small but helpful step. Problems such as this need to be identified and the open discussion nature of the focus group facilitates this.

Expanding the sampling frame may help make the best use of focus group efforts as potential students can provide insights as well as current students. This can also help in understanding how to approach a broader “market” of students in future recruiting efforts.

Selection of a Moderator
A focus group moderator has several major tasks. The moderator needs to create an atmosphere of security and creativity. All the focus group participants need to feel free to speak their minds, but they also need to be kept focused on the subject. Therefore, the moderator facilitates without interrogating or even “over-interviewing.” While the moderator’s agenda necessitates moving through a given set of topics, probing too deeply could reduce spontaneity and security. The moderator also needs to have the skills and experience to manage the group and keep dominant individuals from overwhelming the other participants while simultaneously drawing out the shy members.

The moderator does not need to be very knowledgeable about focus group topics. In fact, one very effective tool for eliciting participation is for the moderator to be able to credibly ask the group for help in understanding the issues and clarifying what various members have stated. The moderator can “probe” without being aggressive by asking questions such as, “You all seem to understand what thus-and-so just said, but I am still a little confused. Can someone help me by putting it in different words?” Having an intelligent moderator who is an “outsider” makes this approach acceptable and contributes to the “richness” of what the subjects say. Although moderators often help in subsequent analysis and interpretation of the focus group’s transcripts and tapes, “insiders” and experts can be recruited to help in interpretation. This reduces any risk in using a naive moderator.

A good moderator is a good listener, one who can keep people talking with responsive words, but does not “lead” the participants. Research participants often seek the moderator’s approval by voicing opinions they believe to be consistent with that of the moderator. The problem of seeking approval occurs in every type of personal research so the wording of questions and facilitating statements must be handled carefully. Misusing simple, encouraging words such as yes, continue please, or I know what you mean can influence a focus group. In a focus group involving the tasting of liquors and cordials, one hapless moderator absentmindedly said, “I know what you mean” in response to a subject declaring that the cordial tasted like anti-freeze. This caused the focus group members to start topping each other’s insults about the cordial, comparing it to “ant killer,” “buzz bomb juice,” etc. Afterwards, three subjects confided to the moderator that they liked the beverage, but didn’t want to be viewed as “cheap drunks” by saying so. The moderator must know the difference between keeping ideas flowing and encouraging tangents.

Huneycutt, Lewis, and Wibker (1990) provide thorough guidance on utilizing marketing faculty for tasks involved in
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marketing the university. In the higher education environment, it has become increasingly necessary to draw on faculty because of budget constraints that limit the hiring of outside consulting and research services; but because focus group research is subjective in nature, there are some cautions that need to be considered to successfully manage faculty who conduct research within their own schools.

Students may feel at risk in saying negative things about a topic if faculty moderators are also currently (or in the future) grading the student. Likewise, faculty who are involved in the programs under research may have a hard time maintaining a neutral "poker face" through both praise and criticism by participants. If an administrator serves as moderator, student participants may view the administrator as a "complaint department" and try to turn the discussion group into a gripe session. Although untenured faculty may be eager to serve the university by helping with these kinds of projects, they may not be the best choices because they tend to lack knowledge of the institution's history, are in danger of getting pulled into potential institutional political problems, and may become overly involved in time consuming projects when they should be spending their time on activities leading to tenure.

Developing a "Script" or Discussion Guide for the Moderator

Based on the research guidelines, a script or discussion guide should be developed so that the moderator can lead the focus group through all the needed topics. The topics should be presented in the form of open-ended questions that help guide the discussion. If the discussion is to explore the relative costs of attending graduate school at one university versus its geographical competitors, directing the questions toward costs will make better use of time. Rather than asking an overarching question such as, "What do you think of our MBA program?" which may create a tidal wave of comments on less important aspects, it may be better to start out with a more specific but open-ended question such as, "What do you consider to be 'value' when considering graduate school options?" The 'value' aspect subtly directs the subjects to thinking in terms of cost/benefit rather than an entire spectrum of MBA program factors. The moderator can then guide the subjects through more specific subtopic areas.

Make sure that the questions posed are understood by the subjects. Vocabulary choice or even idioms may need to be changed to increase comprehension and reduce intimidation. Have a panel of subjects from your sampling frame review the questions not only for understanding but also comfort level. When inquiring about the cost of attending graduate school, asking personal income questions may not only cause discomfort but hostility. Pretest both the questions and the time allowed for discussion. Topic length may need to be adjusted or additional focus group sessions added.

Recruiting Participants

The above discussion on the sampling frame must be considered in developing the recruiting strategy for obtaining focus group subjects. After the segment of interest is determined and a sampling frame identified, screening questions need to be developed in order to select appropriate focus group participants (e.g., Are you considering pursuing an MBA degree sometime in the next two years?). Some members of the sampling frame may have already self-selected out of program participation, leading them to decline participation without comment. This, however, may still need to be explored. When one author announced focus group participation opportunities in class, one student commented, "Oh...I ruined my chances for that my freshman year," referring to a poor GPA that year. This comment showed both a challenge and an opportunity. After the author explained that a number of universities based graduate school admissions decisions on the last two years of undergraduate credits, the student could not wait to get more information. The student volunteered for the focus group and elaborated on his presumed disqualification for graduate school. That particular university is now very forthcoming about its admission criteria because it became obvious that many undergraduates held the same erroneous notion.

Recruitment is often facilitated by offering compensation to the participants. Because research participation is voluntary, sample bias can result from the form of compensation offered to the participants. Each compensation system will attract those who have a particular incentive. Consider the following "compensation" schemes and the personal incentives of the participants. No compensation tends to result in mainly loyal, enthusiastic students who willingly help their school. Opinionated students desire a "forum." Unhappy students may want to complain about the institution. If monetary compensation is offered, the balance may tip toward impoverished students who desperately need money and yet, the honorarium may not be high enough to attract affluent students. Course "extra credit" attracts both academically poor students and insecure overachievers to secure a better grade. Alienated students may simply be unwilling to participate, and thus the focus group researchers may miss important insights on student attraction. There is no perfect solution to the bias problem, but being cognizant of potential problems may help the researchers manage the process to obtain a reasonably representative group of student participants.

Some student focus group projects obtain subjects by using participation in focus groups as a "lab" portion of the stu-
This approach to obtaining students also resulted in a broader student base with a smaller bias since all the students in the given program were required to take a research methods course at some point during their course of study. However, not all students were motivated to participate "fully," as some students are by nature passive in class activities.

In addition, be sure to inquire about the institution's human subjects protocol and obtain research releases from all participants regardless of how recruiting is managed.

**Conducting the Focus Group**

Conducting a successful focus group requires an atmosphere supporting free "guided" discussion that simultaneously "fully," as some students are by nature and obtain research releases from all participants regardless of how recruiting is managed.

In a series of MBA-oriented focus groups, one of the authors prepared a set of pictures from informational brochures to ask which ones would be useful to the students in selecting MBA programs. Although "a picture is worth a thousand words," the researcher found that the ability of a subject to articulate even a hundred words was limited, and that being able to point to sample pictures to indicate likes and dislikes was very helpful. In this particular study, it was found that although most students considered photos of other students working on class-related activities as helpful in getting a sense of a given MBA program, photos that appeared to be staged (such as everyone smiling at a computer or a perfectly racially balanced group of posed students) were viewed as contrived, and insultingly lacking in credibility. These conclusions were not derived until all the students had sorted through stacks of pictures cut from MBA recruiting brochures and catalogs (with institutional names removed) and created piles of "good" and "bad" photos. They were then asked to state what each group of photos had in common in terms of their likes and dislikes.

The final stage of conducting the focus group is debriefing the participants. Many researchers are in the habit of conducting an entire series of data collection sessions and then conducting a single debriefing session at the end to avoid having too much information about the research project leak out prematurely; that information could possibly influence subjects prior to their appointed session time. However, using current students as subjects poses potential difficulties, such as raising student expectations about program changes. In one focus group project, the research question concerning perceived needed changes led several students to periodically "follow-up" with the MBA director about when their suggestions would be implemented. When the MBA director explained that action had not been taken citing budgets, delays, curriculum committee meetings, accreditation requirements, etc., the student response was that of increasing discontent. Apparently, without a context early on, some students had expected that their suggestions would be used immediately, and, as each term passed, disappointment increased. Subsequently, deliberate, careful debriefing was conducted after each focus group, especially with currently enrolled students, explaining that the purpose was to identify issues for further study and that their ideas would be considered with ideas from many other focus groups including input from people outside the university. This not only put the significance of each suggestion into the "perspective" of being part of a larger study considering many ideas, it also reduced the impression of immediacy because the magnitude and long term perspective were emphasized. Should there be the need for cloaking other research purposes to avoid influencing future subjects, a traditional debriefing should be conducted at the end of the data collection series as well. With regard to student relations, the contextual debriefing is unlikely to affect future subjects and could avoid creating feelings of discontent or futility toward institutional research.

**Recording the Focus Group**

Because qualitative research analysis is by its nature, subjective, it is important to record each focus session even if the moderator is capable of taking good notes. Subjects need to be reassured of the confidentiality of the recordings. Even with the presence of cameras, most subjects quickly overcome any awkwardness from being on camera. Video cameras are very useful because of their ability to capture the body language of the respondents; this is an aid in interpretation. Tape recording may seem to be redundant, but it enables the researchers to obtain dictaphone transcriptions. Verbatim transcription is expensive and "key quotes" may be sufficient. However, a
benefit of verbatim transcripts is in assisting with formal content analysis during which concept frequency is used as a basis for determining the relative importance of issues. A transcript can be created in a word processing package that allows the researchers to use a “search” function to easily and accurately count the number of times and the context within which given issues were mentioned.

When placing a video camera, make sure that the subjects’ faces are in the line of sight. All too often, the camera is focused on the moderator at one end of the table and only the backs of the subjects’ heads are filmed as they look toward the moderator during discussion. Ideally, all recording equipment should be unobtrusive. If a one-way viewing mirror is available, not only can the recording equipment be concealed, but additional observers can take notes from behind the “screen” of the mirror.

Moderators frequently take notes, but they are also very busy conducting the focus group. Note-taking itself can cause the respondents to hesitate as their words are jotted down, while others view the note-taking as a form of acknowledgement. The notes may become a tool as the moderator reads back lists of discussion points asking for additional thoughts. Finally, if the moderator’s notes are not verbatim, which they usually are not, they may contain subjective interpretation as the moderator rapidly seeks to summarize the discussion. Because of these factors, the moderator’s notes should not be the only source of recording.

Analyzing the Focus Group Data
Content analysis is a methodology for classifying data (in this case, words, phrases, themes, etc.) from the focus group discussion. A number of techniques have been developed for analysis and there are computer packages available to assist with the analysis. Pen and paper techniques of coding each unit by circling with colored pens or marking with symbols are good economical alternatives to investing in specialized software.

Many social science research textbooks provide a section on content analysis. In brief, the technique involves counting the number of times a given unit (word, phrase, etc.) appears in the transcript. Because there are several ways to state the concept, it is important that the raters are trained to recognize synonyms. Likewise, they may need to interpret the statements for aspects such as a positive or negative attitude. It is best to have at least two raters who initially code the transcripts independently. The raters then compare results and discuss discrepancies. Unresolved discrepancies are calculated as a portion of the whole to help determine inter-rater reliability. This process can become highly subjective, so thorough training of the raters is needed not only for accuracy, but also for a productive discrepancy resolution. Many social science research texts include chapters on content analysis (Babbie 1988). Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) provide an excellent section on content analysis in their monograph on focus group research.

Using and Interpreting the Focus Group Data
Focus group data are highly valuable in terms of exploratory research to determine the breadth of issues concerning a target. Less commonly, focus groups conducted later on in more extensive formal research projects tend to be used for clarification and confirmatory purposes, primarily because the number of subjects used is so small that generalization of the entire segment is precluded. This is true even when the sample is representative of the segment. Likewise, even consensus within the group may not be representative because of the possible bias created by the dynamics of discussion. The group dynamics that can cause a consensus may range from the domineering influence of an aggressive participant to the phenomenon of “group think.” While consensus may seem very persuasive, the researcher must be wary of this interpretation.

An additional benefit of focus groups is the pinpointing of areas for higher institutional informational campaigns. Communication goals for informational campaigns can be determined based on identifying the level of student awareness, interest, and any knowledge gaps or misconceptions. Likewise, the vocabulary used by the participants can be identified so that informational campaigns can use wording that is familiar and understood by the recipients.

Conclusions
Focus groups can be very useful tools in identifying important issues from the perspective of the subjects. Issue identification can serve as the basis for more extensive research efforts. But care must be taken in using this highly subjective, qualitative technique because of the above described interpretational challenges. Likewise, in-house research in a university can easily become quite political, which can also be self-defeating. When these caveats are properly handled, however, the focus group can be of great assistance in the higher education learning environment.
References


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Winter 1998
Update on German Education

Axel Markert

Germany was reunified seven years ago and it is legitimate to wonder whether the country is now suffering from the seven-year itch. I would say that it is, that in fact, Germany is itching all over. The ‘Ossies’ (as we call our brethren in the Osten, the East), complain about the arrogant ‘Wessies’ (as we Westerners are called), and the Wessies claim that unification has ‘Ossified’ us. This holds true for higher education as it does for the rest of society.

Towards the end of the 1980s, when the cold war iceberg between East Germany and West Germany started to melt, there were modest attempts at establishing partnerships between schools on both sides. Tübingen, for example, bashfully approached the University of Jena, an old and prestigious German university in the East. My first visit there in 1987 made me realize just how little I knew about the differences between East and West Germany’s educational systems.

Within three short days, the main differences between the two higher education systems became clear: the West, following what they thought was the American ‘model,’ had developed a democratic, open-access system which has become ‘massified.’ The East had a truly elitist system—not elitist in the sense of intellectual elite, but what a socialist school took to be the social elite: children of academics had little chance of getting into universities, children of workers and farmers were given preference, and the number of students admitted was strictly limited. When I visited, the University of Jena had under 7,000 students and as many staff (teaching and clerical). The University of Tübingen had about the same number of staff, but was serving about 25,000 students. (Currently, Jena has 10,000 students and an academic staff of under 2,000, while Tübingen’s enrollment is down to about 23,000 with the same number of academic staff as Jena!) This Eastern staff-student ratio of 1:1 was partially due to the fact that a very high proportion of the teaching staff was there to teach Marxist-Leninist ideology; this ratio could be financed only in a socialist system. With this knowledge, the feeling that an academic cooperative was mutually beneficial seemed acceptable to only a limited number of people.

After reunification, the Eastern political system, along with higher education, was swallowed whole by the West. Whether this was the right path to follow is hard to judge, but in retrospect, it appears there were few real alternatives. Incidentally, this was not only a matter of the West imposing its system, it was above all a matter of retaliation on the part of all those who had opposed or suffered under the communist regime—these people insisted that the departure from the old times be as radical as possible.

Assuming that there were a number of features in East German higher education that deserved closer scrutiny (from which the West might possibly profit), I organized an international conference in Tübingen. This meeting brought together colleagues from Eastern European and Western European countries as well as East German (i.e., formerly German Democratic Republic (GDR)) universities and (formerly) West German universities. The purpose of the meeting was to determine whether there were some redeeming factors in the GDR situation that deserved to be continued and even used in Western schools. Three factors were identified: (1) The high staff-student ratio of Eastern schools could not be financed in a non-socialist context, but the overcrowded Western schools could take steps to move in that direction; (2) the knowledge of the Russian language in the GDR in general, and the universities in particular, was felt to be a precious asset that should be preserved; and (3) the close relationships of GDR universities with schools in Eastern Europe should help to improve German-Eastern European academic relationships in general. All three of these factors were quoted by our group in a list of recommendations to the Federal Ministry of Education and Science which had sponsored the conference, but in the end, all three were ignored. Subsidizing the East with hundreds of billions of marks per year left no reserves to improve staff-student ratios anywhere; interest in the Russian language dwindled very quickly after the general collapse of the communist system; and finally, Eastern European universities proved more eager to enter into direct relationships with Western schools than maintain the old links they had formed with GDR universities during the socialist empire.

Colleagues in the United States have periodically asked me in the years following reunification whether there was a large influx of students from the former GDR into universities in the West. The answer is no, and for several reasons there still isn’t. Income in the eastern part of Germany still has not reached western levels, and studying in the West is expensive for students from the East, especially since student housing rents tend to be higher in ‘Wessieland.’ Internal mobility, at any rate, has been declining for mainly financial reasons in both parts of Germany. If
there is student mobility, it seems to be predominantly in an easterly direction: students from the West can do more with their money in the East, and many appreciate the better student-staff ratios. East German students tend not to go west in significant numbers because they get more attention at home, and therefore feel the lack of personal attention in the cold and arrogant West (what the French so aptly call dépayssé). During a recent visit to the former GDR, however, I found that a number of students from the West, who have been sent to one of the Eastern universities by the ZVS (the Central Admissions Office for numerus clausus subjects), seem to feel just as dépayssé and are trying hard now to get 'back home' into one of the Western schools.

Generally speaking, the mobility of faculty also follows an "Eastward Ho!" trend. Thousands of GDR faculty with political links to the old system were laid off, and those thousands of positions had to be filled again with politically underfiled teachers, who, of course, had to be recruited mainly from the West. Imagine the kind of academic rush this has produced, not least in terms of the academic quality of those who were hired. It is fair to say that quite a few faculty from the Western part of Germany, who were stuck somewhere in an academic blind alley, made unexpected careers that way. But again, there was no other way, and as in most other sectors of German society, the consequences will linger for at least another two generations.

Readers interested in detailed data describing higher educational institutions in the East should consult "Annotated Charts on Germany's Higher Education and Research System," a special excerpt from Universitäten in Deutschland—Universities in Germany by Christian Bode, Werner Becker, Rainer Klofat, eds. (München: Prestel, 1995). This book contains useful graphs and statistics based on publications by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Technology (BMBF), the German Association for Student Services (Deutsches Studentenwerk), the Higher Education Information System (HIS GmbH), the Federal Statistics Office, and the German Academic Council (Wissenschaftsrat). The graphs show, among other things, that the states of the former GDR (or the neue Bundesländer, as we tend to call them), with 30 percent of the total surface of Germany and 20 percent of the population, have only 8.7 percent of the students and 21.5 percent of the academic staff. Berlin's Humboldt University, the biggest university in the East, ranks only seventeenth, nationally, in terms of size.

As for academics, 15.6 percent of Western students take up studies in mathematics and the sciences as compared to 9.6 percent in the East. 3.1 percent in the West take up medicine versus 6.0 percent in the East, and 18.9 percent of Western students study languages and cultures as compared to 12.8 percent of the Easterners. Thirteen percent of the students in the West receive funding through the Federal Education Assistance Act (BAföG) versus 28 percent in the East, and 44 percent of the Easterners live in dormitories versus only 13 percent of the Westerners. The typical budget of a student in the West is about 50 percent higher than that of a student in the East (DM 1,230 versus DM 847 per month). This publication is by no means limited to East and West comparisons, but provides a host of useful data about the higher education system in general.

What makes Ossies and Wessies tick in 1997? For better or worse, we have become a unified system. These are personal observations so there is no guarantee that all German academics would agree with my assessment. After all, we are Germans and have to live up to our collective reputation! The German system has come under pressure because of the very factors that once were the reasons for its success, a success that made hundreds of Americans flock to schools like Göttingen and Berlin in the nineteenth century. The Humboldtian ideals of academic freedom are not conducive to an open-access system; what was designed for the intellectual elite cannot be made to work without drastic changes. No society can afford to keep students in the universities for seven years before they earn a first degree, especially if there are no charges for tuition. Therefore, it seems fair to predict that Germany will have:

1. Bachelor's level degrees (pilot projects are already underway, such as the baccalaureate in Japanese studies at the University of Tübingen);
2. Revamped and streamlined courses of study which will allow students to leave the university earlier with a degree;
3. Modest, or maybe not-so-modest administrative and tuition charges which will help students make up their minds about earning degrees earlier; and
4. Some (maybe many) courses which will be taught in English.

The German language, like Russian and French, is suffering in the United States, as it is worldwide, despite a brief reunification boom especially in Eastern Europe. Many third world countries, for whom German higher education had been a tradition, tend to send their students to countries with Anglo-American systems these days. Aside from language, these countries have become critical of some aspects of the German system, such as overcrowding, lack of attention, and problems with the acceptance of German degrees. Some of our traveling politicians have been shocked to learn these facts, and the federal government has recently initiated a series of programs, some of them jointly with the federal states, the Länder, to internationalize the German higher education system and make it 'attractive' to prospective students once again.
The most interesting program in this context is called Auslandsorientierte Studiengänge (Courses of Study with an International Orientation) which will provide about $20 million during the next four years for universities willing to create new courses, predominantly in economics, business administration, the sciences, and engineering. Of the forty to sixty students accepted, half must be foreigners (and not counted among those will be Bildungsinländer, i.e., students with a foreign nationality who have gone through the German educational system). A foreign language (which most likely will be English) must be used on an equal basis with German, and among the teachers there must be academics for whom the “other language” is the native idiom. A year abroad will be an integral part of these courses; this year has to be fully integrated into the course, i.e., the transfer of credit must be automatic. Participating universities must guarantee that all students will be adequately prepared in both languages, i.e., German and the foreign language, and written as well as oral examinations must be made available in either language. It is hoped that there will also be a foreign designation for the degree earned at the end of the course. The program will pay up to $450,000 per year to each institution to subsidize additional faculty members (especially foreign teaching staff and visiting lecturers from abroad), language teachers for both German and the foreign language, student assistants and tutors, top-up grants for the period abroad for both the German and the foreign students enrolled in the course, and finally, teaching materials, books, equipment, rent, travel expenses, excursions, further education in the languages used for students and staff, and the procurement of accommodations for up to 30 percent of the annual cost.

Some 200 German universities sent in a first statement of intention to apply by the end of January 1997. Since, given the amount provided, only ten such courses (DM 750,000 x 4 years x 10 equals DM 30 million) can be financed, it is clear that competition has been fierce because only 5 percent of the applications could be accepted. This program is advertised and will be administered by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), an association of the German institutions of higher education.

The same is true for a second new program launched in 1997 which subsidizes subject-oriented cooperation with universities in developing countries. The purposes of this program are to help universities in third world countries with their “institutional development”—the development of faculty, staff, and students; to create direct bilateral relationships between German and foreign institutions which will hopefully encourage German institutions to build up networks with universities abroad; to sensitize German institutions and their staff to problems of developing countries; and to promote Germany and German universities as hosts for higher education. Those who know enough German will appreciate the wording of the final point: “Die Steigerung der Attraktivität der deutschen Hochschulen und die Festigung des Wissenschaftstandorts Deutschland.”

The annual subsidy for projects within this second program (Förderung von fachbezogenen Partnerschaften mit Hochschulen in Entwicklungsländern) will be between DM 5,000 and 30,000 per year for four years. One of the main criteria will be the integration of students and younger faculty members on both sides into the project. Of equal importance is the academic quality of the cooperation and its weight in terms of development policy. Special attention will be given to those innovative programs promising structural improvement of teaching and research, especially at the partner institution abroad.

A third program will support visiting faculty members from abroad for guest lectureships with a duration of one to two years. Universities interested in receiving subsidies under this program could establish lectureships for foreign faculty in courses with an international orientation or within an existing student exchange program with an institution abroad. They could also hire guest lecturers for courses in which a foreign teacher promises “added value” internationally (e.g., a lectureship on common law in the Law Faculty), or they could aim at establishing an academic north-south dialogue (Kultur-und Wissenschaftsdialog Süd-Nord) within which eminent teachers from extra-European cultures would help promote specific schools of thought and methods. This program is not limited to any specific subject areas (as is the first one) or specific countries (as is the second one). Its target group is the “more than 90 percent of our students who will not spend an academic period abroad.” The federal government and the Länder will jointly provide about $15 million over a period of four years (1997-2000) for this program.

And finally, there is yet another new program, funded by the German Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) and also administered by the DAAD which will help foreign graduate students earn a German Master’s (Diplom) degree within a maximum of five semesters or a doctorate within a maximum of five years. Funds will be awarded towards the creation of new courses of study which guarantee that foreign applicants with BA degrees will be accepted as graduate students or, in German terms, on the level of Hauptstudium. Twenty to forty students with a BA should be accepted annually per course of study; the applicants should have above average grades, and they should not have studied more than one semester at any German institution prior to admission. Intensive preparation in the language is supposed to be an integral part of the course, before and after admission into the course. The DAAD will fund tutors, student assistants, and language teachers; give stipends for the period of
language preparation; and subsidize excursions as well as advertising and teaching materials. Travel cost and other "necessary means to prepare the institution's application" will also be borne by the DAAD. If the application is successful, up to DM 150,000 will be awarded during the first year, and up to DM 250,000 in the second and following years. The total amount of funding will depend on the number of foreign participants in the course.

All these program descriptions arrived at the universities during the last few months of 1996. They demonstrate how much federal and state governments are worried about the international attractiveness of the German system of higher education.

I doubt that programs of this kind will help make the German universities more attractive in the long run. The time has come for more radical and far-reaching changes, and the institutions themselves will have to come up with the solutions. The present system cannot be financed much longer, and although the German universities have not discovered the term 'retrenchment,' they will soon know what it means. In my state of Baden-Württemberg, for example, all institutions of higher education will have to cut, across the board, 10 percent of their staff within a ten-year period (1997-2006). This is just the beginning. Those who know the 'German University' cannot be but pessimistic when it comes to its ability to reform without pressure from the outside. The present financial crisis may just be what is needed to bring about this long overdue process—to build a university within a system of higher education that serves the demands of society in the second half of the 20th century. We only have three more years before it is over!•••
Project EASIER

David J. Alvord, Leland R. Tack, and Jerald W. Dallam

Introduction

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is becoming a common means of efficiently, effectively, and securely exchanging information in the business world. The viability of EDI is strongly supported in current technology literature. The use of EDI has increased dramatically since 1980, rising from the involvement of 2,000 United States companies to more than 25,000 in 1995, and it is currently used in more than fifty industries, including education, to handle the exchange of information.

The application of EDI technology by the Iowa Department of Education has been implemented through Project EASIER (Electronic Access System for Iowa Education Records). EDI, which is the exchange of electronic information in standard formats to enable direct computer-to-computer processing, was undertaken to take advantage of emerging technologies, and to remove the data reporting burden and improve transcript security.

Initial Department of Education interest was a product of the Regents institutions’ (in particular, The University of Iowa) and the Iowa Department of Education’s collaborative efforts in presenting a statewide SPEEDE/ExPRESS conference in June 1994. The application of EDI technology by the Iowa Department of Education was then implemented through Project EASIER, which in turn had evolved from the efforts of a broadly representative statewide Advisory Committee organized by the Department of Education in May 1995 to provide recommendations with respect to content, policy, and technological considerations designed to serve as criteria and governing principles to guide the process of EDI in education.

Purpose

Project EASIER is a collaborative effort involving the networking of Iowa’s local school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, Regents institutions, and the Department of Education to encourage and build the capacity for better decision making by establishing a cost effective, security-enhanced method of accessing and exchanging timely, basic educational information about students utilizing the principles of EDI. Participants in Project EASIER are currently 1) universities and community colleges—resulting in the replacement of paper-based student transcripts; 2) the Department of Education—resulting in the reduction of data burden through the elimination of paper-based collection departments; 3) other local school districts—resulting in an instantaneous exchange of essential student information needed for immediate placement of transfer students in the most appropriate educational program. In addition, it is anticipated that adding the student data elements necessary to complete the previously mentioned purposes of the project to individual local school district student information bases will greatly enhance local school district capacity to develop a management information system. This system can then be used not only for school improvement but also to provide local school boards, the Iowa Department of Education, the State Board of Education, and the State Legislature with information on which to base sound educational policy decisions.

Project EASIER has as its primary goal to develop and implement a system for the collection of essential student information for state and federal reporting requirements and for policy development and research activities by utilizing portions of individual student records available directly from school districts’ automated student record systems.

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**Major Milestones**

Major milestones in addressing the project’s primary goal included the following: 1) development of an overview of the tasks to be completed; 2) development of a budget for the tasks identified as well as estimates of personnel resources; 3) development of a set of criteria and governing principles to guide in the process of establishing the electronic transfer and storage of individual student records; 4) identification of DE technology and both software and hardware needs for the electronic receipt and storage of individual student records; 5) preparation of specifications and standards for the development and transmission of student records; 6) design of a pilot study to demonstrate EDI; and 7) identification of a timeline and phase-in plan to develop local school district capacity and to bring districts online. The establishment of a statewide EDI Advisory Committee to provide direction was a significant event (possibly the most significant) in achieving many of the major milestones identified above.

"Project EASIER is a collaborative effort... to encourage and build the capacity for better decision making by establishing a cost effective, security-enhanced method of accessing and exchanging timely, basic educational information about students utilizing the principles of EDI."

Additional milestones which occurred concurrently included: 1) development of necessary legislation to allow/facilitate the electronic transmission of individual student records; 2) development and dissemination of informational materials to facilitate awareness of the principles, issues, and benefits of EDI; 3) creation of a Department of Education repository for student data; 4) development of access, security, and guiding principles to govern operations for the transmission, receipt, storage, access, security, and confidentiality of student record information; and 5) elimination of paper-based data collection forms for the data reported by schools to the Department of Education.

**Goals and Activities to Bring About Attainment**

To achieve the primary goal of Project EASIER, a statewide Advisory Committee for EDI was established by the Department of Education. Invitations for nominations to this advisory group were sent to all public school districts. In addition, Advisory Committee members were invited to represent area education agencies, community colleges, Iowa’s three public universities, educational associations, and non-public schools. As more educators became aware of the project, they requested membership on the Committee; since its initial inception on May 19, 1995, membership on the Committee has risen to nearly seventy.

The Advisory Committee’s operations were aided by a steering committee consisting of six members drawn from the existing committee. The goal of the EDI Advisory Committee was to develop a comprehensive set of issues and recommendations related to the implementation of a statewide student record system. To facilitate attaining this goal, the Advisory Committee was organized into three basic subgroups, each guided by two steering committee members: 1) content; 2) technical; and 3) policy. The content group dealt with identification and organization of student data elements needed by the Department of Education, postsecondary institutions, and local school districts. The technical group dealt with the issues of data transmission, transmission standards, and security. The policy group dealt with issues of confidentiality, access, marketing, dissemination of information on EDI, and legal requirements.

Several objectives related to the primary goal of Project EASIER were also addressed through project activities. These included: 1) increasing the security of individual student record information; 2) improving the timeliness of the receipt of information; 3) reducing the data reporting burden on data providers; 4) reducing the cost of data collection through the application of new technology; 5) reducing the amount of time required to enroll and accurately place students who transfer from one district to another in an appropriate educational setting; 6) acquiring the ability to calculate additional measures of the effectiveness of the educational system (such as graduation rates); 7) acquiring the ability to evaluate more readily the effectiveness of specific state and federally funded programs such as Title I, dropout prevention, and talented and gifted programs; and 8) improving the ability to disseminate and access summary statistics from the individual student databases for both local school district program improvement and Department of Education policy improvement.

Within the Department of Education an internal EDI committee was formed to provide guidance in directing the statewide Advisory Committee’s operations and to facilitate communication within the agency regarding EDI activities. This internal group was composed of staff from the areas of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Community Colleges, Data Processing, Special Education, Internal Technology Support, Technical and Vocational Education, and Administration, Instruction, and School
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Improvement. This group meets regularly to identify unresolved issues, to plan future activities, and to coordinate efforts.

In addition, the Iowa Department of Education is involved in a multi-state project seeking to facilitate the electronic transfer of student records. The Midwest Education Information Consortium (MEIC), which was established and funded through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), is involved in an effort to move toward electronic transmission of student information for reporting purposes. States involved in the MEIC effort include Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

**Demonstration Sites**

During the November 29, 1995 meeting of the EDI statewide Advisory Committee, members were informed of plans for a pilot project involving demonstration sites that would be implemented in January 1996. At that time all public schools with representation on the Advisory Committee were invited to notify the Department of Education through a letter of intent if they had interest in becoming a demonstration site. An internal Department of Education team reviewed letters of intent in accordance with prespecified criteria as well as conducted follow-up team telephone interviews with potential demonstration site candidates.

Six of the ten school districts expressing an interest in becoming EDI demonstration sites were selected as initial pilot sites. These included: 1) Des Moines; 2) Janesville; 3) Clinton; 4) Iowa City; 5) Jefferson-Scranton; and 6) Cedar Rapids. Each of the six sites received $8,000 from the Department of Education to facilitate its efforts in demonstrating the use of EDI to transmit student information to the Department of Education, to postsecondary institutions, and to other local district demonstration sites.

Specific expectations for EDI demonstration sites included the following: 1) with technical assistance, conduct an initial EDI assessment to provide a foundation for future direction; 2) organize a pilot site team; 3) develop a site team plan; 4) participate in team meetings with other pilot sites; 5) communicate with the Department of Education and with other pilot sites; 6) record/report progress and share technical problems and issues with other site teams and the Department of Education; 7) develop trading agreements with other pilot sites and postsecondary institutions; and 8) transfer student data electronically to the Department of Education and/or other pilot sites and/or postsecondary institutions.

**Current Status and Participation**

Currently, there are twenty active pilot sites involved in Project EASIER. The initial sites have been involved for approximately twelve months and the remaining fourteen sites were added during the summer of 1996. An additional sixteen pre-pilot sites have been participating in EDI readiness activities in anticipation of becoming active pilot sites in late 1997. Several of the initial pilot sites are currently working toward the goal of using EDI to submit information required by the Department of Education directly from existing local school district student information systems, thus eliminating the need for the paper-based documents previously required. It is anticipated that a few of the active pilot sites will also be submitting EDI-based electronic transcripts to Regents institutions and to a select number of Iowa community colleges in early 1998.

The Department of Education has established the 1998-99 school year as its goal for approving all school districts that wish to become involved and that are able to meet the prerequisite of having K-12 automated student record systems. Future plans are to expand EDI efforts from the current initiative focusing on student information to include personnel and financial information as well.

During the 1995-96 school year, the Department of Education sponsored a survey to determine local school district status with respect to automated student record systems. Based on its survey, it was estimated that 72 percent of Iowa public school districts have some form of automated student record software in place while 40 percent have automated their records for grades K-12. Having an automated student record for all students is an essential prerequisite step for implementation of EDI.

**Common Standards**

Iowans have a long proven tradition of local control of education. Local control of education has been and is one of the many strengths of the state's education system. Local control, however, does not mean that administrators and school boards are not concerned about compatibility of their computer hardware and software with their neighbors, the Area Education Agency (AEA), the Department of Education, and the rest of the education community. Through the work of the Advisory Committee as embodied in the purpose of Project EASIER, EDI in education must follow standards, just as EDI in business follows standards. By following the principles of EDI, organizations and businesses which have different hardware and software platforms are able to communicate. The most common format for EDI in the United States is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) X12 committee standard. This format, which has gone through a rigorous formalized standards
process by ANSI, is the one that is being followed in transmitting education data to the Department of Education, schools, colleges, and universities. Each school district will choose its own software and hardware vendor; however, each school district and vendor is aware of the expectation of the system with respect to compatibility.

To exchange and to collect information regarding the courses students take, standardized student course codes will be used. The National Center for Education Statistics Course Code Classification System, developed through pilot activities involving a diverse group of states across the nation, is being used and will facilitate a common interpretation for school districts and postsecondary institutions of the content and nature of courses taken by students. This NCES Course Code Classification System appears to be the evolving standard and has been reviewed by the ANSI-X12 committee and is included as a part of the EDI student record transaction set. The postsecondary institutions involved in Project EASIER have endorsed adoption of the standardized course code adoption and have suggested that the standardization will make transcript evaluation much more efficient for them in dealing with Iowa's 379 individual public school districts.

**Benefits**

Implementing EDI in education will benefit students, teachers, administrators, counselors, schools, colleges, universities, and the Department of Education in numerous ways. One of the most obvious benefits is the reduction of paperwork. It will also enable districts to provide information to the Department in a more timely and efficient manner as well as provide more accurate information. One of the major benefits of EDI is the electronic transmission of transcript information between a school district and a postsecondary institution and among postsecondary institutions. Transcript information is made available in a timely manner, is accurate, is sent efficiently, allows for streamlining the transition between institutions, and increases the security of the content of the records. The need to handle, copy, or mail the same record multiple times is eliminated. Both students and institutions are benefiting from the increased confidentiality and security provided by EDI.

**Appropriation Request**

The Iowa Department of Education has requested $1.5 million in FY98 and $1.5 million in FY99 from the State Legislature to implement EDI in the public schools.

The Iowa Department of Education has worked with six pilot projects for almost a year, granting each of the six pilots $8,000. Based upon the work with the initial six pilots and comments from the Advisory Committee, $4,000 was allocated to the fourteen additional pilot sites added in 1996 to partially offset start-up costs for such items as hardware, software, and personnel. The major portion of the cost of implementing EDI in school districts, community colleges, colleges, and universities will be their responsibility.

**Business Case**

The business case for EDI may be viewed as doing more either with the same resources or from the savings which are realized. EDI in education reduces error, improves security, and improves productivity. Based on other states' experiences, sending, receiving, and reconciling transcripts electronically will save dollars for both the sending and receiving institutions. It is estimated that at the elementary and secondary level, the cost of processing a transcript is $18 in staff time and materials. Although there will be real out-of-pocket savings, such as postage, copying, paper, and envelopes, the benefits of more accurate and timely enrollment counts which are used to determine Iowa's state foundation aid ($1.4 billion) and property taxes, and the elimination of the audits of enrollment may be even more cost effective. Also included in the business case should be the improved image and relations with the public. Taking the lead in adopting technology that promises to reduce cost and improve services enhances the image of the school district with taxpayers.
under contract with the Department of Education to develop software and to provide technical advice to the Department and to local school districts. An independent consultant has also been under contract to advise the EDI committee, pilot schools, and the Department of Education throughout this project.

In addition to the local district implementation, funds are needed for Department of Education staffing to support the automation of data collection as well as for storage and school district access to comparative information through a data warehouse. Funding to achieve this has been included in the Department's budget request to develop and support the software required in such a system. Additional funds are also being requested for studying the communication, encryption, and security options.

EDI Information Dissemination Efforts

To disseminate information on Project EASIER, a multi-faceted approach is being employed by the Department of Education. The Department has and continues to share information on Project EASIER through presentations and communications to both internal and external groups. The statewide Advisory Committee (with representation from Local Education Agencies (LEAs), AEAs, community colleges, Regents institutions, nonpublic schools, and professional organizations) also shares information through both formal and informal communication networks.

In addition, the Department of Education has contracted for specialized technical consultant services to assist in the development of a variety of materials to share the vision, mission, and goals of Project EASIER with LEAs, community colleges, Regents universities, and other education groups throughout the state. These products include: 1) a ten minute video overview of EDI; 2) an in-depth Power Point presentation of the concepts and advantages of transmitting and accessing education information using EDI; 3) a brochure detailing issues related to the use of EDI as a mechanism to transmit and receive education data; and 4) a Project EASIER website at www.state.ia.us/educate/depteduc/fis/edi/easier.html. The Project EASIER website includes information on the mission, guiding principles, historical overview, demonstration sites, information products available, EDI Advisory Committee, EASIER data elements, EASIER Exchange electronic newsletter, and provides a link to EDI Transaction Set 130.

Vendor Involvement

From the beginning of the project, the Iowa Department of Education has taken the stance that the choice of automated student record systems was a matter for local schools to decide and that project efforts would seek to accommodate any student record software used by local districts. Vendors were invited to all advisory council meetings and were encouraged to work with local districts involved in the project who were using their software products. Vendor participation was minimal in the beginning, but has since progressed to the point where three vendors are extensively involved in working with the Department of Education and with pilot and pre-pilot sites that are using their products. One vendor is currently working to incorporate SPEEDE/ExPRESS standards into its product. This is being done at no cost to the Department or to the Iowa school districts using the vendor's software.

Future EDI Activities

Future activities of Project EASIER will involve bringing additional local school districts online as active sites. The long range goal is to have the majority of public school districts, if not all districts, using EDI to transmit and to access educational data in three to four years. It is envisioned that districts will be able to transmit to the Department of Education all student data required for state and federal reporting requirements and for research and policy purposes, thus eventually eliminating the need for paper-based data collection documents. Additionally, it is envisioned that districts will also use EDI to exchange student records among districts when students move from one district to another, and further to transfer transcript information via EDI to postsecondary institutions.

The long range vision seeks to develop a system of EDI data exchange that encompasses three basic components: 1) a student data component containing information on students' demographics, characteristics, and educational programs; 2) a staff component containing information on education staff characteristics; and 3) a financial component, currently in the beginning stages of development, containing information on school district finances.
Bold, balanced and believable may be the best words to describe the AACRAO Policy Summit, *Hopwood, Bakke, and Beyond*, held recently in Washington, DC. Sandwiched between the National Association for College Admission Counseling’s (NACAC) and The College Board’s Annual Meetings, and held in the midst of the recruiting season, a less than optimal number of admissions officers was able to attend. Those who did attend were joined by an assortment of university counsels, institutional researchers, policy analysts, association representatives, media, and graduate students. They all got their money’s worth.

In his greeting to the summit participants, AACRAO President Fred Fresh indicated that *Hopwood, Bakke, and Beyond*, the third of the Association’s recent policy summits, was “...designed to cut through the rhetoric and offer you an open and honest dialogue on campus diversity.” Dr. Fresh did not exaggerate. AACRAO and its two dozen co-sponsoring organizations provided a rich array of keynote, film, plenary, and break-out sessions that successfully engaged summit participants in a robust dialogue on campus diversity.

This summit was bold because it addressed head on one of the most pressing and controversial topics in higher education. Affirmative action is an issue on which there is little neutrality; no less than the US Supreme Court has addressed this matter. More than a few individuals and even some universities have attempted to sidestep affirmative action and avoid its public discussion. AACRAO and its several partners are to be commended for providing a forum balanced in the explanation and discussion of affirmative action and campus diversity.

The summit was balanced because it provided a venue for the expression of a wide array of reasonable views and interpretation of issues that pertain to affirmative action and campus diversity. Well spoken advocates of opinions as differing as those of University of California Regent, Ward Connerly and Elizabeth Toledo, Vice President of the National Organization for Women (NOW), provided summit participants with the rationale for their views. *Hopwood, Bakke, and Beyond* was also balanced in that the issues, along with their possible causes and solutions, were provided. It should be noted that almost anyone can discuss the issues; providing believable context and suggesting credible solutions is a more difficult task.

The AACRAO Policy Summit was believable because the presenters were all actively involved with affirmative action and campus diversity. Enrollment managers and most of the other groups of participants at the summit are often implementors of policies and procedures affecting the campus.

No one can say with certainty what will happen with regard to affirmative action and campus diversity. However, the importance of the issue and the difficulty of solving the problems will not soon disappear. As one of the plenary speakers at *Hopwood, Bakke, and Beyond* suggested, “Affirmative action is not rocket science; it is harder than that.” AACRAO and its co-sponsors opted to boldly confront the campus diversity debate in a balanced way that provided believable information, opinions, and solutions.

The AACRAO National Office staff and AACRAO’s co-sponsors deserve special recognition. I have never before seen so many worthwhile events occurring in less than forty hours in our nation’s capital.

—Jim Blackburn, Fullerton, CA

James C. Blackburn is director of admissions and records at California State University, Fullerton. He holds graduate degrees from University of Tennessee and Indiana University and formerly served as editor of College & University. Jim was one of several dozen presenters at the *Hopwood, Bakke, and Beyond* summit.


The contributors, however, never express views of extreme frustration or anger, but rather convey a feeling of "this is the way it is" and set about achieving their goals despite certain obstacles.

The contributors offer valuable, and often feminine, insight into an academic career. For anyone familiar with academe, there is the ongoing conflict between the valuation of teaching and the valuation of research. This is most prominent in some faculty members' desire to teach and serve rather than conduct research. Although one or two of the women are interested primarily in academic research, the majority indicated an interest in teaching. This desire often is often subjugated to the demand for research. Some of the women discuss the possibility of returning to the private sector where they would be free from the rigors of research and could spend more time practicing their specialty.

Another continuing theme among the women is the focus on cooperation rather than competition. Most of the stories indicate a willingness to collaborate with other faculty, to help students, and to work for the success of their department or school rather than concentrate on their individual success. This theme is echoed in discussion focused on trying to achieve a balanced lifestyle, where the women involve themselves in teaching, research, and service while maintaining an adequate social and family life. Several of the women were concerned about the politics practiced at the department level and the sense of a "win/lose" attitude on the part of faculty preparing for tenure and promotion. Instances of intellectual theft regarding research and personal undercutting were experienced by several of the women.

A reader might assume that the experiences of these women are similar to those of female business faculty members throughout academe. Another valid assumption is that similar experiences may be found among female faculty in the disciplines of mathematics, chemistry, geology, and physics, or any of the sciences which have been historically male concentrated departments. It would be interesting to compare these with the experiences of women in the more female concentrated areas of English, history, and the arts. Do women attempting to obtain faculty positions in these areas at prestigious institutions encounter similar obstacles, and what is their success in the tenure and promotion track process? Are these faculty women more traditional in their education-to-career path? Do they bring a different perspective to academe having not been involved professionally outside of higher education?

The authors point out some career themes that are probably universal regardless of academic discipline. These include: the serendipitous nature of academic life where one is often not in control but is affected by circumstance and sheer luck; the female dilemma often accompanying professional life where the role of faculty member and mother is often a source of conflict for women; the desire and need for support systems that is generally not felt by men; and the desire to achieve balance in their lives.

The experiences of the women are interesting and the book could prove valuable for any female graduate student beginning her professional studies.

—Betty J. Huff
Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Services
California State University, Hayward

Winter 1998
Continuing Higher Education: The Coming Wave

Edited by
Allan W. Lerner and B. Kay King
Teachers College Press, 1992; New York, NY

Continuing Higher Education: The Coming Wave, has not previously been reviewed in College & University. Yet this slender volume, now in its fifth year of publication, contains a series of challenging essays concerning how higher education in general, and mega-universities in particular, can rethink their approaches to serving the needs of continuing education. These essays are as thought-provoking today as they were at the time of their original publication. The editors, Allan Lerner and B. Kay King, were both associated with the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1992; Lerner as an Associate Dean of the Graduate College and professor of political science, and King as Director of the Office of Continuing Education and Public Service and adjunct assistant professor in the College of Medicine. All the other contributors also have extensive backgrounds in continuing and adult education.

The value of this book for an individual engaged in admissions or records work lies in the ability of the authors to discuss emerging trends and to relate them conceptually to a framework familiar to many of us; that is, to consider changing student demographics, the role of the faculty in advancing institutional mission, and the ability of administrative support units to provide traditional services in new and innovative ways—which all represent an opportunity to bring together otherwise disparate and far-flung elements of an institution to advance the common good.

Continuing and adult education is seen as an area of scholarly endeavor that is responsive to the changing needs of society and the workforce. It can also be viewed as an economic engine fueling the need of financial support in the face of steady or declining funding earmarked for higher education. For many institutions it represents a new market that has only begun to be tapped.

This is not a "how to" source of information. One will not learn of the best practices for admission, registration, or delivery of other services to adult learners. What this book does do, however, is raise a host of issues at an abstract level that should be of concern to administrators and faculty members.

In the past few years the term "distance education" has come into use as a recognized and popular term in educational circles. This volume appeared before distance education had come into common usage. One can only speculate as to the strength of its already powerful message had distance education, the Internet, and the Web been in full flower at that time.

—Thomas L. W. Johnson
Executive Associate Registrar
University of Wisconsin—Madison

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Vol. 73, No. 3
A Message from the President

1996-97 certainly represented one of the monumental years in AACRAO's 87-year history. As the AACRAO membership embraced a new mission that will guide the Association into the 21st Century, it also emphasized the importance of focusing on the daily issues our members face.

AACRAO strove forward confidently with a resolute set of goals and objectives for the year. Most importantly, the Association broke new ground by addressing pressing issues. This has demonstrated that AACRAO members have accepted the challenge to begin changing the way we do business as technology and other advancements change higher education. Highlighted below are some of our accomplishments:

- Professional Development Offerings—FERPA workshops satisfied a great member demand for more information about the legal limitations facing higher education administrators. The summits also focused on pressing member issues: international access, virtual education, and campus diversity. From these summits, important dialogue was begun to help frame future issues our members need to be aware of as we approach the year 2000.

- New Publications—The Association published several new guides, including: *Becoming a Leader in Enrollment Services; Breakthrough Systems: Student Access and Registration; Electronic Imaging in Admissions, Records, and Financial Aid Offices; FERPA and Secondary Education; Misrepresentation in the Marketplace and Beyond: Ethics Under Siege; and Strategic Enrollment Management: Cases from the Field.*

True, some of these efforts were not without their faults. Most notably, some of these programs exceeded their budgeted expenses and produced lower amounts of revenue than anticipated. But overall I firmly believe the direction we chose was healthy for the Association. We received record amounts of member feedback and input. And a great result was a series of publications that will be higher education resources for years to come.

AACRAO is a healthy, vibrant association and one which I have been proud to serve. The people I have met through it have always shown me the personal and professional excellence I have come to expect from AACRAO members. We are a community of individuals working for common goals and stand ready for the challenges which face us in the coming millennium.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your President.

Sincerely Yours,

Kathleen G. Plante
1996-97 AACRAO President
A Message from the Executive Director

Dear AACRAO Colleague:

1996-97 marked another year of significant growth and change for AACRAO. A redesigned and enhanced website and a new Document-on-Request service enable us to make more and more information available to AACRAO members twenty-four hours a day.

As predictions of rapid change, increasing use of technology, and rapid expansion of virtual learning became commonplace, AACRAO began to examine its strategic direction. Emerging from this effort were proposed changes to the AACRAO Constitution and Bylaws to better position the Association to grow, diversify, and respond quickly to rapid change; a reexamination of the structure of the Board and committees; and a new mission and new ways of looking at old concepts.

Our vocabulary was challenged with new terms, such as: transformation, domains, policy primacy, and summits. Members voted to support a new mission statement, but expressed strong opposition to a change of name for the Association and several other proposed constitution and bylaw changes.

1996-97 marked the first year for the AACRAO/SCT APEX Award for Achieving Professional EXcellence in higher education, and the third year of awarding Annual Meeting Scholarships to deserving students from the host city. The introduction of the scholarship winners at the Opening General Session has become a highlight of the Annual Meeting.

Unfortunately, AACRAO ended the year on a down side financially, missing short-term budget goals that help the Association carry out its day to day activities. But as we continue into FY98, we will be working hard to enhance the long-term financial position of the Association and strive to continue and improve the membership benefits you have come to expect.

We look forward to your continued involvement and support for the Association in the coming year!

Sincerely yours,

Wayne E. Becraft
Executive Director
Realigning, Redesigning, Redefining, and Reengineering...

These words continued to echo in the halls of our hallowed ivory towers as higher education shifted its focus from the institution to the learner. With increasing competition not only from sister institutions but the worldwide entrepreneurial and corporate arenas, traditional colleges and universities were scrambling to retain their share of the learner market.

The effects of increased competition on individuals in the workplace,

their subsequent need to adopt a lifelong learning mode,

the resulting challenge that institutions step up to meet these new demands and lead the way with learner-centered strategies,

the fast pace of change itself...

...All these factors demand that AACRAO...

monitor the rapidly changing education scene,

identify the role Association members play in the educational process,

be proactive in strategizing planning and action, and

both lead and guide its members toward the future while continuing to meet the ongoing needs and interests of its constituents.

Toward these ends AACRAO...

1. Supported the ongoing work of the Task Force 2000 in identifying the wants and needs of members
   - Set and promoted standards
   - Promoted the development of professional credentialing practices for the Association’s professionals
   - Supported a strong government relations program
   - Built collaborative relationships with other organizations/corporate entities
   - Focused on professional development as key to membership service
   - Released timely publications

2. Continued other strong professional development programs
   - Annual Meeting, Salt Lake City, April 20-24, 1997, drew more than 2,100 attendees to more than 200 sessions and workshops. The keynote address was on “Transforming Higher Education: A Vision of Learning for the 21st Century” and plenary sessions focused on the generation, progress, and future of the Western Governors University; the International Student Bill of Rights; and Hopwood and Bakke.
   - SEM VI Conference: Creating the Bottom Line, Aspen, CO, November 10-12, 1996, drew 215 attendees to four cutting-edge plenary sessions and three days of breakouts for community college, small college, and general audiences.
   - EDI in Education, Des Moines, IA, October 18-20, 1996, drew attendees from thirty-six states and provinces to exchange experiences and information on emerging applications of EDI.
   - July Leadership Conference, July 11-14, 1996, hosted thirty-eight AACRAO chairpersons to finalize the 1997 Annual Meeting program and discuss leadership within the Association.

3. Added new publications to the resources on which our members rely
   - Becoming a Leader in Enrollment Services
   - Breakthrough Systems: Student Access and Registration
   - FERPA and Secondary Education by Richard Rainsberger (AACRAO and NACAC)
   - 1996 Conference Papers edited by James Menzel
Privacy and the Handling of Student Information in the Electronic Networked Environments of Colleges and Universities (CAUSE and AACRAO)

Fifteen Country Guides

Fourteen reports in the Handbook for the Admission of International Students in Elementary and Secondary Schools in the United States series

Bulgaria (PIER) by Caroline Aldrich

Europe-USA: Mutual Recognition of Qualifications edited by Caroline Aldrich

Electronic AACRAO Government Relations Newsletter

Document-on-Request service

Eleven issues of AACRAO Data Dispenser

Four issues of College & University, edited by Georgeanne Porter and Steve Gawkoski

1996-97 Member Guide

NetNews, edited by Paul Aucoin

4. Recognized achievements and contributions to the profession

First annual APEX Award for Achieving Professional EXcellence in Education Administration to Patrick R. Forte, Registrar, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey

Distinguished Service Award to Mary Neary, Associate Registrar, Arizona State University

Certificate of Recognition to Georgeanne Porter, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, University of Missouri-Columbia for 10 years' service as College & University editor

Honorary Memberships for longtime service to AACRAO to Charles McKinney, Registrar, Florida Gulf Coast University; Carol Medders, Manager of Academic Data and Analysis, University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Health Related Professions; Richard Elkins, Director of Admissions, Kansas State University

Awarded $1,000 scholarships to eight high school graduates and two community college students from the Reno area

Elbert W. Ockerman State and Regional Professional Activity Awards to:
Michigan ACRAO for “New Admissions Professional Workshop”
Nebraska ACRAO for “Clerical Workshop”
Ohio ACRAO for “Records Fraud and Misrepresentation Workshop”

Newly published authors recognized at “Author Signings” in Salt Lake City


SEM Primer: Transforming Higher Education: Michael G. Dolence

FERPA and Secondary Education: Richard Rainsberger


Electronic Imaging in Admissions, Records and Financial Aid Offices: Helen Perkins

5. Maintained and expanded its partnership with...

AACRAO State/Regional Associations

Reciprocal visits to State/Regional Annual Meetings by Board and National Office staff

Hosting State/Regional workshop and reception at AACRAO's Annual Meeting

Accepting Idaho and Puerto Rico as State Associations
Other Educational Associations

• NACAC (FERPA & Secondary Education) • CAUSE (Privacy and the Handling of Student Information in the Electronic Networked Environments of Colleges and Universities) • CAUSE, ETS, Law School Admissions Council (Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council) • NASPA/Association of Student Judicial Affairs (Task Force on Disciplinary Dismissals and Student Transcripts) • ACT, ETS, NCS (Transaction Set, Testing Results Request and Report)

Government Agencies

SHEEO/NCES (Postsecondary Student Data Handbook) • Department of Defense (Solomon Amendment) • Department of Education, NASFAA, NACUBO (Project EASI) • ACT, ETS, NCES, AIR, LSAS, OPE (Single Institutional Postsecondary Identifier) • Family Policy Compliance Office (FERPA workshops and review of AACRAO publications on FERPA) • Department of Education Title IV Task Forces (Reauthorization of Higher Education Act of 1965)

Corporations


Other Alliances

Advisory Committee on Veterans Affairs • The College Board • Council of Higher Education Management Associations • National Association of College Deans, Registrars, and Admissions Officers • National Collegiate Athletic Association • National Council on Benchmarking in Higher Education • National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials • National Postsecondary Education Cooperative • American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) • American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) • Association for Institutional Research (AIR) • Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) • Educational Testing Service (ETS) • Family Policy Compliance Office • Law School Admission Services (LSAS) • National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) • National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) • National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) • National Computer Systems (NCS) • National Student Loan Clearinghouse • Systems & Computer Technology Corporation (SCT) • State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) • Statistical Networking Applications Project (SNAP) • US Network on Education Information • Washington Higher Education Secretariat

6. Continued to offer other ancillary services to members

- Electronic access to AACRAO via a redesigned website (www.aacrao.com)
- Document-on-Request service (1-888-6AACRAO)
- Consultant referral service for those seeking help in reviewing and/or evaluating their operations
- Professional resource panel of experts in data and definitions, audit systems, enrollment management, FERPA, fraudulent credentials, records and registration, international education and technology
- Foreign credential evaluation services, Skills Enhancement Institute for mid-level international admissions professionals, and consulting provided by AACRAO's Office of International Education Services
- Professional and personal insurance
- Mailing labels and lists
AACRAO Membership

Institutional membership in AACRAO rose to 2,334 in 1996-97. Individual members totaled 9,005, broken down as follows:

- 2,310 in admissions
- 136 in financial aid
- 80 in computer information
- 2,788 in records and registration
- 79 in international education
- 77 in institutional research
- 3,100 in combined activities
- 833 in miscellaneous

Additional categories of individual members include:

- 101 corporate members
- 71 honorary members
- 114 affiliate members
- 57 associate members
- 5 accreditation candidates
- 40 high school members
- 4 retired members
- 6 student members

Corporate membership rose to 31 companies, representing interests in such diverse areas as achievement products, administrative products and services, alumni development and fundraising, client/server architecture, campus information systems, college catalogs, cultural exchange and other international programs, distance learning, degree audit software, electronic admissions applications, electronic data interchange, enrollment management, financial aid services and software, records and registration management services and support, scanning software, equipment, and services, publications and publishing services, voice response, and the World Wide Web.

Corporate Members

| The Access Group                          | JEC College Connection™ |
| American College Testing, Inc. (ACT)     | Jostens, Inc.           |
| The American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS) | KPMG Peat Marwick, LLP |
| BOSS Imaging                              | LRP Publications        |
| Buzzdeo, Inc.                             | Magna Publications, Inc.|
| Campus America, Inc.                      | National Computer Systems (NCS) |
| Career Guidance Foundation (CGF)          | National Student Loan Clearinghouse |
| CARS Information Systems (CISTM)          | PeopleSoft              |
| CollegeView                               | Periphonics Corporation |
| Datatel, Inc.                             | Quodata Corporation     |
| Edify Corporation                         | SCRIP-SAFE® Security Products, Inc. |
| Education Catalysts, Inc.                 | Syntellect, Inc.        |
| ELS Language Centers                      | Systems & Computer Technology Corp. (SCT) |
| EPOS Corporation                          | Universal Algorithms, Inc. (UAI) |
| Global Education Group, Inc. (GEG)        | Voice FX Corporation    |
| Harbinger SupplyTech                      |                         |

Vol. 73, No. 3
Other Opportunities and Challenges in 1996-97:

- The Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for International Students and Institutions, the first of three summits designed to establish the framework for developing policy in higher education administration. Drawn up by a group of key international experts, the Bill incorporated member input and endorsement by higher education institutions, agencies, and ministries of education throughout the world. The Bill was formally presented at the Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City.
- An expansion of the activities in the Office of International Education Services
- Ongoing support for the task force on credentialing and certification and the proposed Electronic Standards Council to support EDI in higher education.

Members attending the Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City approved the 1997-98 budget, beginning a five-year plan reflecting the Association’s transformation, and a revised mission statement:

*The mission of the Association is to provide leadership in policy initiation, interpretation, and implementation in the global education community. This is accomplished through the identification and promotion of standards and best practices in enrollment management, instructional management, information technology, and student services.*

Following a lively, often heated, debate that demonstrated the emotional investment members have in their professional association, the proposals to: 1) change the Association’s name; 2) allow voting by mail ballot or other electronic means approved by the Board; 3) eliminate the words “higher education” from the Association’s approved activities; 4) remove the nonvoting membership category descriptions from the Bylaws; and 5) increase member dues each year based on the Higher Education Price Index, or 5 percent, were defeated.

Keynote speaker at the Annual Meeting, Michael G. Dolence, challenged members to seize the opportunities posed by an increasingly competitive learning environment. Utah Governor Michael Leavitt added to the consciousness-raising discussion. “As competition in the marketplace increases, and employer expectations for well-trained workers continue to rise, it is incumbent upon higher education, he continued, to reposition itself if it is to survive and prosper.” [In 1995, college graduates (47 percent), those without college degrees (36 percent), and those with high school diplomas or less (20 percent) participated in training courses to improve their job skills (The National Center for Education Statistics in *The Condition of Education, 1997*).] School-college partnerships and collaboration between industry giants and higher education institutions must increase to help meet the growing challenges facing our workers, our institutions, and our industries competing in a borderless marketplace.

Higher education must help frame the policies that govern educational policy and procedures or someone else will do it for them, both speakers cautioned their audiences. AACRAO is facilitating this policy development input by participating in pilot projects such as the Western Governors University (WGU). A representative from AACRAO has joined the project planning group for WGU, and an AACRAO response team is preparing position papers on transfer and articulation; records management and security; outreach, access and admissions; and learner support services.

Looking Toward the Future

- Additional workshops and conferences on essential skills
- Electronic delivery of publications and meetings
- Ongoing monitoring of the environment, with appropriate adjustments to AACRAO’s strategic planning
- Continued partnering with other associations to monitor and develop programs aligned with member interests and responsibilities

Winter 1998
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS’ REPORT

To the Board of Directors
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
Washington, D.C.

We have audited the accompanying statements of financial position of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (the Association) as of June 30, 1997 and 1996, and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Association’s management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly in all material respects the financial position of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers as of June 30, 1997 and 1996, the changes in net assets and cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

As discussed in Note 3 to the financial statements, during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1996, the Association changed its method of accounting for contributions, financial reporting and financial statement presentation, and its method of accounting for investments.

Stegman & Company
Columbia, Maryland
August 25, 1997
### ASSETS

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### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

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<td>116,481</td>
<td>50,376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue</td>
<td>195,590</td>
<td>106,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total current liabilities</strong></td>
<td>$650,347</td>
<td>343,598</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>261,427</td>
<td>692,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
<td>48,760</td>
<td>42,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total net assets</strong></td>
<td>310,187</td>
<td>734,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$960,534</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,077,939</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See accompanying notes.*
Statements of activities for the years ended June 30, 1997 and 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997 Unrestricted</th>
<th>Temporarily Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>1996 Unrestricted</th>
<th>Temporarily Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership fees</td>
<td>$1,224,507</td>
<td>$—</td>
<td>$1,224,507</td>
<td>$1,064,393</td>
<td>$—</td>
<td>$1,064,393</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual meeting fees</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>514,668</td>
<td>576,623</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>576,423</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication fees</td>
<td>214,916</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>214,916</td>
<td>161,310</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>161,310</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracts and grants</td>
<td>115,650</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>115,650</td>
<td>77,828</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>77,828</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment income</td>
<td>39,339</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>40,292</td>
<td>41,254</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>42,182</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net unrealized and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>realized gain on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>66,165</td>
<td>97,401</td>
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<td>Professional</td>
<td>155,165</td>
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<td>155,165</td>
<td>152,355</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>152,355</td>
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<td>development</td>
<td>33,045</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>33,045</td>
<td>51,551</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>51,551</td>
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<td>Advertising</td>
<td>9,506</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>9,506</td>
<td>8,384</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8,384</td>
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<td>Special projects</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>206,353</td>
<td>82,294</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>82,294</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>15,785</td>
<td>45,785</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>11,423</td>
<td>11,423</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net assets released</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from restriction</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>(10,000)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>(2,000)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total revenues</strong></td>
<td>2,619,314</td>
<td>6,738</td>
<td>2,626,052</td>
<td>2,315,193</td>
<td>10,351</td>
<td>2,325,544</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Meeting</td>
<td>440,807</td>
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<td>440,807</td>
<td>354,051</td>
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<td>Contracts and grants</td>
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<td>40,852</td>
<td>83,736</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>83,734</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
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<td>334,448</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>Enrollment management</td>
<td>10,864</td>
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<td>11,997</td>
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<td>International</td>
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<td>12,943</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>activities</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership services</td>
<td>108,297</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>108,297</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>323</td>
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<tr>
<td>Records and</td>
<td>10,782</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10,782</td>
<td>25,107</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>25,107</td>
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<td>registration</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>44,607</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>44,607</td>
<td>28,864</td>
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<td>28,864</td>
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<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional association/</td>
<td>28,629</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>28,629</td>
<td>36,592</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>36,592</td>
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<tr>
<td>institutional issues</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>685,860</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>685,860</td>
<td>253,487</td>
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<td>253,487</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special projects</td>
<td>326,063</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>326,063</td>
<td>175,907</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>175,907</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Total program</td>
<td>2,044,152</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2,044,152</td>
<td>1,132,987</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,132,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expenses**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting services:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and</td>
<td>876,272</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>876,272</td>
<td>1,264,605</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,264,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>administrative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Program planning,</td>
<td>129,782</td>
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<td>129,782</td>
<td>134,755</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>134,755</td>
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<tr>
<td>development and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>monitoring</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Total supporting</td>
<td>1,006,054</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,006,054</td>
<td>1,432,880</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,432,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services expenses**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td>3,050,206</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3,050,206</td>
<td>2,565,867</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2,565,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>(430,892)</td>
<td>6,738</td>
<td>(424,154)</td>
<td>(250,674)</td>
<td>10,351</td>
<td>(240,323)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS AT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEGINNING OF YEAR</td>
<td>692,319</td>
<td>42,022</td>
<td>734,341</td>
<td>942,993</td>
<td>31,671</td>
<td>974,664</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</strong></td>
<td>$261,427</td>
<td>$48,760</td>
<td>$310,187</td>
<td>$692,319</td>
<td>$42,022</td>
<td>$734,341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 1997 AND 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in net assets</td>
<td>$(424,154)</td>
<td>$(240,323)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used by operating activities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>83,639</td>
<td>73,733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealized loss (gain) on marketable securities</td>
<td>1,523</td>
<td>(13,484)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realized gain on sale of marketable securities</td>
<td>(67,688)</td>
<td>(63,917)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net changes in:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted cash</td>
<td>(952)</td>
<td>(928)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable</td>
<td>11,193</td>
<td>(23,694)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other assets</td>
<td>(99,642)</td>
<td>(19,154)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>(40,454)</td>
<td>58,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued vacation</td>
<td>36,105</td>
<td>13,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue</td>
<td>89,087</td>
<td>(36,663)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other liabilities</td>
<td>18,482</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net cash used in operating activities</td>
<td>(392,891)</td>
<td>(272,249)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of equipment</td>
<td>(115,466)</td>
<td>(83,324)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of investments</td>
<td>(473,179)</td>
<td>(28,488)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proceeds from sales of investments</td>
<td>775,549</td>
<td>361,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net cash provided by investing activities</td>
<td>186,904</td>
<td>246,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proceeds from line of credit</td>
<td>200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET DECREASE IN CASH</strong></td>
<td>(5,987)</td>
<td>(25,350)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CASH AT BEGINNING OF YEAR</strong></td>
<td>30,609</td>
<td>55,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASH AT END OF YEAR</strong></td>
<td>$24,622</td>
<td>$30,609</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Reconciliation to amounts on Statements of Financial Position:

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<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$4,112</td>
<td>$7,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash overdraft</td>
<td>(10,508)</td>
<td>(6,949)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted cash</td>
<td>31,018</td>
<td>30,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24,622</td>
<td>30,609</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supplemental disclosure of cash flows information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash paid for interest</td>
<td>$5,046</td>
<td>$—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See accompanying notes.
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 1997 AND 1996

1. NATURE OF ORGANIZATION
The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers is a voluntary education association dedicated to promoting higher education and furthering the professional development of its members.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

   Basis of Accounting
The financial statements of AACRAO have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting and, accordingly, reflect all significant receivables, payables, and other liabilities.

   Basis of Presentation
Financial statement presentation follows the recommendations of the Financial Accounting Standards Board in its Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 117, Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Organizations. Under SFAS No. 117, the Association is required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to three classes of net assets: unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets, and permanently restricted assets.

   Marketable Securities
Marketable securities as of June 1997 and 1996 are carried at the quoted market value of the securities. Both realized and unrealized gains and losses are reflected in the Statement of Activities. The cost of securities sold is determined by the specific identification method. Marketable securities acquired by donation are initially recorded at their fair market value at the date of donation.

   Property and Equipment
Expenditures for maintenance and repairs are charged to expense as incurred. Expenditures for additions, improvements and replacements are added to the property and equipment accounts. Equipment purchased with federal grant monies and subject to reversion to the federal government is expensed.

Depreciation and amortization are determined using the straight-line method over estimated useful lives as follows:

- Furniture: 10 years
- Equipment: 5-6 years
- Leasehold improvements: Shorter of lease term or useful life

Depreciation expense was $83,639 and $73,733 for the years ended June 30, 1997 and 1996, respectively.

   Deferred Revenue
Membership dues and meeting fees collected in advance represent deferred revenue in the accompanying Statement of Financial Position.

   Contracts and Grants
Revenue from exchange contracts and grants is recognized as work is performed in amounts equal to reimbursable costs.

   Pension Plan
The Association has a defined contribution pension plan which covers all full-time regular employees following two years of continuous employment.

Employer contributions, which amounted to $61,384 and $52,595 in 1997 and 1996, are made in amounts equal to 10 percent of participants' salaries up to the Social Security earnings base and 15 percent of salary in excess thereof.

   Special Projects
Special projects include expenditures for the Office of International Education Services (OIES), the SPEEDE/ExPRESS Project, and expenditures for projects not previously budgeted.

   Expense Allocation
The costs of providing various programs and other activities have been summarized on a functional basis in the Statement of Activities. Accordingly, certain costs have been allocated among the programs and supporting services benefited.
Restricted and Unrestricted Support and Revenue
Support that is restricted by the donor is reported as an increase in unrestricted net assets if the restriction expires in the reporting period in which the support is recognized. All other donor-restricted support is reported as an increase in temporarily or permanently restricted net assets, depending on the nature of the restriction. When a restriction expires (that is, when a stipulated time restriction ends or purpose restriction is accomplished), temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified to unrestricted net assets and reported in the Statement of Activities as net assets released from restrictions.

Use of Estimates
The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of support and revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Inventory
Inventory, consisting of publications, is reported at the lower of cost or market using the first in, first out method.

Allowance for Doubtful Accounts
An allowance for doubtful accounts has not been established as the Association considers accounts receivable to be fully collectible. If amounts become uncollectible, they will be charged to operations when that determination is made.

Reclassifications
Certain reclassifications were made to the June 30, 1996 financial statements to conform with the June 30, 1997 presentation.

3. CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES

The Association adopted Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 116, Accounting for Contributions Received and Contributions Made, in 1996. In accordance with SFAS No. 116, contributions received are recorded as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, or permanently restricted support depending on the existence and/or nature of any donor restrictions. As permitted by SFAS No. 116, the Association has retroactively applied the provisions of this new statement by restating beginning net assets to reflect the recognition of $2,533 of previously deferred contribution revenue as temporarily restricted net assets. The change in net assets for June 30, 1996 is $9,423 higher than it would be if SFAS No. 116 had not been implemented.

In 1996, the Association adopted Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 117, Financial Statement of Not-for-Profit Organizations. Under SFAS No. 117, the Association is required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to three classes of net assets, unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets, and permanently restricted net assets. As permitted by this new statement, the Association has discontinued its use of fund accounting and has, accordingly, reclassified its financial statements to present the three classes of net assets required. This reclassification had no effect on change in net assets for 1996.

The Association adopted Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 124, Accounting for Certain Investments Held by Not-for-Profit Organizations, in 1996. In accordance with SFAS No. 124, investments in debt and equity securities that have readily determinable fair values are recorded at fair value in the Statement of Financial Position. Gains and losses, both realized and unrealized, are reported in the Statement of Activities as increases or decreases in unrealized net assets unless their use is temporarily or permanently restricted. As permitted by SFAS No. 124, the Organization has retroactively applied the provisions of this new statement to 1995; however, no adjustments are necessary at June 30, 1996.

4. INCOME TAX STATUS

The Association is exempt from federal and state income taxes (except taxes on unrelated business income, if any) under Section 501c(3) of the Internal Revenue code and is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as other than a private foundation.
5. MARKETABLE SECURITIES

The fair value of marketable securities at June 30, 1997 and 1996 was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Securities</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketable equity securities</td>
<td>$44,533</td>
<td>$280,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate bond securities</td>
<td>44,533</td>
<td>224,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasury notes</td>
<td>223,551</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$258,084</td>
<td>$504,909</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Investment fees were $4,121 and $4,671 at June 30, 1997 and 1996, respectively.

6. RESTRICTIONS AND DESIGNATIONS OF NET ASSETS

Unrestricted

Unrestricted net assets include amounts designated by the Board of the Association. The following represents unrestricted net assets at June 30, 1997 and 1996:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designated by the Board for special projects</td>
<td>$ —</td>
<td>$28,624</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undesignated</td>
<td>261,427</td>
<td>663,695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted net assets</td>
<td>$261,427</td>
<td>$692,319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Temporarily Restricted

Temporarily restricted net assets at June 30, 1997 and 1996 are available for the following purposes or periods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships – winter meeting</td>
<td>$17,742</td>
<td>$11,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conner Scholarship</td>
<td>31,018</td>
<td>30,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$48,760</td>
<td>$42,922</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Permanently Restricted

There are no permanently restricted net assets at June 30, 1997 or 1996.

7. CONTRACTS AND GRANTS

Reimbursed costs under the Association’s government contracts are subject to final determination of allowability by the government agency.

Until such audits have been completed and final settlement reached, there exists a contingency to refund any amount received in excess of allowable costs. Management is of the opinion that no material liability will result from such audits.

8. COMMITMENTS

Employment Agreement

In December 1995, the Association entered into a twenty-four month agreement effective July 1, 1996 with its Executive Director. Under this contract, the Association was committed to pay a salary of $103,833 for the years ended June 30, 1998 and 1997.

Operating Lease

The Association leased office space under an operating lease which expired June 30, 1997. A new lease commencing on July 1, 1997 and expiring on June 30, 2007 has been signed. The lease calls for a rent increase commencing on the sixth anniversary of the commencement date.
Future minimal rental payments under the operating lease as of June 30, 1997 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year ending June 30</th>
<th>Rental Payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>$141,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>$153,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$153,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>$153,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>$153,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent to 2002</td>
<td>$841,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total minimum future rental payments</td>
<td>$1,595,628</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rent expense totaled $138,885 and $131,685 for the years ended June 30, 1997 and 1996, respectively.

Hotel Commitments
The Association reserves hotel accommodations for its annual conventions up to 7 years in advance. The contracts contain contingency clauses whereby the Association is liable for cancellations. The monetary restitution is based on a percentage of the peak room rate, the number of rooms contracted and the date of cancellation.

9. DONATED MATERIALS
The Association received use of donated equipment for a one week period during the Annual Meeting in April 1997. The equipment consisted of pentium processor computers, laser printers, cabling and software. The fair value of this equipment is estimated at $30,000 and meets the criteria for recognition in SFAS No. 116.

10. LINE OF CREDIT
The Association entered into an agreement with NationsBank for a $200,000 line of credit payable in a single payment on October 31, 1997. The line of credit bears interest at the prime rate, payable monthly. The line of credit is collateralized with the Association’s Treasury notes.

11. JOINT PROJECT
During the year ended June 30, 1997, AACRAO accepted responsibility for the administration of a joint project entered into with another organization to promote international education research. AACRAO receives an administration fee of 20 percent of annual sales revenue. This fee amounted to $9,153 in June 30, 1997. The terms of the agreement allow the two organizations to split any net revenues when the project ends. AACRAO’s investment in the project at June 30, 1997 was $8,710.

12. CONTINGENCIES
As indicated in the accompanying financial statements, the Association shows a decrease in net assets of $424,154 during the year ended June 30, 1997 and $240,323 during the year ended June 30, 1996. As of June 30, 1997, the Association’s current liabilities exceeded its current assets by $44,940. In addition the Association has used substantial amounts of working capital in its operations.

In view of these matters, realization of a major portion of the assets in the accompanying balance sheet is dependent upon continued operations of the Association, which in turn is dependent upon the Association’s ability to meet its financial requirements, and the success of its future operations. Management believes that actions presently being taken to revise the Association’s operating and financial requirements provide an opportunity for the Association to realize its assets and pay its liabilities in accordance with its terms.
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