

1979

CAUR Annual Report: 1978-1979

Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR)
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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CENTER FOR APPLIED URBAN RESEARCH
Annual Report, 1978-79 Fiscal Year

Introduction

This was an active and productive year. A new director was recruited and appointed; a change in mission designed to strengthen community service was adopted and implemented; linkages of a formal nature were created with other CPACS units; and a summer of unprecedented collaboration and community outreach is being faced.

Staff Update

As of May 15, 1979 the Center had ten full-time research professionals, three full-time research assistants, an editor, a support staff of three and three part-time student assistants. Two full-time summer associates (one in research and one in community service) have been selected and will report on June 1.

A new director was appointed on August 16, 1978 and found the introduction to new duties and responsibilities most pleasant, largely because of the outstanding job done by interim director Dr. Murray Frost. Ms. Marian Meier was hired to replace former editor Linda Ferring. With Marian's expert assistance we were able to develop an attractive brochure describing the Center's modified mission and to revise the format of the monthly Review of Applied Urban Research. Ms. Carole Davis was hired as a Research Assistant to replace Scott Samson who left to pursue studies toward the doctorate. Dr. Mele Koneya was hired on a 25 percent time basis to help us initiate a community development thrust at CAUR. Mr. Jack Ruff was selected internally to spearhead the new emphasis on community service/technical assistance and is assisted by Ms. Ethel Williams and Dr. Koneya in this regard. Dr. Frost was assigned additional duties and a new title, Coordinator of Research. Dr. David DiMartino was selected to fill a vacancy.

A special note of gratitude for consistently outstanding performance on the part of CAUR's support staff is in order. In my entire management experience I have never encountered a more dedicated and competent crew. Betty Mayhew, Beverly Walker, and Joyce Carson are persons deserving not only accolades but monetary rewards. Unless the new reclassification scheme provides significant advancement, one high priority for the coming year will be that of obtaining just compensation for these individuals.

Research Activities

Seventeen research projects were completed during the year; six are currently being conducted; and fourteen are in various stages of the proposal submission and approval process.

The projects completed this year, with name of principal investigator in parentheses, include "Housing Allocation Formula for Nebraska Cities of the First Class" (Jack Ruff), "Impact of Rural Nebraska Industrial Development on Migration of Rural Youth" (Armin Ludwig), "Greater Omaha Construction Loans and Unsold Housing Inventory" (Jack Ruff), "Economic Impact of Non-Profit Arts Organizations in Nebraska" (Murray Frost), "Survey of Nebraska Women's Employment Participation, Attitudes, and Needs" (Murray Frost), "The Use of Correlation and Regression Analyses to Determine Bus Operator Hourly Wages" (Murray Frost), "Some Methodological Comments on the Decision of the Nebraska Court of Industrial Relations in MAT vs. TWU" (Murray Frost), "A Study of Boat Ownership in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area" (Paul Lee), "A Survey of Market Potential in Omaha for Cable TV" (Murray Frost and Peggy Hein), "Evaluation of the National Juvenile Justice Collaboration" (Ginger Burch), "Evaluation of a Family Service Intervention Program in Child Abuse" (Ginger Burch), "An Analysis of Data on Adolescent Abuse" (Ginger Burch), "Bemis Park: A Study of Neighborhood Change" (Garneth Peterson), "Plea Bargaining: Three Perspectives" (Julie Horney), "Housing Tomorrow: Preliminary Findings of Omaha Tomorrow Housing Task Force" (Linda Ferring), "A Study of Women's Travel Patterns in Nebraska" (Paul Lee), and "A Computerized Demonstration of the Central Limit Theorem in Statistics" (Paul Lee).

The studies currently in progress are "A Study of the Developmental Accomplishments of Community Leaders" (Jack Ruff), "A Needs Assessment of Elderly Hispanics in Omaha" (David DiMartino), "A Study of Needs and Program Options for Elderly Hispanics" (Ginger Burch), "Evaluation of an Alcohol Education and Counseling Program in Omaha's Catholic Schools" (Ginger Burch), "A Comparative Study of Wages Paid to Personnel in Community Mental Health Centers" (Murray Frost) and "A Survey of Alumni Perspectives on the Quality of Education" (Paul Lee).

Among the more significant of fourteen proposals pending are "A Study of Market Readiness Among Nebraska's Elderly for the Reverse Annuity Mortgage Instrument," "An Evaluation of Nebraska's Adult Basic Education Program," "A Needs Assessment for Metropolitan Technical and Community College," "An Evaluation of the Sarpy County Juvenile Court," "Nonmetropolitan Migration: Motives and Adjustments," and "Migrant Service Demands in Nonmetropolitan Growth Centers."

Technical Assistance/Community Education

In addition to relatively formal studies and surveys, the Center devotes much of its time and talent to the provision of technical assistance and, as a result of the new emphasis on training and community service, to educational activities as well. A complete list of such activities and services would be burdensome to the reader, but the following items serve to illustrate the scope and value of such activity.

1. Assistance in the preparation of questionnaires for many organizations including YMCA, National Council of Churches, the Gerontology Program, the Chicano Awareness Center, Metropolitan Utilities District, Omaha Tomorrow, Kellom Community Council and the Long School Neighborhood.

2. Consultation on organizational, program, or information management improvement with GOCA, Dr. Sher Home for the Aged, Omaha Family Service Society, Douglas County Department of Children and Youth, Lincoln Indian Center, Nebraska Psychiatric Institute, Omaha Junior League, Immanuel Community Mental Health Center, State Office of Juvenile Probation, North Omaha Community Development Association, and Operation Bridge.
3. Assisted with data analysis problems confronted by River Bluffs Community Health Center, MUD, Boys Town Center for the Study of Youth Development, Metropolitan Area Transit, and several graduate students and faculty members.
4. Conducted or are designing training programs for foster parents, corrections workers, child protective service personnel, interviewers, municipal administrators, proposal writers, and neighborhood leaders.
5. Presently engaged under contract with the City of Norfolk to help develop a comprehensive community development plan.
6. Began a series of Omaha Tours, starting with the near northside, designed to acquaint citizens with the ethnic and economic history of the city.
7. Provided assistance to several groups in the preparation of proposals, leading in one instance (Franklin Community Consumer Services Organization) to an award of \$84,000. This consumer education project will involve UNO faculty to a significant degree.

Collaborative Arrangements

The Center consciously took the stance this year of actively seeking and demonstrating openness to the notion of collaboration with other units of the University. Staff worked with 16 separate units on 38 different activities or projects. Four other units have initiated inquiries to explore possible cooperation in the future.

The activities included the development of joint proposals, involvement in training activities, teaching and guest lecturing, summer associate arrangements, data gathering and analysis, supervising independent study, and working with neighborhood groups.

Plans were laid this year for the newest experiment in collaboration which will commence in August, 1979. One CAUR position will be occupied next year by two half-time faculty members in Criminal Justice. They will be working with Senior Research staff at the Center on some team research projects, but their major effort will be the development of proposals for new research in the criminal justice field. The anticipated outcome will be the generation of additional grants and the enhancement of research capability in the CJ department.

On the basis of developments like these, it is possible that a future role for CAUR will be that of being a clearinghouse or administrative unit for all grant-supported research and public service activities of the College of Public Affairs and Community Service.

Grants and Contracts

Grant activity this year significantly exceeded that of last year. Fifteen grants and contracts were awarded this year (compared to seven last year) totalling \$215,813.00 (compared to \$61,890.00 last year).

This gain is attributed to improved staff morale, improved relationships with former clients and the kind of collaboration cited in the section above.

Presentations/Publications

In addition to several TV appearances and radio interviews, as well as countless speeches and leadership roles in regional and national conferences, the staff produced 22 publications this year.

Committee Updates

Dr. Genevieve Burch serves on the CPACS Personnel Committee and her term continues for two years. Dr. Paul Lee served on the Curriculum Committee. His term expires and Dr. Murray Frost has been elected to serve in this capacity.

Conclusion

The mission of CAUR is changing and the future looks promising. We expect to see further growth in grant development, collaboration and public service. The advent of the Downtown Center holds unique opportunities, but these face not only CAUR but the entire College.

We look forward to the new year and its new challenges.