

5/75

**CURA RESOURCE COLLECTION**  
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs  
University of Minnesota  
330 Humphrey Center

CURA OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Tentative Recommendations

Submitted by

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and

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reports

The matter of constructing some sort of reporting system to the CURA central office by the programs on projects and their progress was, of course, discussed with coordinators. The program "independence" factor was frankly discussed in conjunction with the expressed wishes of everyone to avoid meaningless paper work. It is the recommendation of this Report that some sort of formal reporting process be initiated.

We suggest that two types of reports be required of each project within each program.

The first report would be on a single sheet<sup>1</sup> and would be sent to the CURA central office when a project is starting. It would contain basic information about the project--staff objectives, expected outcome (service to be performed, a meeting, whether a paper is to be produced, and so forth), when the project is expected to be completed, the planned allotment with a budget breakdown, and whether or not there will be a specific budget account. It will also contain a project identification (perhaps a code) so that each project within a program can be easily found.

CURA central office should send out a memo stating that this one-sheet report is a requirement on all projects. We recommend that no expenditure items be approved until this completed form is on file in the central office. This will facilitate account work and help to keep track of projects. This basic information would then be available for anyone in the central office and can be, if used properly, a great

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<sup>1</sup>See appendix for sample forms.

help in improving the accounting of costs for each project within a program in addition to providing basic content.

Those programs or projects which get outside money and only use CURA as an administrative home should also be required to send the project summary form.

Summary sheets for active projects should be maintained as part of the central filing system. If changes are made in subsequent reports, these sheets should be amended by a designated person after which the report should be returned to the resource collection. In the process of preparing a Summary Sheet for a project the project director and a representative from the central office administrative staff should outline a follow-up reporting timetable. This timetable and any specifics about these reports should be noted on the Project Summary Sheet.

The second type of report required on each project would be a follow-up report. Its principal purpose would be to report basic changes not reported in the project summaries and to what, if any, actual progress has been made. There's no point in requiring coordinators to write the same thing over and over. But, items that should be included are changes in staff (both students and faculty), results, budget changes, problems, successes, failures, or if the project has been terminated. If there are no changes, the report will so state.

CURA central office should set up categories to be responded to and should emphasize that verbiage should be held to a minimum. Perhaps a checklist could be provided.

The completion date of these follow-up reports should be staggered by the central office so the reports will be read and responded to. The

reception of the reports should be acknowledged and if information on budget or anything else is incomplete or unclear the coordinator should be called soon after the report is received. When a report is received it should be logged by a designated person and circulated to appropriate people and returned to the resource collection. Also, the person at CURA central office responsible for receiving the reports should be identified to the program coordinators.

The rationale in calling for staggered times on the follow-up reports is twofold--the first is so the reports will be read in due time; the second is that this might produce a more steady flow of current information for the CURA Reporter.

On those programs or projects where central office administrators are closely involved, formal reports should still be prepared. Verbal reports should not be accepted as substitutes for the regular written reports to the central office.

Any reports of a program or project going to a funding source by a project should also be sent to the CURA central office and maintained in the resource collection.

## 2. Personal Contact--Central Office to Programs

We recommend that the CURA central office have a person who occasionally, but regularly, stops by program offices to meet people, to discuss problems and look at projects. CURA is ultimately responsible for projects and informal visits might help to provide a show of interest toward those programs not normally having the personal involvement of CURA administrators and/or which are physically separate from the central office.

The contact person should be recognized as part of the CURA office or should be regularly reporting, at least in an informal manner, to the central office. Feedback from central office staff when appropriate will insure the viability of this type of contact person. If this policy is accepted, some type of performance evaluation should be agreed upon before the person accepts the task and an initial review time should be established. Also, the contact person should be responsible for insuring that information on file about projects is accurate and up-to-date.

This recommendation is not meant to add new staff. It perhaps could be done in conjunction with preparation of the CURA Reporter or assigned to someone already in the central office. The key element is that the responsibility be clearly defined and all personnel made aware of it. The basic rationale for requesting this specificity of responsibility is to provide a mechanism which will provide the most information for the largest number of people with the least amount of duplicated effort.

While current material could be transmitted to the CURA Reporter by these visits, the contact person should also be an evaluator of sorts. Regular contact with projects would give the individual an opportunity to maintain a clear picture of what is happening in a project. The information derived may be positive or negative. It might point up good points of a project that might otherwise be overlooked, help to solve problems more effectively, or direct attention to projects which appear to be making little progress.

In any event, CURA has grown and there should be some discussion about the possibility of added personal contact with programs.

### 3. CURA Reporter

The original purpose of the Reporter as stated by Dr. Borchert still seems to be in order--perhaps more than ever.<sup>2</sup>

"As the CURA work program has evolved, all connected with it have felt the growing need for more communication among ourselves. We want to keep informed about:

- what the CURA projects are doing;
- related programs and projects in the University;
- related programs in other Minnesota colleges and universities; and
- actions outside the educational establishment which affect our plans and programs.

To fill this need, we are initiating the CURA Reporter. We are circulating it widely because we believe that the activities it reports will be of interest well beyond the circle of current CURA coordinators."<sup>2</sup>

But the Reporter demonstrably is not providing the communication links it was called upon to do. A regular flow of appropriate information is essential to negate the need for filler material. And, the effectiveness of a publication decreases in direct proportion to the amount of unnecessary items.

This recommendation calls for a feature article on a project in each issue supplemented by various short articles. There should be a space allotted in each issue to announce publications from CURA programs and where the publications can be obtained. An effort must be made to have some kind of follow-up each year in the Reporter on each CURA program and project. Projects shouldn't just fall out of sight and disappear into never, never land. Even if a project disintegrates, the reasons (when possible to enumerate) for the disintegration might be instructive for future projects.

It's important that the Reporter come out on a regular basis and information from the staggered progress reports will provide a clue

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<sup>2</sup>CURA Reporter, Volume 1, Number 1, June-July 1970 and Volume 1, Number 2, August-September 1970.

to ideas for articles and follow-up news notes that are current. The frequency of publication, however, should be established as a function of appropriate information, not just publishing for the sake of publishing.

#### 4. Fiscal Administration

Although we recognize that much of CURA's operation demands a certain degree of flexibility, we feel that all involved would benefit by having a general set of guidelines adopted and sent to all coordinators. Basically, this would entail an outline of accepted university procedures and the time frame required to process various documents. A straightforward explanation of the process of submitting proposals, for instance, and the amount of time each step requires could alleviate having several proposals arrive in various stages of completion needing to be transmitted immediately. Significant problems appear to be generated by the unnecessarily erratic submission of documents.

Again, although we assume that allowances must be made from time to time, we feel if a project regularly requires special handling it may be an indication that a problem exists within the administration of the project and that this should be investigated.

To facilitate reporting the budgetary status of projects, we recommend that before any documents are processed, projects be required to file a PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET with a specific breakdown of perceived expenditures. This procedure should be coupled with a requirement that every document be identified by specific project. These two

actions would require minimal effort on the part of projects but would save significant amounts of time for the accounting staff in the central office and would insure that the reports prepared on the financial status of projects would clearly reflect the type of expenditure breakdown that coordinators need to plan future expenditures.

#### 5. Meetings

This recommendation calls for three basic types of meetings:

- a) General departmental meetings bringing together all coordinators and the central office administrative staff--these meetings should be infrequent but regular. The content of these meetings could be supplemented by reports issued by the central office (see recommendation #6) and the meetings themselves used as an opportunity for the department to gather as a community to discuss issues which affect CURA as a whole. The coordinators all indicated that they would find this type of meeting valuable and we feel that it would help to maintain a sense of departmental inclusion rather than satellite participation. Perhaps these meetings could be annual or biennial. If the meetings are biennial, we suggest that they be held in the spring at or near the end of a legislative session.
- b) Central administrative staff meetings--it is difficult to propose anything other than that these meetings be held at regular intervals agreed upon by those involved. These meetings should provide the opportunity for exchange of information and ideas. Although there exists a general sense of open communication, it would appear desirable, because of the schedules of the people involved, to have set times in which people could be brought up to date in a somewhat systematic fashion.
- c) Office staff meetings--again these meetings should be held at established intervals. The meetings (whether among the staff of a project or among the central office staff) should provide the opportunity for discussion of new procedures or activities. In the central office, for instance, a representative of the administrative staff, probably Shirley Bennett, would communicate relevant information to the rest of the staff and provide them with an opportunity to discuss problems or ideas.



## 6. Central Office Communication

This recommendation considers two kinds of communication: internal and external.

a) Internal. In addition to the meetings described in recommendation #5, we suggest that a type of PRELIMINARY CONTACT SHEET be filled out for all contacts made by people in the central office that may involve CURA at some time. Maintaining a file of these contacts may fulfill two functions: first, provide basic information if contact is renewed (either as a refresher for the person who was initially contacted or for the person who is making or receiving the second contact); and, second, to provide a record of the types of contact that have been made--this could be used to evaluate the direction in which demand seems to exist or to insure that particularly desirable ideas are not lost. These forms could be maintained centrally, and periodically reviewed in the administrative staff meetings. The same type of record should be maintained by Program Offices.

Also, because of the type of communication that exists and the interchangeability of administrative responsibility at times (and perhaps the need to send representatives to certain meetings) we recommend that some type of regular, consistent notes be maintained on all meetings which affect either departmental policy or operation of projects. We recommend that these notes be brief, listing basic information such as time or money commitments and planned follow-up.

b) External--Central Office to Projects. As mentioned earlier in this report, we recognize that it is an essential part of the nature of CURA to be able to respond quickly to ideas and to encourage

new ideas. To this end we agree that any policies adopted should have a certain degree of flexibility or maneuverability. It appears, however, that there is a need to articulate some kind of framework and basic guidelines. It may be that this has been done in the past, but, if this is true, it needs to be repeated. Although projects value their independence, they have no definite sense of their responsibilities to the central office. Likewise, they have no clear picture of what the central office considers its responsibility to be to the projects. We feel that the general sense of uncertainty which seems to exist could be remedied somewhat by the drafting of guidelines such as we mentioned earlier in the reporting and fiscal administration sections.

Since the coordinators unanimously endorsed the type of interim report issued in September, 1974, we recommend that this type of overall activity summary be prepared and distributed regularly (probably annually). If all CURA staff had this type of material before the departmental meeting, the need for verbal overviews from coordinators would be eradicated.

In addition, we recommend some type of personal orientation for new project staff by the central office. This would provide a personal contact and an opportunity for new staff to be initiated to CURA and hopefully give them a sense of belonging to CURA as a whole in addition to their specific project.

## 7. Evaluation

As an important part of a feedback loop, we recommend the establishment of a system of internal evaluation with two components: self-evaluation by individual projects; and, central office evaluation.

The self-evaluation could begin with a brief evaluation form or contract designed by the project director reflecting his view of what the project will do if successful and outlining the key elements or steps in the project so that each can be looked at individually to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the projects. This form would be designed before the project was operational and submitted to the central office with the PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET. Project progress in terms of this evaluation design could be periodic or only at the conclusion of the project. We recommend that this decision be based on the duration of the project. At any rate, regardless of the timing, this self-evaluation should be reviewed with a representative of the CURA administrative staff. In addition to this review, the central office will be receiving periodic information from whomever has been designated to maintain the personal contact mentioned earlier. Complemented by the written reports, we feel that this should provide an adequate base for an internal evaluation of projects. An important element of this evaluation process is the feedback between the central office and the projects about what the projects are doing.

No sample evaluation design is included because they could take any format. The key element in the evaluation design would be that it provide a tool for a concise and direct consideration of a project's movement toward its goals--rather than involve a lengthy investigation.

#### 8. CURA with the Wider Community

There are three basic ways in which CURA now communicates with the wider community: 1) the Reporter; 2) research reports; and

3) seminars, workshops, conferences and other types of public meetings. We have already discussed the CURA Reporter in a separate section so we will now address the other two. The only additional comment on the Reporter in the context of communication with the wider community is that it is at present the basic mechanism for communicating relevant information from outside to the CURA projects. This is an important part of the information coordinating function of the central office.

The other function is easier to deal with. This function is the distribution of information generated by CURA projects to the outside. Although the Reporter is certainly intended to do this, the two other methods must not be underestimated. At this time it is difficult to make significant comments on verbal communication which operates through the seminars and so forth. We do, however, have some thoughts on the dissemination of project results through the various printed media.

The essence of our recommendation on this point is the establishment of a publications review committee and the establishment of a publications fund. We feel that the size of this committee should be minimal--perhaps two or three people. Representation should include the central office and the coordinators. The coordinator could be elected or assigned on a rotating basis. The committee should include the Reporter editor who could have as part of his function to search out possible ways of disseminating research results, or even preliminary findings, in a timely manner to appropriate audiences. Part of the function then, either of the editor or the committee, could be to serve as a resource for people who have information that they would like to have evaluated for identification of possible routes of distribution.

For instance, some coordinators feel that it would be beneficial if projects were encouraged to share preliminary results or information, not really suitable for regular publication, with others working in the field. The purpose of this would be an attempt to establish outside dialogue while research is in progress, rather than waiting until a project is completed. The dissemination of small bits of information could also help to build a worthwhile fund of information over a period of time.

The publications review committee could also provide funds (from the publication fund) for the printing of material that has not had funds previously earmarked. They could either have direct control of the fund or make recommendations to the directors for funding authorization. In any event, we feel that any report which is issued under CURA auspices should be reviewed and a standard disclaimer should be developed for inclusion in reports when appropriate.

We have not addressed the question of whether the central office should provide the personnel to handle the distribution of published reports or whether that should be a project responsibility because we feel that this is basically a management decision based on space and personnel logistics.

Finally, the directors might also publicize, perhaps through the Reporter, areas of potential project interest.

PRELIMINARY CONTACT RECORD

CONTACT MADE WITH: DUDLEY FIELD MAHONE      DATE: JAN. 15, 1975  
 NAME: FACULTY MEMBER  
 AFFILIATION: OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
 ADDRESS: 1925 CLARENCE DARROW BLVD., UNIV OF MINN  
 PHONE: 3-3333

REASON FOR CONTACT:

// General discussion of possible projects.

projects mentioned were: \_\_\_\_\_

Seeking funding for project called PROOF POSITIVE OF NON-NATURAL SELECTION OF THE SPECIES  
 sources considered were: CURA FOR GRAD STUDENT SUPPORT  
PRIMARY FUNDING SUPPORT FROM ANTI-CHARLES DARWIN LEAGUE, DAYTON, TENN.

// Planning for project called \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT INITIATED BY: DUDLEY FIELD MAHONE

COMMITMENTS MADE: NONE

INTENDED FOLLOW-UP POSSIBILITY OF CURA GRAD STUDENT SUPPORT IF PRIMARY FUNDING IS SECURED

Signature Arthur N. Hayes      Date Jan. 15, 1975  
Eyes. Mir,  
CURA

## PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

Date February 20, 1975Project Title: Proof Positive of Non-Natural  
Selection of the SpeciesAddress: 1925 Clarence Darrow Blvd.  
University of MinnesotaProgram Office NoneFree standing Project Office of  
Religious Studies, University  
of MinnesotaProject Director: John Thomas Scopes

Project Staff	Faculty	Dept.	Paid	Contri- buted	Volun- teer	Stu- dent	Paid	R'cvd Credit	Volun- teer	Civil Service
Director	1		1/3							
Principal Researcher	1		full							
Graduate Student						1	x	x		

**Project objective:** To prove false the Darwinian theory of natural selection of the species and, to thus prove, the Divine creation of man as taught in the bible. This will be accomplished by sending the principal researcher, William Jennings Bryan, and a graduate student, Thomas Stewart, to Siberia and India to check on Siberian and Bengal tigers which are tawny colored with black stripes. If Darwin's theory is correct, these tigers, over the last 10 million years, should have turned green in color so they could hide in the grass.

**Intended population served:** All of mankind.

**Population location:** Everywhere

**How will this population be served:** By receiving the correct theory of the history of mankind which will stop all arguments on the subject.

**Effect (potential or actual) on the University at large:** It will make it easier to teach subjects on this point in many departments because they will all have the one correct theory.

Administrative support needed: Funds for one graduate student for one year.

Communication/publication assistance: Not necessary; private publishers and/or the University of Minnesota Press will scramble for printing and distribution rights of subsequent book on the research.

Expected value of project: See previous answers.

Anticipated problems: Getting into Russia.

Planned follow-up: Publication.

University departments, public or private agencies or organizations involved in, or with, the project and the way in which they are involved (even if only informal discussions): Office of Religious Studies.  
Informal and argumentative discussions with faculty in Anthropology, Biology and Philosophy.

Anticipated duration of project: 1 year

Project spin-off expected? No

Possibility for spin-off? No

Source(s) of funds and amount--include and identify contributions:

Anti Charles Darwin League, Dayton, Tennessee	\$40,000
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota	9,000

Budget Summary: See attached proposal to Anti Charles Darwin League

Signature John Thomas Scopes

Date Feb. 20, 1975

John Thomas Scopes

Project Director



FOLLOW-UP REPORT

PROJECT: Proof Positive of Non-Natural Selection of the Species

DATE: August 20, 1975

Describe any changes that have occurred since the PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET was filed:

The principal researcher, William Jennings Bryan, and the graduate student Thomas Stewart traveled to Russia on March 1, 1975.

Have you obtained any preliminary results? If so, please describe your findings:

No

Have you sponsored any activities to date? If so, or if you have specific activities scheduled for the near future, please describe, giving details about whom you expect to attend (not names unless they are significant in terms of your project); what you intend to accomplish with this activity; and planned follow-up:

No

Have you prepared any reports? What and for whom? Yes, a report to the Anti Charles Darwin League dated June 15, 1975 - copy attached.

Please outline any major difficulties you are encountering or areas in which you would like assistance: Our two researchers have been in Siberia for almost six months, as far as we know, and we haven't heard from them. Does CURA know anyone over there that could help us get them out?

Please list anything you think significant about this project which has not been reported: None

PLEASE CONTINUE ON ADDITIONAL SHEETS

SUBMITTED BY: John Tom Seages, Project Director

DATE RECEIVED: AUGUST 25, 1975 CURA

## FOLLOW-UP REPORT

PROJECT: Proof Positive of Non-Natural  
Selection of the Species

DATE: February 20, 1976

Describe any changes that have occurred since the PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET was filed:  
Our two researchers returned on December 15, 1975 from Siberia and India.

Have you obtained any preliminary results? If so, please describe your findings:  
These are final results. The attempt to prove Darwin wrong failed in this instance because the researchers couldn't find any green grass in either Siberia or India.

Have you sponsored any activities to date? If so, or if you have specific activities scheduled for the near future, please describe, giving details about whom you expect to attend (not names unless they are significant in terms of your project); what you intend to accomplish with this activity; and planned follow-up:

No

Have you prepared any reports? What and for whom? Yes, a final report for CURA and the Anti Charles Darwin League - copy attached. Please keep your copy. We understand the League burned the copy they received.

Please outline any major difficulties you are encountering or areas in which you would like assistance: Please get the Anthropology, Biology and Philosophy faculties to stop harassing us.

Please list anything you think significant about this project which has not been reported: none

PLEASE CONTINUE ON ADDITIONAL SHEETS

SUBMITTED BY:

*John Thomas Seiges, Project Director*

DATE RECEIVED:

*FEBRUARY 23, 1976*  
*CURA*