Memo to: Dean Taylor, Associate Dean Cowmeadow, Student Services Director Esther Peralez,
             Information Management Specialist Rose Relopez, and ORE Applications
             Programmer Paulette Ralston, Data Entry Specialist Mark Erickson

From: Connie Schmitz, ORE *Connie*

Date: September 25, 1991   SEP 26

In Re: "Location and Content of Student Data Bases"

The purpose of this memo is to describe in general terms the main data bases ORE has been
maintaining since about 1987 and to propose a few changes and additions. The concepts here evolved
from discussion with Rose and others of you, and are still in a fluid state should further
improvements/corrections be needed. I hope the memo helps stimulate conversation where
conversation is needed, and also allays some fears about how certain information management tasks
are going to get done this year.

Since the departure of Bob delMas and the intervening personnel at ORE, we (Paulette, Mark and I)
have been trying to document what's on the ORE student data bases in the Fourth Dimension folders
on the Macintosh. These folders are organized by year. I have succeeded in figuring out what most
of the files in the most recent two years are about, and have written file-by-file descriptions and put
these into three-ring binders. These binders also contain the questionnaires, coding sheets, and
copies of the lay-out of the data structure so future programmers and researchers will have a clearer
idea of what the files contain. I will probably never be able to figure out all the files from earlier
years in entirety, and I'm not sure it's a good use of my time to do so, in that we don't really seem to
have much need for them.

Being more of an IBM person than a Mac person, Paulette will be initiating a "New Era" and
maintaining all future data bases and AIS downloads on D-Base 4. She will be responsible for
documenting procedures used in the downloads and cataloguing the new data bases. I will continue
to provide written text (as necessary) explaining the studies, and for providing copies of instruments
or coding sheets used.

In terms of routine reports, I see that ORE will continue to be responsible for generating:

1. New Students Reports (i.e., "Fall Freshman Characteristics Paper")

2. Quarterly downloads from the UM RRDB to facilitate academic progress (i.e., quarterly
    probation/suspension reports and Dean's Lists)

3. Quarterly downloads for monitoring transfer (this is a new venture)

4. Annual downloads for reporting retention and transfer rates

I'll be happy to meet with any or all of you to discuss these items in more detail.

Description of the Student Data Bases in the Office of Research & Evaluation

(Approximately 1987 to the present; the "Fourth Dimension Era" of Bob delMas.)

1. General College Student Information (GCSI). The GCSI is an in-house
    questionnaire which has evolved over the past couple of years. It originated in
    ORE initially as one of several intake forms used for the TRIO and PEP
    programs, and then was adopted by Student Services and used for all incoming
    freshmen. The form serves two purposes: 1) documenting backround
    characteristics of freshmen for ORE's annual, descriptive report on new
    students, and 2) providing advisors with individual student data to help with
    academic advising. Data from the forms are entered once fall registration is
    over; the forms are then returned to students' files in Student Services.

    In the past, students completed the forms at registration. Now, the forms are
    being sent out in the spring/summer to all new admits and requested prior to
    orientation. Earlier versions of the form were called "New Student Planning
    Form," and contained students' GC Placement Test Scores in reading, writing,
    arithmetic, and algebra. As the placement tests were phased out, these
    elements were eliminated. The current (1991-92) version contains an
    experimental "Self-Assessment" section in which students respond to
    statements regarding typical school behaviors and attitudes. These data are
    being entered in a separate data base.

    The information gathered by the GCSI overlaps a bit with application data
    logged in AIS, but aside from name, ethnic background, and a few other items,
    the GCSI gathers unique data. Examples include employment plans, reasons
    for entering college, special needs in advising, counseling, and demographic
    data pertinent to enrollment in GC special programs, such as TRIO or the
    Student Parent Program.

    Because the forms are collected once each year, the GCSI data bases are usually
    identifiable by year (e.g., GCSI 90-91). In Fourth Dimension, they are also linked
    to information downloaded from the UM Admissions and Registration Data
    Bases so that annual, descriptive reports of new students can be written (see
    item 2 below). In the future, these data will probably be maintained in discrete
    foxbase files (as the "Ralston/IBM era takes over). They should have a generic
    heading that documents the form's title and year, such as: **GCSI 91-92**.

2. "New Student Reports:" Annual Fall Downloads from the Admissions and
    Registration Reporting Data Bases. The "Fall Freshman Characteristics" or
    "New Student" reports generated by delMas, Moline, and Garfield in the past
    have all included some information from students' UM application forms, as
    well as current registration characteristics (e.g., part-time or full-time) to
    describe the freshman population. While each of the report authors
    approached the task somewhat differently, the resulting data bases typcially

include such things as high school performance data, entrance test data, financial aid application, and previous college performance.

The way in which these data were brought over from AIS and organized in Fourth Dimension is difficult to understand. Data from separate AIS tables (e.g., "ACT") show up as separate data bases in Fourth Dimension, linked (in some cases) to a 2nd Week Class List roster or on its own. Some of the data bases have dates, indicating the year, although the Fourth Dimension itself has been organized by year in the Mac. (All files relating to 90-91 are together, for example.) Because of the inconsistent nomenclature and the lack of descriptive documentation, however, it is hard to trace these data and link them to particular cohorts.

In the future, beginning with Fall 91, these data should be kept intact under a generic heading to reflect their purpose and time period, such as: **NewStudent Data F91.**

3. <u>Quarterly DownLoads (Snapshots) of All "Currently Registered" GC Students</u>. The primary purpose of the quarterly download has been to monitor the academic progress of GC students. The download captures credits attempted, credits completed, term and cumulative GPA, and registration status for individuals who have registered in the college within the two-year revolving window. (It does not contain the individualized codes pertaining to suspension which were developed within GC Academic Progress.) The data can be disaggregated by program codes or advising codes (e.g., TRIO, CE, OMSSA, Student Athlete).

At once time, we felt that by archiving the quarterly download we would be building a data base that we could use for research. Given the two-year window limitation on the RRDB, this may have been appropriate. The truth is, in the five years I've been here, the waurterly downloads have never been used for outcomes research, in that the UM RRDB is always the preferable source of achievement, retention, transfer, and graduation data because it is more complete and up-to-date. Now that the RRDB has an eight-year window, there is even less reason to think we would use the quarterly download for outcomes research. Therefore, the download should be driven (if it isn't already) by Academic Progress needs to report quarterly and annual probation and suspension rates and Dean's Lists.

As with the above annual fall downloads, the data bases for quarterly monitoring are also organized in several pieces in Fourth Dimension (probably in relation to the way AIS organizes its tables) rather than organized by product or purpose. There is some pattern to the nomenclature, in that quarters and years are designated. The data elements are not especially consistent, however, from file to file. I don't know how to interpret this. In the future, the downloads should be given a generic heading indicating their purpose and time period, such as: **AcadProg F91.**

4.   Special Programs. Special College student programs, such as TRIO, PEP, and Commanding English (CE) have discrete files scattered throughout the Fourth Dimension years. They represent either specific instruments (e.g., the Eligibility Form used to screening and classifying TRIO students, student satisfaction surveys) or specific evaluation reports. Now that advising designators are being put into the AS tables, enabling us to track TRIO and other special program students through the UM data bases, it no longer is necessary for us to maintain student lists on Fourth Dimension. Those we have from previous years to the present, however, need to be kept.

5.   Special Studies. The remainder of ORE files reflect the kinds of ad hoc or unique reports generated by the Office in the last several years, such as "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Transfer Rate, but Were Afraid to Ask," "1421: Assessing the Curricular Placement Plan." They also reflect current studies underway, for example, the GCSI Validity Study, the IAR Validity Study, and the Reliability Study for the Student Self-Assessment. They are generally not linked to other files and are self-explanatory in terms of nomenclature.

6.   Cumulative Transfer Rates. In previous years, we have uploaded student ID#s from designated fall cohorts and then searched through the intervening years to report cumulative transfer rates for each of the cohorts. We've done this only on an ad hoc basis, such as for the "Transfer Paper" or for specific groups (e.g., TRIO, CE). (John Kellogg performed the programming tasks for us for the "Research Notes" report last winter, so these data are not actually in Fourth Dimension.) We can also get an estimate of transfer from the annual University Retention and Graduation Report released by Student Support Services (Matross and Kellogg), although these data are not cumulative. I'd like to see this report done on an annual basis in the early summer and combined with transfer-outside-the-University data obtained from the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB). The generic title for these data bases would again reflect content and time period, such as: **CumTrans F90.**

7.   Current Transfer Rates. The one additional activity that I recommend at this time for ORE in terms of information management relates to monitoring transfer on a more frequent basis and in a manner so that individual student data could be useful to advisors and program directors. Every quarter, we could upload recent fall freshman cohorts (e.g., from the last three or four years) and search the current two-year window to see who has transferred to what units during that time period. We could also find out how well these recent transfers are doing, academically, in their unit of transfer. Using student identifiers (e.g., OMSSA) and advising codes put into AIS, we could report transfer rates and success for specific populations. The generic title for these downloads might be: **CurTrans F90.** This data would reflect transfers for students who first entered GC in 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989 and transferred sometime between 1989-91.

**List of Data Elements for the Fall Download
from the UM Admissions Data Base (ARDB)
for the New Student Profile: Entering Cohort of 1991-91**

(Based on 2nd Week Class Lists, selecting all students whose unit
of registration is GC and whose first quarter of registration is Fall, 1991)

1.   Student Key (ID#)

2.   Ethnic Code

3.   Sex (Gender) Code

4.   Birthdate

5.   Application Type Code (NHS vs. NAS)

6.   Academic Units (High School)

7.   Academic Units (Previous College)

8.   Class Rank (High School)

9.   Cumulative Grade Point Average (High School)

10. Cumulative Grade Point Average (Previous College)

11. Credits (Previous College)

12. Scores: Enhanced ACT Composite Score (22); Enhanced ACT Subscore Code
     (03); AAR Scores (14); MELAB (20)

13. Financial Aid Application Intended

These data are combined with data from the General College Student
Information (GCSI) form each fall to produce an annual, descriptive report on
new students entering the College.

**List of Data Elements for the Quarterly Download
from the UM Registration Reporting Data Base (RRDB)
for Monitoring All "Currently" Registered Students**

(Based on 2nd Week Class Lists, selecting all students whose current unit of
registration is GC; "current" means registration within the two-year window.)

1. Student Key (ID#)

2. Student Name

3. Student Address, Telephone Number

4. 1st Quarter Registered

5. Last Quarter Registered

6. OMSSA

7. Athlete

8. Gender

9. Ethnic Background

10. Credits Attempted

11. Current Credit Load

12. Term GPA

13. Cumulative GPA

14. Registration Status (Year 1 of two-year window)

15. Registration Status (Year 2 of two-year window)

16. Advising Code

These data are collected for determining probation, suspension, and Dean's List
reports. They are useful for knowing, quarter to quarter, where most of the
recently admitted students are and how they are doing.

**List of Data Elements for the Quarterly Download
from the UM Registration Reporting Data Base (RRDB)
for Tracking Transfer and Progress of GC Students**

(Based on 2nd Week Class Lists; selecting all GC students, from the
past four freshman cohorts, whose registration within another UM unit
was within the current two-year window.)

Note: Upload student key (ID numbers) from the past four freshman cohorts, using
the student rosters generated by the Fall Downloads from the ARDB.

1. Student Key (ID Number)

2. 1st Quarter Registered

3. Last Quarter Registered

4. Current Unit of Registration

5. OMSSA

6. Athlete

7. Gender

8. Ethnic Background

9. Advising Code

10. Current Unit Cumulative GPA

These data, which have not been collected routinely before, would be useful for
tracking transfer rates of students and their current academic progress in their
unit of transfer with quarter by quarter snapshots. To look at cumulative
retention, transfer, and graduation rates of all GC students, the annual report
issued by John Kellogg's office in the spring is the better source.