

NASULGC meeting explores technology

By Barbara J. Ford

Information technology must be part of the mission

Nearly 100 members (including about 25 librarians) of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) Commission on Information Technology (CIT) met at the 106th NASULGC annual meeting in Washington, D.C., on November 11, 1993. The CIT has over 180 members and is an important voice for higher education as one of six NASULGC policy commissions. The following report highlights the activities of CIT's boards.

The Board on Distance Education and Telecommunications Policy had a panel discussion regarding distance and higher education and the national agenda. The board will move into a strategic planning process that will enable it to include more effectively higher education in the national discussions on telecommunications.

The Board on Distance Technology and Learning developed a listserv for board members and is developing a brochure on compressed video and satellite systems that includes a directory of programs and products in the area. The Board on Technology Infrastructure reported on networking activities in various states. A discussion was held on drafting a statement on the importance of networking to higher education.

The Board on Library Resources and Services reviewed the status of legislation dealing with access to government information and networking development. Issues of particular interest to the board include intellectual property in the electronic environment, cooperation using electronic systems, preservation in the electronic environment, networking and the

global or virtual library, and public and private responsibility for the Internet. Discussions were held on how library services can be used to help support university distance learning programs by giving students library access electronically. There was also a discussion on using NASULGC to begin a dialogue with the cooperative extension community on establishing a role for libraries in providing electronic information to extension offices. CIT plans to develop a conference for university presidents on the impact of the national information infrastructure.

Michael Nelson, senior policy advisor for information technology, Office of Science and Technology Policy, provided some insight on the Clinton administration's national information infrastructure agenda. He made clear that the information highways will not be paid for by the government. The government's role was defined as research and development support for new technologies, support for pilot projects, servicing as a customer for electronic information, developing policy for intellectual property protection and privacy rights, and rewriting the existing federal regulations to facilitate a more productive telecommunications policy.

EDUCOM's Teaching and Learning Initiative was the focus of part of the afternoon program. Four presidents of NASULGC member institutions spoke on the importance of information technology and higher education. It was noted that the information technology revolution is the biggest factor affecting the future of education and that the rapid spread of technology is transforming traditional methods of teaching and learning. They stressed that higher education administrators must make information technology a part of a student's education and a part of the land-grant mission of outreach and service. ■