Happy New Year!

Mission Statement
The ISR is a multidisciplinary institute committed to advancing the understanding of the social world through applied research. The ISR offers research expertise and related technical assistance needed to develop solutions to problems facing society. It serves as a resource for agencies, organizations, the University, and the broader community. The ISR provides a supportive environment where students can learn about applied research and faculty can obtain assistance for their research endeavors.

ISR: Invaluable Resource Encouraging Research Opportunities among CSUS Faculty and Students
As a unit of the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies, the ISR works to open new avenues and partnerships for faculty and students interested in applied social research. Faculty are encouraged to utilize the ISR’s facilities, and assistance is provided for the recruiting and hiring of project staff, including student research assistants.

The ISR hires three new Graduate Research Analysts
By providing opportunities for graduate students to develop their research skills and participate in the world of applied research, the ISR is doing our part to ensure that future researchers possess the necessary skills to produce meaningful contributions to social science. During the Fall 2014 semester, we expanded our graduate research program to include Justin Martin, Alton Williams, and Jimmy Pope. Justin is working towards his M.A. in Psychology, while Alton and Jimmy are working towards their M.A. degrees in Sociology. Each of them brings a unique set of skills to the ISR and is an invaluable asset to the projects they are involved with.

Graduate Research Analyst Program
The ISR is a tremendous resource to students attending Sacramento State. From providing employment to undergraduates in the CATI Lab to paid internships offered to graduate students, the ISR is dedicated to advancing student knowledge in research. The Graduate Research Analyst (GRA) program affords a multitude of opportunities to students across several disciplines including, but not limited to: Sociology, Psychology, and Public Policy and Administration. Under the guidance of professional analysts, our GRA’s receive invaluable hands-on research experience in applied social research, performing program analyses, participating in survey development, and implementation as well as data collection and analyses. We currently employ 5 GRA’s and new opportunities may arise in the near future, depending on the workload of new projects. For many of our GRA’s, this rare opportunity is a tremendous boost to their Curriculum Vitae, and provides the added research experience vital in gaining acceptance into doctoral programs for those students interested in furthering their education.

Jimmy Pope, editor
Current / Recent Projects

The ISR is continuously taking on new projects, encompassing a wide variety of social issues. We conduct public opinion surveys, perform program/policy evaluations, and provide a comprehensive list of data analytic services (both quantitative and qualitative) for state, federal and local government agencies, non-profits, and the academic community. CLICK HERE to view a full listing of our current projects. Below, we highlight just a few of them.

Franchise Tax Board (FTB) Consumer Satisfaction Survey

As part of the Franchise Tax Board’s (FTB) effort to meet one of its four main strategic goals, “Taxpayer Centric Service,” outlined in its 2012-2016 Strategic Plan, the FTB contracted with the Institute for Social Research (ISR) to conduct a call center and website customer satisfaction survey. This initial satisfaction survey provides a baseline percentage of taxpayers who believe that the FTB provides the “products, services, and information needed to pay the proper amount owed.” This baseline supplies a starting point from which to measure progress towards meeting the goal of increasing the percentage of taxpayers who believe that the FTB provides the services they need. The survey was conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) resulting in approximately 700 completed interviews for analysis.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Program Evaluation

The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has contracted with the Institute for Social Research (ISR) to evaluate the Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Suicide Prevention Program developed by the Office of Suicide Prevention (OSP). The evaluation of the GLS Suicide Prevention Initiative is mandated by the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act (GLSMA) and is essential to helping communities improve suicide prevention effectiveness and to helping decision makers at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) efficiently direct Federal resources to programs and work. The OSP’s GLS Program includes the LGBTQ Youth Suicide Prevention Education and Outreach Program that will implement a school-based suicide prevention strategy that seeks to educate school personnel and students about youth suicide prevention, especially among LGBTQ students; enhance school policies and procedures to promote school safety for all students; build a community support base for LGBTQ youth; provide Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR) training for providers. ISR will oversee data collection, performance measurement, and SAMSA TRAC data entry requirements. Data from program participants for the project will be obtained from Project Partners; The Trevor Project, LivingWorks and Suicide Prevention Resource Center Training Institute, and other training provider organizations and ISR will compile and enter this data into the SAMHSA TRAC System, for the local evaluation and cross-site evaluation.

Community Care Licensing (CCL) Licensing Program Analyst (LPA) Workload Study

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) has contracted with the Institute for Social Research (ISR) to conduct a workload study on activities performed by Licensing Program Analysts (LPAs). The ISR will work collaboratively with the CCL division in the data collection, analysis and interpretation phases of the project to determine the amount of time required by LPA’s to conduct the inspection process for a variety of residential and day care facilities that provide services to children and adults throughout California. The evaluation will update a previous study conducted by the ISR in 2001 which was used by the CCL to determine workload standards and staffing requirements for its workforce. The current study will take into account the new inspection processes developed by CCL, additional regulatory requirements and the substantial growth in the number of facilities that have occurred in the past decade.

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Consumer Survey

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) has contracted with the ISR to conduct a consumer survey. IHSS is a public program that provides assistance to low-income residents who are elderly, blind or disabled. The program helps residents who have high-care needs remain safely in their own homes, in lieu of moving into a long-term care facility, nursing home or institution. IHSS operates by providing funding for participants (also known as consumers) to hire private caregivers (or providers) for assistance with specific personal care, domestic, and paramedical tasks in their own residence. Each month, IHSS enables approximately half a million Californians (throughout the state) to remain safely in their homes while also retaining their sense of independence and quality of life. CDSS has contracted with the ISR to conduct surveys of IHSS consumers that are representative of the consumer population. ISR collected and analyzed consumer survey data in 2008, 2010, 2012, and most recently in the Fall of 2014.

JP editor
Cristina Larsen has been a valued member of the ISR team since joining in 2007 as a Research Analyst. Prior to 2007, Cristina attained her M.S. and Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Georgia (Athens), with a focus in cognitive and industrial-organizational Psychology. She has further bolstered her credentials through several publications, presentations, honorary awards and industry/community service. Cristina also has two bachelor’s degrees: a B.S. in Psychology from our very own Sacramento State, and a B.A. in English from the University of San Francisco – the latter of which serves to broaden the perspective that she brings to the ISR.

Cristina has wasted no time since returning home from Athens. In 2005, Cristina began teaching multiple courses as an adjunct professor at Sacramento State, which included Research in Human Development, Statistical Research Methods, Cross-Cultural Psychology, Perceptual Psychology and Cognitive Psychology.

Cristina has managed many research projects for the ISR. Cristina’s ability to conceptualize research problems and develop appropriate measures has facilitated optimal data collections and analyses for program evaluations, workload studies, annual reports, social service and environmental studies. Cristina has a strong background in proposal development and grant writing as well.

When asked which ISR project has stood out the most, Cristina indicated that the First 5 California (California Children and Families Act of 1998 (Proposition 10)) project was a great experience. First 5 California is the lead agency and statewide coordinator charged with facilitating and enacting the Act’s goals of promoting early childhood development. Cristina oversaw and managed every detail, from developing the timeline and scope of work, to coordinating, obtaining, and then analyzing the data. As a confirmation of her dedication and hard work, the report won the 2012 CA State Information Officers Council Gold Award for the Annual Report Category.

When Cristina is not busy at work, she enjoys unwinding in the great outdoors and living an environmentally conscious life, Cristina and her two furry, four-legged companions enjoy their weekend adventures. Cycling, camping and hiking are some of Cristina’s spring and summer passions. When the winter season comes, you can find Cristina snowshoeing through the mountains, knitting, or reading some of her favorite books. She just recently finished reading Lonesome Dove for the second time, and she has a great interest in Japanese literature as well.

As you can see, Cristina Larsen has played an integral role at ISR for 7 years, raising the bar of applied research (and prior to that, in academia and the service industry). She has acquired several accolades for her outstanding commitment and achievement. We feel very fortunate and lucky to have Cristina Larsen as part of the ISR family!

Written by James Madsen, Undergraduate Intern