COSTS AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Speakers: Michael Ribaudo, *The City University of New York*
Barbara Hoetker Ash, *Florida Department of Education*
Judy Moyer, *National Computer Systems*

Introducer/Recorder: Dan Stephenfield, *The Florida State University*

Michael Ribaudo reported that when CUNY went to an open admissions policy in 1970, each of the seventeen undergraduate colleges had its own large-scale testing program. However, commencing in 1978, CUNY went to a uniform literacy testing program for all its colleges. The test includes a writing sample and multiple-choice reading assessment. Each writing sample is read by two readers and if they disagree, the sample is forwarded to a third reader for purposes of validation. This results in approximately two-and-a-half readings per sample. Since there are 100,000 samples each semester, about three-quarters of a million readings are performed annually. a very costly process.

Faculty members do the reading and are reimbursed either in cash or by compensatory measures. Generally, a reader can manage twenty writing samples per hour; the reader's pay is $12 to $13 per hour. For two and a half readings per essay, the cost range

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per writing sample is between $2 and $2.25. There are, in addition, numerous indirect costs for handling, filing, transportation, etc. Ribaudo concluded his comments that data management is a "nightmare."

Barbara Ash discussed Florida's testing programs, SSAT I and II, FCTE, and the relatively new CLAST, pointing out that for the former two tests, out of 450,000 executed annually, fewer than one half of one per cent involve any kind of writing sample. Even when a writing sample is included, it is not an extended piece of writing. The Florida Department of Education has recommended that a writing sample be included at each level, but this recommendation has not yet been acted upon. Both the FCTE and CLAST include extended writing samples. In the case of the FCTE three readers are used for the ten thousand tests conducted annually. For the CLAST, which determines whether a college sophomore may progress to the upper division, two readers are used for each writing sample. While the figures for reading and assessing the FCTE and CLAST writing portion only are not broken out, estimates for CLAST range between $3 and $4 per writing sample. As in the case of Ribaudo's projections, the cost is only for direct items, and does not include indirect costs.

Judy Moyer advised that the testing program used by her firm, formerly the Iowa Testing Program, was originally developed for machine scoring since concern for costs is universal and this is the least expensive way. Even so, the cost per student paper ranges between $1 and $2. Again, this does not include indirect costs, described by Moyer as "many, many." This figure is based on three million tests being scored between January and May each year. In order to project a reliable essay score assessment, Moyer stated her firm required a large base of scores. The costs quoted, $1 to $2, are for a minimum of 200,000 students.

During the question and answer period, Ribaudo stated that the scoring scale includes six points. Florida uses a four-point scale. All of the speakers agreed that use of computers for test results retention is effective, although costs have not yet been determined. Ash pointed out legal implications of preserving test results. With regard to the selection of readers, Ribaudo claimed that it is the quality of the training, not the background of the person, that is important. Moyer added that the level of boredom for the reader is a major problem and that comfort, lighting, etc., were prime considerations.

IMPACT OF TESTING ON CURRICULUM AND TEACHING