History of Statistics Interest Group Meeting Minutes

November 29, 2018

Attendees: Amanda, Wendy, Jeffrey, Beverly, Lee, Hans, Martha, John, Michael Cohen

We used the Adobe Connect software courtesy of Beverly. Some people had trouble getting their audio working. So, we used the Chat feature to conduct the meeting. Beverly emailed the chat transcript to Wendy, which is the basis for these notes.

The main goal for this meeting was to plan our allocated topic-contributed session for JSM 2019. In particular, we discussed the following list of ideas obtained from our JSM business meeting.

1. History of the US Census / History of Census (regardless of country)
2. Statistics versus Data Science - Long-standing debate that could be examined in depth
3. History of Price Indices. For example, after the US Civil War, a list of certain household items was used to create a price index.
4. How statisticians contributed during WWII
5. How is the history of statistics brought into the classroom? (This could be a joint session with the Stats Ed Section)
6. The history or motivation for key statistical processes, such as p-values, data visualization, etc.
7. Understanding of key test differences, such as Pearson and Fisher test differences. This is rarely acknowledged in the US.
8. A memorial session for a woman statistician
9. A session for women (or all statisticians) who have been missed for memorial sessions. Could be called "Missed Memorial Sessions"
10. Information on the history of statistics and general history background for non-stats people. This could include interesting facts such as how Gosset worked at Guinness, etc.
11. An oral history project with a major university - focus on stories by elderly statisticians and the memories they have
12. A session on firsts. This could include things like the first fellow, the first founder of the ASA, the first female statistics professor, the first time a statistics procedure was taught, etc.
13. Changing vocabulary - How statistic language has evolved over time from group to group, such as phrases used by statisticians versus those in computer science that mean the same thing or are the same concept. Could also involve the evolution of notation changes in the field.

In general, we wanted to have a session highlighting major milestones in statistics and how these can be used in the classroom. Besides the list above, we could also use some of the ideas and contributors to the revision of the Significance timeline that Amanda passed to the IG.

Jeffrey mentioned the ASA statement on p-values could be in the session. He also liked combining items 5, 6, and maybe 10.

We thought of having 3 speakers and two discussants talking about how this can be used in the classroom. Lee liked the idea and said he saw a similar panel last year from the Stat Ed section. That one focused on Intro Probability courses.

The title of our session is Snapshots in History: Statisticians Making an Impact

We just need a proposal by the deadline to get it in the system. This is our allocated session, so we don’t need a lot of detail.

John reminded us of the importance of keywords and should not be included in the title. Lee said keywords should include education and specific subjects of the talks.

We then talked about possible speakers. Martha said she has former professors who did a modern-day twist on Fisher’s tea tasting experiment. She is going to invite one of them.

Other possible speakers included

* Eliabeth Johnson (ETS offered the first AP statistics exam),
* Milo Schield (suggested by Hans). John said Milo does not teach in a liberal arts setting.
* Michael Cohen suggested we ask a historian
* Beverly agreed to give a talk. She has the classroom projects/materials she did with p-values and visualization
* Dominic Lusinchi suggested Neyman’s 1934 paper “On the two different aspects of the representative method: The method of stratified sampling and the method of purposive selection.”
* Beverly mentioned Michael Friendly, but Wendy was not sure he was going to attend JSM.
* Herb Weisberg wrote to the list with a lot of suggested changes to the timeline, and his book covers a lot. (suggested by Lee)
* Lee also mentioned Stephen Stigler. Wendy said he is already talking in a session.

Martha agreed to help Wendy organize the session. John asked for a list, which could be ranked by people.

Just for the future record. We did organize the topic-contributed session for JSM 2019. Here it is.

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| **Snapshots in History: Statisticians Making an Impact — Topic Contributed Papers**  |
| **History of Statistics Interest Group**, Section on Statistical Education  |
| *Organizer(s): Wendy L Martinez, Bureau of Labor Statistics*  |
| *Chair(s): Jeffrey Smith, U.S. Army Research Laboratory*  |
| 10:35 AM  | [Abraham DeMoivre: Progenitor of Statistics](https://ww2.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2019/onlineprogram/AbstractDetails.cfm?abstractid=304672) **Herbert Weisberg**  |  |  |
| 10:55 AM  | [Two Chapters in the Development of Human Population Sampling (1895/1934)](https://ww2.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2019/onlineprogram/AbstractDetails.cfm?abstractid=304998) **Dominic Lusinchi**  |  |  |
| 11:15 AM  | [Brewing Up Statistics: A look at Gosset’s contributions](https://ww2.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2019/onlineprogram/AbstractDetails.cfm?abstractid=306985) **Martha McRoy, Pew Research Center**  |  |  |
| 11:35 AM  | [Using Primary Historical Sources to Teach Statistics](https://ww2.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2019/onlineprogram/AbstractDetails.cfm?abstractid=304181) **Beverly Wood, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University**  |  |  |
| 11:55 AM  | [A One-Credit History of Statistics Course using “The Lady Tasting Tea” by David Salsburg with Supplementary Readings](https://ww2.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2019/onlineprogram/AbstractDetails.cfm?abstractid=304305) **Phyllis Curtiss, Grand Valley State University**; Kirk Anderson, Grand Valley State Univ  |  |  |