INFORMATION HANDLING PANEL MINUTES --- SPRING MEETING
College Station, February 23rd, 24th, and 25th, 1993

Members: Warner Brueckmann (alternate), Patricia Fryer, Ian Gibson (Chairman), Brian Huber, Chris Jenkins (alternate), Lin Kay, Michael S. Loughridge, Adrian Richards, R. Riedel. Tsunemesa Saito, Andre Schaaf, Mike Simpson (alternate), Henry Spall, Lynn Watney

Liaison: William W. Sager, John Coyne, Russ Merrill, Mike Hobart, R.C. Chaney

Guests: John Saunders, Sherwood W. Wise, Carla Moore, Bruce Malfait, Ellen Kappel, Lou Garrison

IHP Recommendations to PCOM

IHP recommends to PCOM that the changes detailed below be made to the publication policy with the objective of: (a) improving the quality of the publications; (b) restraining the progressively rising costs of publications; and (c) facilitating the rapid distribution of ODP digital data to the user scientific community:

IHP recommends to PCOM that TAMU/ODP be asked to devote sufficient resources to capture, curate and organize the current incoming flow of shipboard data into a rational data-structure. At the present time this is NOT being achieved and the large backlog of unassimilated data continues to grow.

(1) Meeting Arrangements, Words of Welcome, Additions to the Agenda

The Chairman welcomed the Panel and thanked TAMU/ODP for again hosting the Spring meeting of the Panel. The Chairman welcomed in particular the representatives from JOI, NSF, and the Advisory Structure Review Committee (ASRC). It was agreed that the second day of the meeting would be devoted to a joint session with SMP. There were no additions to the agenda.

(2) Approval of the Minutes of the September 1992 IHP meeting.

The minutes of the September 1992 meeting had been previously circulated and corrected by panel members and were accepted in the revised form.

(3) Review of action items and recommendations

In reviewing the flagged action items from the minutes of the September meeting:

(a) John Coyne confirmed that presently there were no plans to accommodate any subset of the Lamont Logging data within the TAMU/ODP data structure. Nor was it clear at present as to whether this would be a priority in any new shipboard data-management system adopted following the issue of the "Computing RFP". Members noted with concern that continuing to store logging and shipboard data at separate sites on different computing systems would continue to impede core-log data integration.

(b) The Chairman confirmed that he had indeed contacted JOI about the possibility of continued funding for the preparation of radiolarian reference material for the MRCs. However, at the present time JOI were unable to offer any assistance.

(c) In the absence of Jack Baldauf, it was unclear as to whether future Co-chiefs were being made aware of the IHP "Guidelines for shipboard Stratigraphers". The Chairman agreed to pursue this matter

(4) PCOM Report

W. Sager reported that, as usual, the December PCOM meeting was largely devoted to the selection of Legs for the upcoming year. Legs included in the ODP FY94 schedule were: 152 NARM East Greenland Margin; 153 MARK; 154 Ceara Rise; 155 Amazon Fan; 156 Barbados; 157 DCS VE3; and 158 TAG. Four other issues were of particular concern to IHP.

Brian Lewis reported to PCOM that letters of intent had been requested in the form of an RFP for the design of the new shipboard Computing System. The letters of intent were to be delivered to ODP/TAMU by February. The Chairman interjected that TAMU had received more than a dozen proposals in response to the RFP and that three bidders had been selected to prepare detailed shipboard computing proposals. Each bidder would receive $50,000 to cover work on the design phase, and would be allowed to participate in the Leg 149 transit from Panama to the Azores to familiarize themselves with the shipboard environment. Tim Francis made it clear to PCOM that he anticipated that up to $0.5M might be available this year to cover these developments and up to $1.0M in the following year.

Dave Goldberg outlined to PCOM plans to produce the Logging results on CD-ROM at LDGO, allowing these to be distributed with Initial Report Volume. Although PCOM still appeared willing to support this change in the way in which Logging Data is distributed, problems over how the production costs would be covered were not resolved.

PCOM reaffirmed its commitment to the Diamond Coring System. Panel members should be aware that this development continues to absorb a large proportion of the available discretionary budget available within the program, inhibiting, among other things, computing and downhole tool developments.

Hans Dürbaum outlined to PCOM the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Structure Review Committee, a group mandated by EXCOM to examine the Advisory Structure within ODP. The work of this Panel is important to IHP as the panel might mandate significant changes in the way in which IHP relates to PCOM. The Chairman interjected to note that he anticipated preparing in the near future a joint response to an initial report from the ASRC with the Chairs of SMP and DMP.

The Chairman thanked William Sager for his report and noted how helpful it was to have a PCOM liaison to IHP who was familiar with the work and problems of the Panel.

(5) Report from ODP/TAMU Publications (Appendix A)

W.D. Rose presented a detailed report on the continued preparation and production of ODP Proceedings volumes. The Panel noted that this work continues to go well although there is concern at the progressively escalating cost and size of the these publications. A detailed discussion followed, after which **IHP made the following formal recommendations to the operator and to PCOM:**

IHP recommends to the operator that they continue to monitor the cost- effectiveness of placing all the SR and IR volume contents on CD-ROMs, but considers that the costs involved make this an inappropriate option at present.

IHP recommends to PCOM that the following changes be made to the publication policy with the objective of: (a) improving the quality of the publications; (b) restraining the progressively rising costs of publications; and (c) facilitating the rapid distribution of ODP digital data to the user scientific community:

A) *Interpretive material in the Site chapters of the Initial Report (IR) volumes should be kept to a minimum and Co-chiefs asked to restrict interpretations to the Summary sections at the conclusion of each site report.*

If adopted, such a policy should reduce the size and cost of the IR volumes, and reduce the work of the shipboard party. Significant new results and interpretation of data should be brought to the attention of the broader scientific community via external publication in the outside literature authored by the shipboard party. The Scientific Results volume is the more appropriate place for other, more detailed, interpretive material.

B) *Printed numerical Tables in the SR volumes should normally be less than a page in length. Long tables of data should be placed n ASCII format on the IR-CD/ROM to be included with each volume. Where possible, shorter tables of data should also be placed on the IR CD/ROM. The simultaneous inclusion of printed figures and tables which embody the same numerical data should normally not be permitted.*

C) *The shipboard party should be encouraged to provide machine readable copies of shipboard data for inclusion on the IR-CD/ROM. This information would be included on a `space available' basis and provided to the Operator at the termination of each cruise.*

IHP encourages TAMU/ODP to devote resources to the rapid generation of segments of the official TAMU/ODP data base of shipboard measurements at the conclusion of each leg. It is hoped that this will soon allow the distribution of ALL the routine shipboard data with the logging data on CD-ROM with the IR Volume.

D) *Logging Data should be distributed with the IR volume on CD-ROM*

IHP supported with enthusiasm the proposal of the Logging Group to implement this policy and hoped that funds would be found in the current financial year for the ongoing generation of the IR-CD/ROM at the LDGO.

E) *The Editorial Board for each Scientific Result (SR) volume should limit to twenty printed pages the size of individual contributed papers within the volume (including all associated tables and text, but excluding plates and range charts). The only exceptions to this policy would be the synthesis papers prepared by the Co-chief scientists. The Editorial Board should discourage authors from circumventing this policy by submitting multiple papers on related topics.*

F) *Authors of SR papers should be given the option of placing additional contributed material (numerical tables, appendices, diagrams, images) on a SR-CD/ROM.*

G) *Printed tables of numerical data (excluding range charts) in the SR volume should be restricted to one page in length. Any additional information should be placed on a SR-CD/ROM to be prepared by ODP-TAMU, and placed at the back of SR volumes on a routine basis. Authors should be encouraged to place copies of all the numerical tabular information on the SR-CD/ROM.*

H) *Data reports and `reprints' of externally published papers of results should be placed on the CD-ROM and represented within the volume by only the abstract, and, in the case of externally published papers, by a reference to the original publication.*

I) *IHP recommends to PCOM that the operator (ODP/TAMU) be encouraged to extend the time frame over which the SR volumes are produced from 34 months to 40 months post-*

cruise. The extra six-months should be used delay the final submission deadline to 22 months post-cruise.

IHP noted that the last recommendation reflects the belief of the panel that the presently hurried schedule for the production of the SR volumes is having an unduly negative impact on the intellectual quality of the publications.

(6) Report from ODP/TAMU Information Services (Appendix B)

John Coyne presented the attached Report of the Information Services Group. The report included at the request of IHP a statement on the status of the S1032 datasets, notes on personnel, and notes on various developments within the Applications Group. A detailed discussion followed.

Discussion relating to Paleontology data acquisition repeated points made to the IHP Paleo Subcommittee and is not repeated here. IHP continued to stress the need for a computer-based paleo data-capture system for the ship and accepted assurances from John Coyne that the work was in hand with the object of having a system placed on board for Leg 150.

Discussion relating to HARVI and HRTHIN is summarized under agenda item 12.

IHP noted with concern that there are five personnel vacancies within the Information Services Group, and that some of these positions have been vacant for some months. John Coyne commented that he was trying to fill these positions as soon as possible.

The information provided on the status of the S1032 data sets highlighted the extent of the backlog in organizing and curating the incoming flow of data. This matter is of serious concern to the panel and is the subject of a recommendation to PCOM outlined in agenda item 13. John Coyne agreed that at the present time the position continues to get worse as staff are NOT keeping up with the incoming data flow.

Questions were raised about the curation of the GRAPE data. This is a concern to the Panel. This important data set was also the subject of discussion at the SMP/IHP joint meeting.

(7) ODP/TAMU Curatorial Report (Appendix C)

Chris Mato presented the Curator's report.

In the following discussion, IHP confirmed that it was NOT in favor of any new arrangement relating to Core Repositories that involved (a) moving cores, (b) storing cores in unrefrigerated space or (c) further fragmentation of collections specific to particular geographical regions. While sensitive to the needs of European ODP participants, it favored the proposal to expand the space available at Lamont to accommodate Atlantic cores obtained during the next few years of drilling.

(8) Logging Group Report (Appendix D)

Mike Hobart presented the Computer and Database reports of the Borehole Research Group. These reports stressed the gradual migration to on-line and CD-ROM methods of distributing logging data, often as ASCII files. IHP supported these moves and hoped that the BRG and TAMU/ODP would cooperate in the production of CD-ROMs to maximize the experience available in this area. The contribution of NGDC in this regard is particularly appreciated.

(9) Joint Meeting with SMP

IHP met with SMP for a whole day on February 24th. The minutes of this portion of the meeting are included in the minutes of SMP and are not repeated here. Amongst the items discussed were the treatment by ODP of cores obtained by land-based drilling related to Leg 150; corrections to the GRAPE data; and a review of the present content of ODP datasets; and paleo shipboard data acquisition.

(10) Report from Paleontological Sub-Committee (Appendix E)

The Paleontologists met all day on Monday February 22nd. The report of this meeting is attached.

(11) Report from the Micro-paleo Reference Centers (Appendix F)

John Saunders presented this report. In discussion it was noted that Brian Huber will be taking over as the IHP member liasing with the MRCs. IHP also noted with regret that the work of the latter was being hampered by a lack of funds for sample preparation.

(12) HARVI and HRTHIN

The Chairman noted that in a letter dated 28th September, 1992, six senior petrologists associated with ODP wrote to Brian Lewis (Chairman, PCOM) to complain about the unfriendly nature of the computer programs HARVI and HRTHIN (used to acquire shipboard hard-rock data). At the invitation of Brian Lewis, Gibson responded to the letter on behalf of IHP, and noted (PCOM Annual Meeting, December 1992, Agenda Book, p.370) that IHP certainly had recommended that hard-rock data acquisition be automated to allow the ready accumulation of routine shipboard data. However, the detailed implementation of that Policy was in the hands of the TAMU/ODP Operator, and IHP had not been invited to provide input into the program design.

Subsequently, at the December 1992 meeting, PCOM was assured that the operator had decided to deal with this matter as a priority and to develop a completely new data-acquisition environment for hard-rock data. The objective was to have the new software ready for the start of Leg 147 (late Nov. 1992). Other computing developments were to be set aside. In fact, the software was not available for Leg 147 or for Leg 148.

IHP discussed this topic at length and considered that the handling of this matter by the Operator had been ill-advised. The rapid response by the Operator gave the impression that TAMU/ODP was ready to bend to the whim of any influential pressure group, without judging the merits of the issue. SMP and, to a lessor degree, IHP had noted that the programs were not perfect, but considered that several other data-acquisition/database projects had a greater priority. The Operator could have "sheltered" behind these minuted recommendations from the Panels, allowing other development work to continue without disruption. The Operator might also have sought further advice from the Panels on the issue at any time, either before the December PCOM meeting, or subsequently over the design of new software. No such advice was sought.

(13) Prioritization of activities.

The following is a prioritized list of activities/developments at ODP/TAMU. IHP considers that action on the majority of these items is essential to ensure the continued health of the Program.

(1) TAMU/ODP should devote sufficient resources to capture, curate and organize the current flow of shipboard data into a rational data-structure. At the present time this is NOT being achieved and the backlog of unassimilated data continues to grow.

(2) The upgrade of the shipboard computing environment. (a) The replacement of user-hostile data-acquisition modules with new software/hardware to allow the ready acquisition of shipboard data in real-time. (b) The replacement of the present database system with a modern relational database, interfaced to the data acquisition units. (c) The provision of software to allow scientists readily to extract information from the shipboard and shore-based data structures.

(3) The elimination of the data-entry backlog in the ODP database to allow this information to be accessed by the scientific community. (a) In view of the importance of chronological information to many facets of the project, the 32-leg backlog of paleontological data from the Proceedings volumes should be entered into the ODP Paleontology database. At the present time, the latter is empty of digital information. (b) The 32-leg backlog of shipboard lithologic data should be entered into the presently existing core-description database. (c) The backlog of routine shipboard XRF major and trace-element data should be added to the existing database.

(4) As there is presently no formal data-structure for the storage of GRAPE data within the project (i.e. the GRAPE data is not entered into the current ODP database). Attempts should be made to improve the mechanism by which this important data set is curated, to give better access to the information.

(5) The growing size and volume of ODP publications, necessitate that the Program consider the generation of a machine-readable cumulative index.

IHP noted that items under (2) on this list are covered by developments proposed under the current "Computing RFP". Item 1 is of the highest priority as it clearly prevents the backlogs noted under items 3 (and other unlisted backlogs ("holes") in the ODP database) from getting worse. IHP also noted that this was the first time for two years that IHP had been provided by ODP/TAMU with quantitative information on the extent of the backlog in the work of incorporating the routine shipboard data into the existing ODP data structure, despite repeated requests for this information.

IHP advises that the very significant problems highlighted by the items on this list indicate that PCOM must pay greater attention to this general area of the Program to prevent a serious problem becoming even worse.

(14) Non-performers

A Subcommittee of the Panel reviewed documentation relating to a small number of potential individual "non-performers". The review suggested that none of the cases was series and that letters from the Chairman of IHP were appropriate in three cases. The Chairman agreed to write on behalf of the Panel to the individuals concerned.

(15) Indexes

The Chairman reported that ODP/TAMU had agreed to include on the Leg 130 Scientific Results CD-ROM a copy of an experimental hypertext version of the printed index to Legs 129 and Legs 130. This will allow the evaluation of the use of the Microsoft Windows Software package "Viewer 1.0" for the browsing of a small trial fragment of a cumulative and fully searchable ODP index including both the subject and taxonomic entries. Browsing, but not searching, of the Viewer file on the Macintosh computer will also be possible.

(16) Next Meeting.

IHP agreed that the next meeting of IHP would be from Wednesday July 21st to Friday July 23rd, and that the meeting would be at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Kate Moran (Chair SMP) has agreed to host the meeting to arrange for panel members to view curatorial and other facilities at the Institute. The timing of the meeting will allow Panel members to travel to St. John's Newfoundland to visit the JOIDES Resolution in the week following the IHP meeting.