

Center provides computer services for University

By **NANCY WYKLE**
Staff Writer

In this age of computers, it is easy to get lost in all the information and technicalities one encounters. The UNC Microcomputing Support Center provides the most comprehensive computer services available on campus.

Anne Parker, director of the center,

said the center offers help and information to students, faculty and staff in the areas of user support, training and outreach, research and development, and instructional computing.

"We want to help people make informed decisions about (computer) usage," Parker said. The program is designed to help, educate and make

computer usage a productive experience.

Computer usage has increased dramatically on campus since the center began operations in 1985, Parker said. In the UNC microcomputer labs, attendance has increased from 33,000 in 1985-86 to 130,000 in 1987-88.

Sherry Graham, director of user

support for the center, said the user support program tries to expand every year either by adding new labs in residence halls or enhancing the equipment already available. Since the program began, it has been successful every year in its expansion.

The user service, located in the Undergraduate Library, is available to help with problems one may encounter while using a computer, Parker said. User service deals with problems ranging from troubleshooting to selecting the computer best suited to an individual's needs, Parker said.

Because the center uses only Apple Macintosh and computers from the IBM family and compatibles, the user service staff may not be able to answer a question about a different type of computer — or the question may take longer to answer, Parker said.

But if no one is able to help, user service will find another contact through its resource and referral information, Parker added.

The user service also has software available for copying and for people who would like to try various kinds before making a purchase, Parker said.

The center also offers microcom-

puter labs with about 250 computers in different areas of campus including the libraries, Venable, Greenl Gardner and some of the residence halls. Parker said about 60,000 will occur in these labs.

The labs are free to use software is available for those don't bring their own, Parker said.

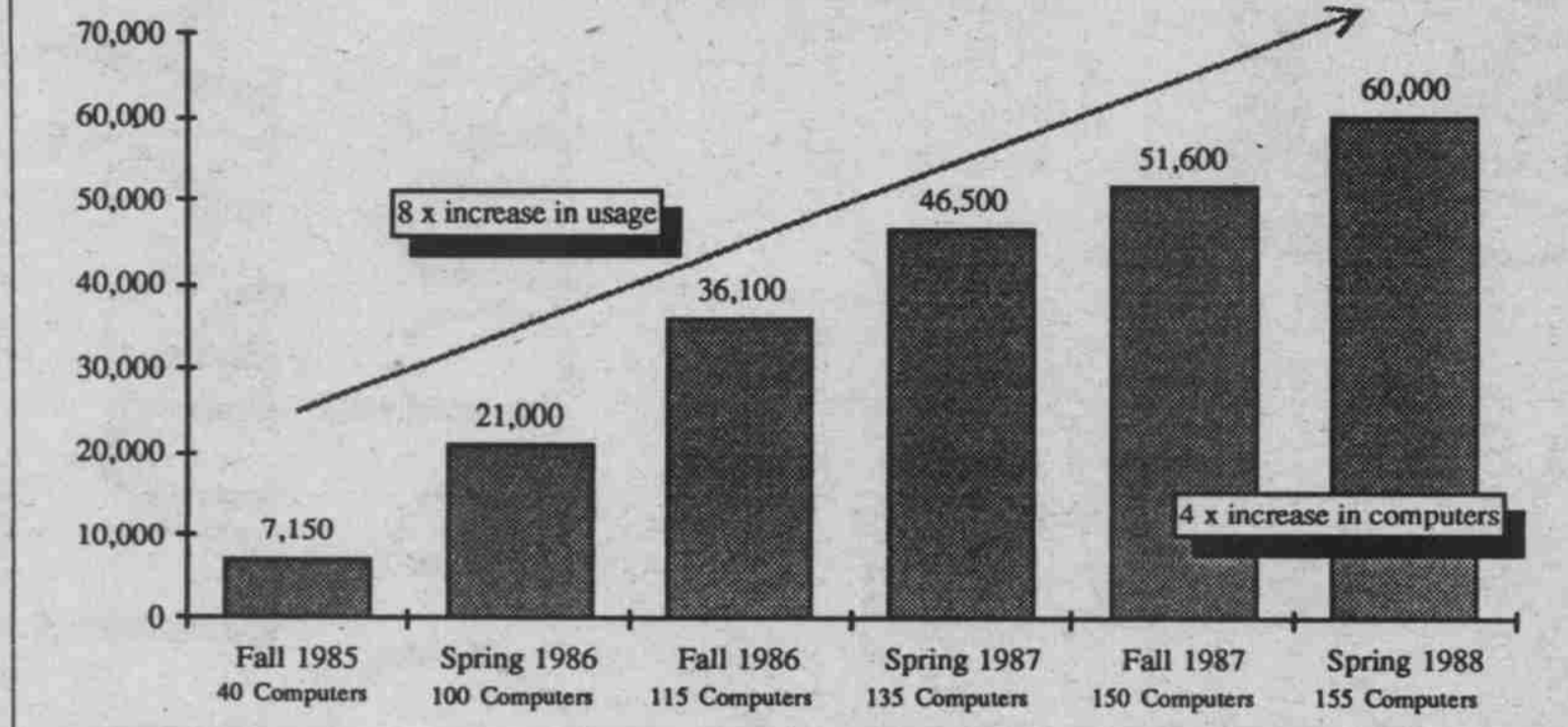
Lab assistants are stationed at different centers around campus, the exception of the residence halls to help people who are not familiar with computers or to with any problems that may arise while a student is typing a term paper or utilizing a computer for class work she said.

The support center also provides free training classes that can teach people how to write a term paper, do statistics or run data bases said.

Faculty members also benefit from the Microcomputer Support Center, Parker said. Instructional courses are available for faculty members who wish to learn how to integrate computers into classes or software work into labs.

Another branch of the Microcomputer Support Center is the research and evaluation group, Parker

Microcomputer Lab Usage by Semester
Excluding residence halls and IRSS



Computer system provides students with INFOrmation

By **WILL SPEARS**
Staff Writer

The INFO computer system gives UNC students and faculty members access to information about everything from campus sporting events and public lectures to phone numbers and club activities. With three locations — Davis Library, the Undergraduate Library and the Student Union — sponsors say INFO is fairly simple to use and is constantly improving itself.

INFO, sponsored by UNC's academic computing services department, is a traditional computer keyboard and monitor, and directions are listed on the computer terminals. A Dec Vax computer located in the basement of Phillips Hall is programmed with information for INFO.

INFO is the result of a collaboration of ideas between Stephanie Ahlschwede, Student Congress' Student Affairs Committee chairwoman, and Associate Provost John Harrison.

"I went home the summer after my freshman year and realized that I needed a better method of storing information," Ahlschwede said. "I had to have an infinite number of papers just to know what was going on around the campus. I wanted to find some way to combine all the necessary materials."

Ahlschwede took her idea to Harrison, who had already planned to start a computer system of departmental information to be used by UNC faculty and staff. Ahlschwede proposed that the system be expanded to include information to be used by students.

"The idea occurred to me out of my own inability to keep up with the thousands of papers across my desk," Harrison said. "I thought that, rather than use filing cabinets, it would be nice to have a place for people to find

"We're making new information available daily"
— Associate Provost John Harrison

information about sporting events, entertainment, club meetings and such."

However, with the addition of different kinds of information came an addition to the cost. Academic Computing Services funded the project.

INFO is working very well, but still needs improvements, said Judith Hallman, ACS manager of information services. "It's going well," she said, "but I wish it were going faster. I think that the calendar section is probably the most helpful. We would like to get more service information on it. The news section is weak. Eventually, we want to put press releases in there. Also, the keyboard is sometimes difficult to use."

Harrison agrees there are still some improvements to be made. "The system is improving as we go," he said. "We're making new information available daily. As students look at it more often it will become easier."

Other improvements to be made in the system include an increase in the number of terminals, said Ahlschwede. She is currently contacting campus groups to see what they would like to put in INFO about their organizations.

A similar computer system at N.C.

State University was the model for INFO. UNC students now have direct access to the NCSU system through INFO. "This is really handy," said Hallman. "If you have a date and aren't interested in what's going on at UNC, you can just go to INFO and check out the events at NCSU that night."

University Registrar David Lanier said he has printed his academic calendar in INFO. Lanier also said he uses the system to aid in the distribution of information. "INFO is not a replacement of distributing printed information, it is merely a supplement. So often when information is handed out, it winds up on the floor."

Associate Athletic Director Richard Baddour agrees that INFO will not replace the manual distribution of information. "The system is a complement, not a replacement," he said. "It is an additional resource. We would not consider it an alternative to passing out information."

INFO is as beneficial to the faculty as it is to the students, Lanier said. The system ensures that the faculty has access to information they may otherwise miss.

Future plans for INFO include adding bus and transportation schedules, phone listings and course schedules, Ahlschwede said.

"INFO would be very helpful for those who are unaware. It could be a valuable resource for them," said Gene Davis, Student Congress Rules and Judiciary Committee chairman. "Previously, if you wanted to become involved and express your ideas, you had to ask around to find anything out. Now you have this computer system with lists and descriptions of groups. Groups should really take advantage of this, because it's basically free advertising. With INFO, the student can easily find activities to interest him."

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