

NASULGC examines information technology

By Barbara J. Ford

Administrators address libraries and technology

A Commission on Information Technology (CIT) of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) is examining the changes in teaching, learning, communications, information creation, storage and retrieval, and the operations of libraries, which are increasingly driven by technology. It is chaired by Martin A. Massengale, president, University of Nebraska.

In 1990 NASULGC conducted a major self-study focusing on the directions it should take. CIT is one of the six new commissions created as a result.

The goals of CIT are to identify and develop policy positions on information technology and related issues of concern to members; publish reports and guidelines, sponsor workshops, and provide other educational support to develop members' ability to deal with issues; work with other parts of NASULGC and other associations and agencies of the federal government to identify related and overlapping issues; and to serve as a sounding board for proposed federal policies relating to information technology.

The commission will use boards to carry out its activities. The Information Policy Board will focus on issues such as intellectual property and privacy, security, and freedom of expression. The Technology Infrastructure Board will address U.S. technological leadership in computing and communications and discuss topics such as federal policy, NREN, human resources, and technology transfer. The Library Resources and Services Board will cover issues such as copyright and licensing, scholarly publishing, cooperation using electronic systems, preservation, and networking and the global or virtual library.

The Educational Telecommunications Board will work to improve educational access to telecommunications systems by addressing the impact of federal regulations, funding initiatives, and information exchange.

NASULGC's agenda for the 1990s includes: showing the linkages between public higher education and economic and societal interests; affirming access for a college education to all who can benefit; and helping to strengthen the credibility of public higher education and making the case for investment in it a top priority.

The commission met for the first time during NASULGC's 105th annual meeting in New Orleans in November. The charge was reviewed and discussed and then each of the boards met. A number of academic librarians were at the meeting representing their institutions.

The Library Resources and Services Board, chaired by Richard West (University of California), discussed the need to coordinate with the Association of American Universities Task Force on Scholarly Information, NASULGC's Council on Academic Affairs, the Coalition for Networked Information, and the EDUCOM National Telecommunications Task Force. Agenda topics of interest that were discussed include position papers and infrastructure ideas for the new federal administration, GPO/Windo Legislation, seminars on information technology for presidents, and demonstration projects in electronic environments. The meeting was brief and the board hopes to meet again in January to work on position papers that need to be prepared quickly.

Founded in 1887, NASULGC is the nation's oldest higher education association and represents the nation's principal state universities and all the land-grant institutions. Among the 159 institutional members are 17 historically black 1890s institutions, major public universities, and state higher education systems. ■