

6 November, 2007

**Research Data Technology Centre  
Advisory Council**

**Minutes of Meeting  
2 November 2007, 3:00-4:30, SSC 9430**

**Council:**

Roderic Beaujot, Sociology (Academic Director)  
David Bellhouse, Statistical and Actuarial Sciences (regrets)  
Joyce Garnett, Chief Librarian (regrets)  
Iris Gutmanis, Evaluation and Research, Parkwood Hospital (regrets)  
Tedd Hewitt, Research V-P (Alison Ariss as replacement)  
Julie McMullin, Associate Dean, Faculty of Social Science (Scott MacDougall-Shackleton, as replacement)  
Reza Nakhaie, Sociology, (regrets from Daniel Edelstein), University of Windsor  
Chris Robinson, Economics  
Bridget Ryan (student representative)  
Moir Stewart, Family Medicine  
Stewart Thornhill, Ivey

**Staff:**

Cynthia Cook, Statistics Canada (Senior Analyst, Regional Supervisor)  
Bradley Corbett, Statistics Canada (Analyst) (regrets)  
Vince Gray, Social Science Network and Data Services (Liaison Officer)  
Zenaida Ravanera, Information Officer

**Documents:**

Minutes of meeting of 23 March 2007  
Budget dated 19 October 2007  
Report to Statistics Canada dated 12 October 2007

**1. Announcements**

Rebecca Williams has been employed as a Statistical Assistant in the RDC, partly to accommodate for the maternity leave of Cynthia Cook envisaged to start in January 2008.

Congratulations to Bradley Corbett who successfully defended his PhD thesis on 1 November.

University of Windsor is applying to open a half-time RDC. This application will be before the 15-16 Meeting of the RDCNCC.

**2. Minutes of 23 March 2007**

The minutes have been approved and posted.

Business arising:

The 26-27 April 2007 meeting of the RDC National Coordinating Committee (RDCNCC) was held at Windermere. Thanks to Council members who came to the drinks and cheese occasion to meet with members of the RDCNCC.

Certain members of Council met with Chad Gaffield, President of SSHRC, on 11 April 2007 as part of his visit to Western. Questions of data access, training and impact were discussed.

### **3. Budget**

A new formula for the allocation of the SSHRC/CIHR operating grant, based partly on measures of output, will probably reduce Western's share of the grant to some \$60,000 for 2008-09 compared to the \$66,073 for the current year. The measures of activity and output rank Western's RDC at 11<sup>th</sup> among 13 Centres across the country. Noting that the Centres ranking lower all opened in 2004 or 2005, Council encouraged versions of the funding formula that would present fewer disadvantages to Centres that have opened more recently. This could be similar to the special provisions that SSHRC makes for young scholars. Western's was the 10<sup>th</sup> Centre to open, in September 2004. The annual data show continued increases in activity, and the experience of other Centres shows that it takes over three years to reach the potential targets in activity and output.

The funds from University of Windsor will stop once an RDC is opened at Windsor.

There is potential for under expenditure, compared to the budget, on the following items for both the current year and next year: workshops, travel, fellowships. The Dean allows us to go forward with a budget showing a negative balance at the end of next year.

Council encouraged the Director to seek funding from participating faculties, besides the Faculty of Social Science. The general understanding from SSHRC/CIHR is that universities should be paying half of the operating costs. Other sources of funding were discussed, including research contracts with governments.

### **4. Activities of the Research Data Centres National Coordinating Committee**

CFI Leading Edge Grant and Virtual Private Network: Four RDCs are expected to be moving into the "light-path technology" shortly and the full implementation of the WAN completed by the summer of 2008. This will greatly encourage connectivity across the centres, for data access and research exchanges. The RDC physical locations will remain the point of data access and disclosure analysis.

Networked RDCs also allow for other potential means of data delivery. At the April meeting of the RDCNCC Vince Gray and his colleagues presented an experiment using the Internet Data Library System (IDLS) for use within RDC. This presentation was well received. There are various competing alternatives for data delivery, and the VPN allows for various options. The server that was used for the test has been moved within the RDC

at Western, so that this one data set (GSS 17) can be accessed through an IDLS adaptation.

The National Conference in Halifax, 12-13 October 2007, was very successful. Western has offered to host the 2009 conference, but this may be set back in order not to have two consecutive conferences in Ontario. Council encouraged paying close attention to the Ottawa conference set for 2008, including early planning and fund raising.

A strategic planning process is being undertaken, and Statistics Canada is undertaking an evaluation. A document outlining the questions under discussion was distributed.

## **5. Projects, researchers, products**

The Annual Report of the UWO Research Data Technology Centre, dated 12 October 2007, was reviewed. Following on the protocol established by the NCC, this report uses nine criteria that will enter into the mid-term review by SSHRC/CIHR. The report is available upon request. We note in particular that Appendix A lists 55 projects with 43 Principal Investigators, showing project titles and data sets (this is also available at the RDC web site). Appendix B lists 101 researchers who have access to the UWO RDC, including 73 researchers who have “swipe card” access. Appendix C list 53 research products with their full bibliographic references. These can be accessed on the web.

We now have better access to Statistics Canada administrative data on projects and researchers with RDC access. We will follow up on the 11 projects showing “incomplete with no current activity” in order to see if these could be signed off as completed.

Brad Corbett has obtained “Venture Capital” funding from Statistics Canada for a project that is seeking to determine which are the best aggregate/community level measures to attach to individual level data for two-stage or other analyses. This has brought four or five projects into the RDC and it has involved various researchers from Western and Windsor.

Chris Robinson and three other members of the Department of Economics at Western are responsible for the human capital module of the Canadian Household Panel Survey. The pilot of the CHPS is funded, and the questions are being tested, but funds need to be obtained to fund the survey. Western’s RDC will be part of the pilot in terms of data infrastructure. Robinson and Beaujot are to determine potential funding for these infrastructure, development and maintenance costs.

## **6. Presentations, workshops, training**

Other Centres, for instance at McMaster and Waterloo, have had graduate courses where students use the RDC as their data source. This provides other avenues of access to the RDC for graduate students. The potential to have such a course at Western will be raised

at a meeting of Directors graduate programs in the Faculty of Social Science. We need to determine the interest in such a course and the form that it should take. We also need to involve graduate programs in other faculties.

It was noted that Graduate Programs should include a link to the web site of the RDC in their material made available to prospective students.

In terms of outreach on campus, Brad Corbett has presented to the orientation for incoming graduate students in Sociology and to similar occasions with the Environmental Science graduate program and Epidemiology. Vince Gray speaks of both DLI and RDC data to Economics 400, to economics students at Huron, Taylor library, and the Research Showcase on 3 November. Brad also speaks to new faculty at the Centre for Teaching and Learning, and to the GIS day at the Geography Map Library. Both Vince and Brad are willing to make presentations in various venues.

The Advanced Statistical Modelling Research Unit has been meeting among and they will call a larger meeting in February to determine the activities that would be useful. They will also take leadership for another HLM/STATA workshop, probably in February.

The RDC is very receptive to accommodating tours on the part of prospective faculty.

## **7. Newsletter and Discussion Paper series (Ravanera)**

Five issues of the RDC e-Newsletter have been released: (1) Don Kerr and Joseph Michalski, *Family and Hyperactivity among Elementary Aged Children*; (2) David Walters, Kelly Phythian, and Paul Anisef, *The Acculturation of Canadian Immigrants: Determinants of Ethnic Identification with the Host Society*; (3) Zenaida Ravanera and Fernando Rajulton, *Have Income, Will Marry*; (4) Paul Maxim and Jerry White, *School Completion and Workforce Transitions Among Urban Aboriginal Youth*; (5) Fernando Rajulton, Zenaida Ravanera, and Rod Beaujot, *Social Cohesion: An Experiment in Measuring the Indefinable*.

We have had the following in the Brown Bag (Pizza Lunch) Series: September - Paul Maxim, *School Completion and Workforce Transition among Urban Aboriginal Youth: Assessing the Policy Impact*; October - Rajulton Fernando, *Measuring Social Cohesion: An Experiment Using the Canadian National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating*; November – Miles Corak, *Intergenerational Education Mobility Among the Children of Canadian Immigrants*. (joint with Demography Colloquium Series)

Heather Juby, RDC NCC Knowledge Coordinator prepared summaries for the e-newsletters, in consultation with first authors of published papers, with an initial intention of submitting the summaries to Statistics Canada's *The Daily*.

The number of participants in the Brown Bag was 12 in September, 17 in October, and 35 in November. The Brown Bag venue has been the Population Studies Centre as conditions for the use of an SSNDS room, nearer to the RDC, could not be met.

Zenaida Ravanera and Heather Juby are working on plans for knowledge mobilization training workshops for students, which will be submitted for possible funding by the Population Change and Lifecourse Strategic Knowledge Cluster (PCLC). Students who are RDC users and PCLC student members will be given priority for the training.

For both the newsletter and the Brown Bag, the main concern is few publications from RDC-based research. Council provided encouragement, noting that it takes time to have the necessary output to schedule these presentations on RDC research. There was encouragement to have other forms of presentations, such as a presentation by Chris Robinson on the human capital module of the CHPS.

We should put together a news release article for Western News.

#### **8. The “to do” list based on CFI application**

Chris Robinson reported on the collaborative joint research link with Simulated Data Centre at Cornell University. There is interest at Statistics Canada to use simulated data as a means of allowing access to Canadian data for cross-national comparisons.

Rajulton Fernando is being encouraged to further develop his LIFEHIST software for event history analysis, given his sabbatical year.

For the most part, it now appears that we will need to develop our own workshops and training, rather than depend on exchanges with Waterloo, McMaster and Toronto

#### **9. No other business**