As part of the $2-plus billion Michigan Difference Campaign launched this spring, the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research (ISR) is starting the most ambitious fund-raising campaign in its history. ISR is seeking to raise $25 million to build on the impressive base of social science and survey research that we are internationally known for conducting, and to expand our work in a number of exciting new directions.

ISR helped to start the field of organizational behavior, developing T-groups and sensitivity training.

ISR surveys have documented the high turnover in the poverty population, countering widespread misconceptions that the same people remain mired in a culture of poverty year after year.

For many years now, private gifts have allowed us to move beyond traditional, grant-based research to explore promising ideas and innovative approaches to issues in which we all have a stake: Poverty. Working families. Adolescent behavior. Aging. Racism. Consumer confidence. Fertility. Migration. Terrorism.

ISR helped to start the field of organizational behavior, developing T-groups and sensitivity training.

ISR survey researchers were among the first to establish that behavior is at least as important as biology in determining health and longevity.

Building on a Half-Century of Achievement

For more than 50 years, ISR has advanced public understanding of human behavior through empirical research of extraordinary depth and breadth. Spanning the fields of psychology, sociology, political science, economics, anthropology, statistics, public health, business, and medicine, our extraordinary research scientists have made ISR a national laboratory for the social sciences and a source of seminal discoveries that enrich the field. Among our many achievements:

ISR founding director Rensis Likert developed the elegant “Likert Scale” for measuring attitudes and opinions, still widely used in academic, government and private sector research.

Starting with its correct call of the 1948 U.S. presidential election, ISR has led the way in developing survey sampling theories and methods that still form the basis of scientifically valid surveys, market research and public opinion polls.

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Continued on page 2
Building on Our Achievements

Our accomplishments have led us to important knowledge in these and other key areas that affect human well-being and, indeed, survival. Our research scientists excel in the competition for peer-reviewed grants from the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation and other major funding sources. But donors provide the seed money for pilot and preliminary studies that allow us to move in bold new directions.

Over months of collaboration, our research scientists have identified three key goals that are crucial to the continuing success and excellence of the Institute. Moving forward on these goals will allow us to soar in the next half-century, as we make a real difference in the lives of people here in Michigan and around the world.

Encouraging innovative research

Because we know that bold new approaches are essential in addressing the complex problems society faces, we need to raise money to expand on-going lines of research and seed innovative, path-breaking research. We want to learn how culture, behavior and environment influence health and longevity; monitor how technological and social changes affect the choices people make; and build public opinion research capacity in the Middle East, South Africa and other world regions, generating accurate numbers that will form the basis of truly democratic decision-making. (See the story on p. 4 for more details.)

Training the next generation

Because we know that junior faculty and graduate students have so much promise yet traditional grants cannot be used for their support, we need private funding to nurture them. The generosity of private donors will allow the exceptional students in our fledgling Michigan Program in Survey Methodology, and in a wide range of empirical social science disciplines, to mine the rich lode of ISR data. We want to provide these young researchers with travel funds, dissertation support, and fellowships that will equip them to become leaders in their fields. To do this effectively, we also need to invest in distance learning facilities and space for “virtual collaboratories” by
Achievements

adding a wing to the recently renovated, historic Perry School Building.

Disseminating our knowledge

Because we understand how important it is for the ISR to contribute to the lives of ordinary citizens and to serve as honest brokers of impartial numbers vital to a wide range of public debates, we need to share what we have learned with as many people as possible. Through digital data “kiosks” and other novel means, we want to provide user-friendly data directly to the public and the policy community. We also want to expand outreach and education efforts, linking journalists with ISR expertise that will enable them to report social science findings more accurately.

For more information about the Campaign for ISR, contact Patrick Shields, ISR Director of External Relations, at (734) 764-8369 or peshield@umich.edu.

What We Do Best

Expert in the fields of psychology, political science, economics, anthropology and public health, ISR research scientists direct some of the longest-running and most widely cited studies in the nation. These include:

Survey of Consumer Attitudes, a monthly survey of consumer sentiment and expectations, started in 1946.

National Election Studies, a biennial survey and analysis of voter behavior and attitudes, started in 1948.

Panel Study of Income Dynamics, an annual study of income change and behavior in American families, conducted since 1968.

Monitoring the Future Study, an annual survey of lifestyles and substance use among adolescents and young adults, launched in 1975.

National Survey of American Life, a survey of the physical, emotional, mental, structural, and economic conditions of African Americans at the beginning of the new century.


World Values Surveys, a worldwide investigation of social, cultural and political change, carried out in more than 65 societies.

In addition to these and other well-known, large-scale survey projects, ISR also nurtures an eclectic array of research programs and centers, including:

Sloan Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life, conducting research on the changing family and work lives of middleclass, mid-Western Americans.

Program on Culture and Cognition, investigating how ethnic and cultural differences affect the way people think and behave in an increasingly multi-cultural world.

Aggression Research Program, studying the causes, consequences and most effective ways of preventing aggression and terrorism.

ISR is also home to the world’s largest computerized social science archive, at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. Now offering expanded data access and instant online data analysis for more than 100 studies in its mammoth archive, ICPSR serves as a resource to policy-makers and average citizens as well as academic researchers from around the world.
Research Plans

Exploring Influences on Health and Longevity

Our research scientists want to explore the reasons behind intriguing social trends, including why so many women—especially well-educated women—are deciding not to bear children. They are poised to probe the causes and consequences of the world’s rapidly aging population, and the ever-longer stage of life between adolescence and adulthood. In studies based close to home, around the country and around the globe, our researchers are ready to assess how culture, social behavior, natural resources and the quality of our physical environment all interact to affect human health, well-being and longevity.

Monitoring Technological and Social Changes

Through deliberative political polling, virtual town meetings and other innovative means, ISR research scientists are ready to play a vital role in fostering educated, informed public debate on the genomic revolution in the life sciences and other complex issues. Using these new methods, as well as large-scale survey research, laboratory experiments and tightly focused qualitative studies, we also hope to learn more about public attitudes toward terrorism, domestic security and economic behavior.

Generating Accurate Numbers for Democracies

Long the leader in developing the methods for conducting trust-worthy surveys, ISR is training a new generation of social scientists to serve as honest brokers of impartial numbers through its growing graduate program in survey methodology. We have exciting plans to expand our imprint, by building public opinion research capacity in the Middle East, South Africa and other world regions, eventually developing a worldwide system of centers that can provide an accurate gauge of public attitudes and behavior.

ISR Honors Martin Luther King, Jr.

In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., ISR sponsored a panel discussion on the role of interdisciplinary research in reducing racial and ethnic health disparities. Panelists included Ana Diez-Roux, James House, James Jackson, Pamela Thornton, and David Williams. ISR Director David Featherman moderated the discussion and ISR Survey Research Center (SRC) Director Robert Groves provided closing remarks.
On a snowy February afternoon in 1995 I began several months of commuting between my full-time job as President of the Social Science Research Council in New York City and my new part-time consultancy as director designate of the ISR. Professional transitions, while exciting in their prospects, are usually complicated and demanding. And therefore as I anticipate ending my ten-year directorship of the Institute in June 2005, I must confess to both a sense of bittersweet endings and exciting beginnings.

The State of the I

I now serve as Interim Director of the newly created U-M Center for the Advancement of Behavioral and Social Science, an innovative research forum of academic experts and intellectually-inspired practitioners seeking new knowledge to define and solve some of the most pressing social problems and dilemmas of this and the coming decade. For me, this is an exciting new professional opportunity, and one I believe will advance the research portfolio and intellectual scope for ISR and for social science at Michigan.

At the same time, as I consolidate some remaining tasks I have set as ISR director, I shall turn my attention to the challenges of the U-M capital campaign and of ISR’s role in it. This, too, represents an exciting opportunity for ISR to develop additional financial resources from the private sector—from individual donors, corporations and foundations—to advance our institutional mission in ways that existing funding sources cannot. Student support, and funds to recruit and retain extraordinary research faculty in their early or mid-careers, are just two examples.

I am especially excited by our New Generation Initiative—a program geared to the future of ISR and its next generation of leading scientists and mentors of student “junior colleagues.” My wife, Jo-Anna, and I have made our own estate plan with a gift to this fund, and several of my ISR senior colleagues are doing the same. We hope to establish a new culture of giving that represents our way of honoring the longstanding tradition of ISR taking care of itself, of investing in its future, even as it goes about its daily business of impressive research output.

The ISR is a unique institution, cherished by all so privileged to have worked here among such talented and dedicated colleagues. As I move from one set of duties to another, I shall work hard to invest in the future of that stimulating enterprise. And I hope you will join me, and others, in doing so, especially in the capital campaign and via the New Generation Initiative.

Photos by Linda Peterson

Panelists David Williams, James Jackson, and Pamela Thornton

David L. Featherman
When U-M President Mary Sue Coleman and her husband, Kenneth Coleman, made a $500,000 leadership gift to the U-M, they included support for the Leslie Kish International Fellows Fund at ISR. The fund honors Kish, an ISR founder and pioneer in survey sampling and statistics, who died in 2000 at the age of 90. “Leslie Kish was an intellectual giant who was fundamentally a good and kind individual,” said Martin Frankel, a statistics professor at the City University of New York’s Baruch College. Kish and his colleagues believed that surveys are among the most important tools in the democratic arsenal. “When quality of life can be measured and reported via surveys,” said Frankel, “then public and political debates are more likely to be based on facts, not anecdotes.”

Kish Fellows participate in ISR’s Sampling Program for Survey Statisticians, founded by Kish in 1961 to offer graduate coursework to statisticians in developing countries. A highly regarded, intensive eight-week course of study, the program has alumni from 104 nations ranging from Abu Dhabi to Zimbabwe.

The fellowship provides a student’s fees and assists with living expenses and travel. In a given year, ISR offers up to five fellowships; alumni are looking to endow the Kish fund and increase the number of annual awards. “There is not another program like this in the country or the world. There really isn’t anything comparable,” said James Lepkowski, a research professor at ISR and an associate professor of biostatistics, who currently directs the summer Sampling Program.
The author of *Survey Sampling*, a 1965 book that is still considered the gold standard on the topic, Kish was “brilliant and humble” at the same time, according to Frankel. For example, Kish called it “mostly luck” that he and ISR colleagues were the only survey research group to predict President Harry S. Truman’s upset victory over Thomas E. Dewey, using a probability sample instead of a quota sample.

Leslie Kish was brilliant, humble, kind, and a generous mentor to generations of students.

“When quality of life can be measured and reported via surveys, then public and political debates are more likely to be based on facts, not anecdote.”
Support from the Russell Sage Foundation

Over the years, a variety of foundations have provided valuable research support for ISR projects. Among these is the Russell Sage Foundation, the nation’s largest private foundation devoted exclusively to the support of social science research about key policy issues.

“Major support in recent years has been focused on the future of work in the United States with an emphasis on low-wage workers and poverty; the causes and effects of immigration; and racial conflict and the social dimensions of inequalities in this nation,” said U-M sociologist Reynolds Farley, a sociologist and ISR senior research scientist, who served as Vice-President of the Foundation from 1997 to 1999.

Farley’s most recent book, Detroit Divided, co-authored with Sheldon Danziger and Harry Holzer, is part of the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality that was jointly funded by the Ford Foundation and the Russell Sage Foundation. The book, published in 2000, uses survey-based evidence to explore the economic and social processes that have made Detroit so polarized today.

“Under the leadership of President Eric Wanner, the Russell Sage Foundation successfully promoted and supported the innovative and now influential discipline of behavioral economics,” noted Farley. “In addition to supporting empirical, methodological and theoretic research in the social sciences, the Foundation publishes 20 leading books each year and invites 15 leaders in the field to spend a year working on their research at the Foundation offices in Manhattan.”

An Eclectic Array of Projects

Sage has recently funded an eclectic array of ISR projects. These include surveys on the public response to September 11; the impact of social and economic inequality on political attitudes and behavior (part of the National Election Studies); and the Detroit Arab American Study. The Foundation has also supported a symposium on the biology of belief and trust organized by ISR research scientist Randolph Nesse, and anthropological work on how indigenous and non-native peoples in Guatemala handle conflict over a shared environment, now being conducted by ISR researcher Scott Atran with a colleague from Northwestern University.

Scott Atran (L) with his field team in Guatemala
Daniel J. Kruger

A social psychologist working in the ISR Evolution and Human Adaptation Program, Dan Kruger uses an evolutionary approach to study human affect, cognition, motivation and behavior. He joined ISR after receiving his PhD in applied social psychology in January 2001 from Loyola University Chicago. As a research fellow, Kruger’s interests extend from theoretical inquiries to practical applications. “I would like to enhance the understanding of our social world as well as improve the conditions in it,” he says.

His research projects include work on gender differences in mortality; evolution and the capacity for commitment; the Changing Lives of Older Couples project; and the Ypsilanti Health Study.

Kruger’s research on evolutionary mating theories, published last fall in the journal Human Nature, is an example of the new field of Darwinian literary studies and has received widespread coverage in the mass media, including a December 2, 2003, feature in the New York Times. For long-term relationships, Kruger’s study showed, women like “dads”—men who are kind, compassionate and monogamous. But for short-term relationships, women prefer “cads”—the classic Romantic dark heroes who are dominant, promiscuous and daring. For the study, Kruger and colleagues used scenarios involving classic cad and dad character types from 18th and 19th century British literature.

Corrine McConnaughy

The most fundamental democratic process in America—the right to vote—is still being sought by several groups: convicted felons, sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds, and residents of the District of Columbia. To understand the forces leading to an expansion of voting rights, PhD candidate Corrine McConnaughy uses archival research and event-history analysis of data on the women’s suffrage movement to test her theory that voting rights are a state-level process driven by strategic party politics.

The recipient of a recent ISR Innovation in Social Research Dissertation Fellowship, McConnaughy is using a creative, mixed-methods approach in her dissertation research. She has combed records from state suffrage associations, state political parties, and state legislatures to trace the process of building—or failing to build—credible suffrage coalitions in six politically diverse states: Arizona, Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan and New Mexico. She is following these coalitions into major party politics and legislative decision-making, to isolate the type of partisan environment most conducive to suffrage extension and the types of political institutions that have the greatest impact on the process. What she is learning may be both an important addition to the field of political science and a detailed road-map to enfranchisement for other groups without voting rights.

“Having the ISR Innovation in Social Research Dissertation Fellowship enabled me to pursue an ambitious amount of archival research for the project, which has allowed me to add rich context to the findings from the quantitative analysis,” said McConnaughy, who recently accepted a tenure-track position in the Department of Government at the University of Texas-Austin. “I simply couldn’t have done this project effectively without the fellowship support.”
ISR hosted two survey industry partners in recent months – Abt Associates and Gallup Organisation Europe. Both firms have funded fellowships for PhD students in the Michigan Program in Survey Methodology (MPSM).

Wendell Knox, President and CEO of Abt Associates, told students that the job outlook for statistically savvy survey research specialists is expanding rapidly in developing nations and remains strong in the U.S., especially for those who broaden the definition of job success to include employment at private sector research firms. According to Knox, private industry has strong reasons to invest in educating the next generation of leaders in the field of survey research. “Our company applies rigorous research techniques to a wide range of social and economic policy issues,” Knox noted. “The growing sophistication of both government and corporate clients fuels a growing need for employees knowledgeable about sampling and survey statistics.” Knox visited ISR last fall with colleagues Judie Mopsik and Mike Battaglia, a U-M alum.

Robert Manchin, Chairman and CEO of Gallup Organisation Europe, and Jim Clifton, CEO of The Gallup Organization, also spoke to MPSM students. Manchin recalled his time studying at ISR in the late ‘sixties with Leslie Kish as a great foundation, and said he has enjoyed his long-distance collaboration with MPSM PhD student Emilia Peytcheva, who presented preliminary findings from her research on the effects of mixed-mode design on survey measurement error.

Clifton, CEO of The Gallup Organization since 1988, spoke about the changes in the field over the last several decades, including the increasing competitiveness
among survey research firms that led him to position Gallup as a consulting group that “prescribes” surveys as a way to identify and then correct problems that businesses are facing. “I’m a businessman,” he said. “The only part of the business that hasn’t become commoditized is solving problems.”

Clifton’s son Jonathan, a student at U-M, attended his father’s ISR talk to MPSM students.

“Abt Associates and Gallup Organisation Europe are companies that have invested in the future of this field,” said Patrick Shields, ISR Director of External Relations. “Their support allows students to have the best of both worlds – working with faculty members on real-world problems.

“The relationships we’re building with these two firms and with other private survey organizations also help demonstrate the employment options available to our graduates outside of academe, and are part of a broader effort to connect industry with academic survey researchers.”

Among the other initiatives are a series of brown-bag lunches, planned with the guidance of the Survey Methodology Program’s External Advisory Committee, that will focus on helping students develop skills needed in the workplace, including communication skills needed to make effective presentations about survey strengths and challenges to both clients and executives within their own firms.

How Survey Mode Influences Response

Gallup Europe Organisation CEO Robert Manchin knows that survey mode has an impact on responses, particularly to certain questions. His interest in learning more about that impact helped inform the research topic for Emilia Peytcheva, a PhD student in the ISR Program in Survey Methodology and the first Gallup Europe Fellow. Peytcheva has been working with Manchin and ISR Survey Research Center director Bob Groves to study the differential impact of four modes of survey administration — face-to-face, telephone, mail and web. So far, she has analyzed results from a quota sample of nearly 2000 respondents from Hungary, using questions from the European Social Survey and the Eurobarometer. Her preliminary findings show that responses to face-to-face and mail surveys are most similar, while mail and telephone surveys yield the most different results. Next, Peytcheva will analyze the results from experiments in more European countries, examining mode as well as cultural effects. “This project not only gives me the chance to work on a topic of great interest to me,” says Peytcheva, “but also allows me to benefit from working with two of the world’s top survey researchers.”
Marshall Weinberg Funds Research Fellowships

Two graduate students in sociology affiliated with the ISR Population Studies Center are the first recipients of Marshall Weinberg Research Fellowships.

“Marshall’s gift, structured as an annuity, is another example of his sophisticated philanthropic style,” said Patrick Shields, ISR Director of External Relations. “He worked closely with PSC Director Arland Thornton to provide flexible funds to support future international travel and research.”

Zhen Zeng won the 2003 Marshall Weinberg International Research Fellowship to support her dissertation on immigrant economic assimilation in the U.S. and Justin Thomas won the 2003 Marshall Weinberg Summer Research Fellowship to continue his study on status homogamy in South Africa. Both awards may be used flexibly in ways the recipients feel will best enhance their ability to complete their research goals.