

# ***CHAPTER CHATTER***

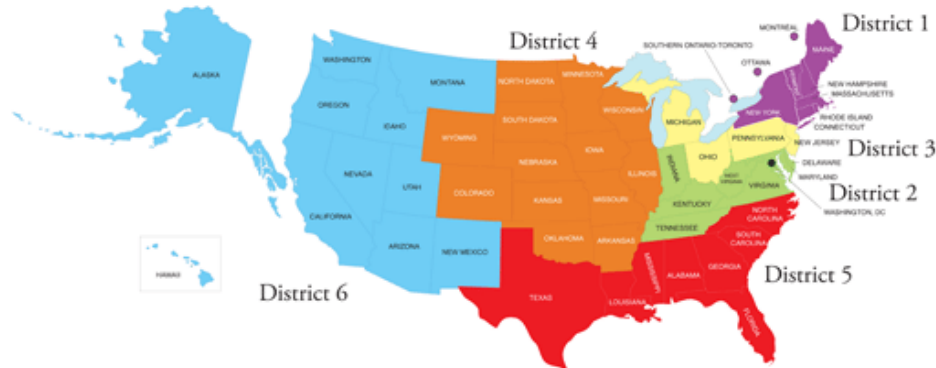
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James J. Cochran, Editor

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## A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Hello to all and welcome to the autumn 2011 issue of *Chapter Chatter*, the newsletter for and about ASA chapters. The COCGB established this publication to foster improved communications i) between the COCGB and chapters and ii) among chapters by providing a forum for spreading news throughout the statistics community about ASA chapter initiatives and activities.

This issue features an interview with ASA President-Elect Bob Rodriguez, who spent time with me during the recent JSM discussing several initiatives the ASA is undertaking during his upcoming presidency and how these initiatives and chapters can support each other. The issue also includes reports on several activities of the 2011 JSM in Miami Beach, including the August 2011 COCGB meeting. You will also find additional information from

ASA Director of Science Policy Steve Pierson on the ASA's Statistical Literacy initiative. Finally, several chapters have checked in with interesting reports on recent and upcoming activities.

As always, please let me know if you have any suggestions about this newsletter (its content, format, distribution, etc.). I am also interested in suggestions on how to facilitate more effective communication between chapters and enable you to use the COCGB as a resource. Finally, please send me information about guest speakers, short courses and seminars, symposia, and other exciting events that are planned for by your chapter so that I can inform other chapters about your activities through this newsletter.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Chapter Chatter*.

## INTERVIEW WITH ASA PRESIDENT-ELECT BOB RODRIGUEZ

In addition to his role as Senior Director of Statistical R&D at SAS, Robert N. Rodriguez currently serves as the President-Elect of the ASA. During the 2011 JSM I asked Bob to reflect on ASA chapters as he prepares to serve as President in 2012.

JC: Good morning, Bob, and thank you for spending some time with me to discuss ASA chapters.

BR: I am very happy to do so and appreciate this opportunity, Jim.

JC: What is your perception of the state of ASA chapters?

BR: Overall, our chapters are doing well. The great majority are very active, and several that have been less so in recent years are now rebuilding. Visiting chapters is one of the most enjoyable aspects of my work as president-elect, and during the past 18 months I have given presentations to the San Diego and Sacramento chapters and the Washington Statistical Society. I leave on August 31 to visit the Alaska chapter, and I will visit the Pittsburgh, Mid-Michigan and North

Texas chapters in the fall. Next year, as president, I hope to continue connecting with chapters, and I would particularly welcome the opportunity to visit and encourage chapters that are reinvigorating themselves.



ASA President-Elect Bob Rodriguez (left) during an interview with *Chapter Chatter* Editor Jim Cochran

JC: Prior to your election as the 2012 ASA President, what experiences did you have with ASA chapters?

BR: Early in my career I served as secretary of the North Carolina chapter and later as representative to the Council of Chapters. In the process of serving the chapter and other ASA groups, I met outstanding people who helped me grow as a professional statistician.

JC: At the recent Joint Statistical Meetings in Miami Beach you spoke to many groups, including the Council of Chapters, about initiatives you will pursue during your ASA presidency. What role or roles can chapters play in these initiatives and how can chapters help you achieve your goals as ASA president in 2012?

BR: I will highlight three initiatives that are especially relevant to chapters. The first is the formation of a steering committee for the celebration of ASA's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014. Christy Chuang-Stein is chairing this committee, which is the central point for planning and coordinating activities related to this important anniversary. Chapters and other ASA groups will be an integral part of these activities and should expect to hear more from the committee in the coming months.

In the meantime, I hope that chapters will encourage their members to contribute to the ASA's Reverse Time Capsule (<https://www.amstat.org/memberson>

[ly/](#)) with individual forecasts concerning what our association will look like in the year 2039, the 200th anniversary of the ASA. This kickoff activity provides a way to build early interest in the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Note that members submitting the most accurate forecasts—to be determined in 2039—will be rewarded with lifetime ASA memberships!

The second initiative is the Career Success Factors Workgroup, chaired by Bob Starbuck. This workgroup will be recommending ways for the ASA to help statisticians develop non-technical skills (such as effective presentation and writing skills) which they need to succeed in their careers. Perhaps this type of training could be delivered in the form of seminars or workshops around the country, and chapters would be natural hosts for these events.

The third initiative is the Inreach Workgroup, chaired by Jeri Mulrow, whose goal is to equip significant numbers of our members to communicate effectively with other

members about the most strategic accomplishments of our association—things that all of us should know about. Examples include the following:

- STATtr@k (<http://stattrak.amstat.org/>), a website with career information and resources for young professional statisticians
- *Significance* ([http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1740-9713](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1740-9713)), a statistical outreach magazine, which is a new member benefit
- ASA's professional accreditation program (<http://www.amstat.org/accreditation/index.cfm>)
- the inaugural Conference on Statistical Practice (<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/csp/2012/index.cfm>) to be held in February 2012 in Orlando.

The Inreach Workgroup will develop attractive presentation materials that chapters and other groups can download and customize for use at their meetings.

All three initiatives are at an early

stage, but I encourage chapter officers interested in learning more about them to contact Christy ([christy.j.chuang-stein@pfizer.com](mailto:christy.j.chuang-stein@pfizer.com)), Bob ([RRS49@nc.rr.com](mailto:RRS49@nc.rr.com)), or Jeri ([jmulrow@nsf.gov](mailto:jmulrow@nsf.gov)).

JC: What message would you like to deliver to members of ASA chapters?

BR: Our association is moving forward with many activities that not only deliver added value to members, but amplify the voice of our profession. I hope chapters will spread this message, both to inform and to involve members. While public policy statements by ASA presidents are important, it is grassroots advocacy by members that has the greatest potential impact.

An outstanding example is the way in which chapters supported our Statistical Literacy Grassroots Campaign (<http://www.amstat.org/outreach/statliteracy/>) and specifically the STAT Acts of 2010 and 2011. Last year, in response to a request from ASA Director of Science Policy Steve Pierson, several chapters arranged

meetings with members of Congress from their districts. These visits raised awareness of statistics and successfully enlisted cosponsors for the bills. I am excited about what

our chapters are doing and capable of doing, and I look forward to meeting many more chapter members in 2012.

## **COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS HOLDS ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AT 2011 JSM IN MIAMI BEACH**

The COC held its annual business meeting on Tuesday, August 2 at the Loews Miami Beach Hotel in conjunction with the 2011 Joint Statistical Meetings in Miami Beach, Florida. Because Kathy Morrissey Chair-Elect of the COCGB, was ill and unable to attend the meeting, Shane Reese called the meeting to order at 8.30 am. Shane reported that Kathy was unable to attend the meeting due to a temporary health reason and she sent her greetings to the COC.

After approval of the minutes from the COCGB annual winter business meeting

of February 25, 2011 which was held at the ASA headquarters in Arlington, VA, Shane called the meeting to order and announced the COC election results:

- Daniel Kasprzyk, Chair-Elect 2012
- Marianne E. Messina, VC, Region 1, District 1
- Alex Cambon, VC, Region 1, District 2
- Nicholas Horton, COC Rep. to the Board 2012-14

Shane also announced that the COC Nominations Committee is fully formed.

## **COCGB OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS TO THE COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS GOVERNING BOARD**

### **COCGB Communications Officer Jim Cochran's Report**

COCGB Communications Officer Jim Cochran reported that:

- two issues the *Chapter Chatter* have been published and are available on the ASA website;
- he initially had trouble getting well

written reports from chapters, but chapters are now participating eagerly. Jim surmised the problem was awareness of the newsletter; and

- the next issue of *Chapter Chatter* (autumn 2011) will be published soon.

Jim also requested that Chapter Representative put him on the distribution list for their chapter newsletters, asked that chapter officers continue to send him reports for the spring 2012 issue of *Chapter Chatter*, and he explained that he is exploring the ways of better distributing the *Chapter Chatter* to the broader membership.

### **COCGB Chapter Status Committee's Report**

Chapter Board Representative David Marker of the Chapter Status Committee reported that:

- Bonnie Lafleur will take over the chair responsibility from David Marker in 2012;
- Statisticians in Nebraska successfully have revived the Nebraska chapter; and
- the COCGB will contact the statisticians from regions represented

by struggling chapters to encourage members of those chapters to follow the Nebraska chapter's example.

### **ASA Board Activities**

COC Board Representative David Marker reported that:

- the ASA and other leading international statistical organizations plan to declare the year 2013 as the International Year of Statistics;
- the ASA is proceeding with its plans to celebrate the association's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary from the 2013 Joint Statistical Meetings in Montréal through the 2014 Joint Statistical Meetings in Boston; and
- the ASA will soon begin considering Member Initiative proposals for 2012, which are a way to ask the ASA for funds to develop unique programs that other chapters can duplicate. The Board favors initiatives that can also be submitted for more funding from other funding agencies, and a list of proposals approved by the Board is available online (<http://www.amstat.org/about/MemberInitiativesInstructions.cfm>).

## **COC PAST CHAIR V. A. SAMARANAYAKE PRESENTS 2011 CHAPTER SERVICE RECOGNITION AND COC SERVICE AWARDS**

COC Past Chair Sam Samaranayake distributed the 2011 Chapter Service Recognition Awards awards. The following members were recognized for their distinguished service to ASA chapters:

- Stephen F. Bingham, Delaware Chapter
- Dean Fearn, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
- Gilbert W. Fellingham, Utah Chapter
- David A. Fluharty, Detroit Chapter
- Nels Grevstad, Colorado/Wyoming Chapter
- Nicholas J. Horton, Boston Chapter
- Richard C. Kaste, Chesapeake Chapter
- Anamaria Kazanis, Ann Arbor Chapter
- Carolyn Oakley, San Antonio Chapter
- Laura Morris, Albany Chapter
- Melvin Munsaka, Northeastern Illinois Chapter
- Page C. Moore, Central Arkansas Chapter
- Theresa L. Utlaut, Oregon Chapter
- Joanne Wendelberger, Albuquerque Chapter.

## **ASA PRESIDENT GELLER AND PRESIDENT-ELECT RODRIGUEZ ADDRESS THE COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS**

Nancy Geller, President of the ASA, spoke to the COC during its 2011 annual meeting. Nancy expressed her appreciation for the work of the chapters and council members. She also offered to assist chapters with their ongoing efforts.

Bob Rodriguez, President –Elect of the ASA, reported that he has established the following four initiatives:

- I. the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Steering Committee
- II. the 2012 Education Workgroup
- III. the Career Success Factors Workgroup
- IV. the Inreach Workgroup

To learn more about Bob's plans for these initiatives, read [Interview with ASA President-Elect Bob Rodriguez](#) earlier in this issue of ***Chapter Chatter***.

## ASA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RON WASSERSTEIN SPEAKS TO THE COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS

Ron Wasserstein, Executive Director of the ASA, reported that the 2012 election candidates for President are Stephanie Shipp and Nat Schenker, and the 2012 candidates for Vice President are Roxy Peck and Jim Rosenberger.

Ron then requested help from the COC for enlisting members to serve as candidates for the 2013 election. In accordance with ASA policy, the 2013 the candidates for President will be selected from the industry sector and the candidates for Vice President will be selected from the government sector.

Ron also reminded everyone that

- the *StatTr@k* website is now available;
- the Conference on Statistical Practice (<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/csp/2012/index.cfm>) will be held in February 2012;
- the ASA and a few other international statistical organizations are planning to declare the year 2013 as the International Year of Statistics;
- the *Statistical Significance* webpage (<http://www.amstat.org/outreach/statsig.cfm>) has ongoing updates.

Ron concluded by thanking members of the Council of Chapters for their valuable contributions to the ASA

## ASA DIRECTOR OF SCIENCE POLICY STEVE PIERSON ADDRESSES THE COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS GOVERNING BOARD

Steve Pierson, ASA Director of Science Policy, explained that one of his charges as Director of Science Policy is to raise the profile of the statistics profession in policy making. He then asked Chapter Representatives to:

- alert him if he/the ASA can assist with state policy issues;

- join the grass root campaign to change policy to make sure the teachers are trained to teach statistics and to include statistics in the “No Child Left Behind Bill” reauthorization (see [\*Is Your Congressperson Engaged On Statistical Literacy? Are You Looking For A Worthwhile Activity For Your Chapter?\*](#) later in this

issue of *Chapter Chatter* for more information); and

- show enthusiasm about statistics education.

Steve also reiterated that he appreciated the support from chapters

(which he characterized as is vital), and invited all to contact him at [pierson@amstat.org](mailto:pierson@amstat.org) or (703) 302-1841 to discuss any ideas on how chapters can support the ASA's efforts to raise the profile of the statistics profession in policy making.

## **ASA MEMBERS EVALUATE APPLICATIONS OF STATISTICS AT THE 2011 INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR**

Teri Utlaut reported on the ASA's involvement in the annual International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) conducted by the Society for Science & the Public ([www.societyforscience.org/](http://www.societyforscience.org/)). She explained the process of ISEF judging and reported that the 2012 fair will be held in Pittsburgh, PA. She also reiterated that the ISEF will rotate between Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and Phoenix from 2011 through 2019, and Teri requested that COC members get involved in the local science fairs that produce the finalists.

Teri explained that the need for volunteers is acute; approximately

fifteen hundred students participate each year, and the ASA gives awards for the best use of statistics in these student projects. Teri noted that because statistics is not a separate category in this competition, the judges must review *all* projects quickly to select top one hundred projects in terms of the statistics use during the first day of judging.

Harold Dyck reported that the Southern California chapter (under the leadership of Rodney Jee) organized the judging in 2011. Harold also reported about the activities and the chapter's positive experience with the fair.

## **ASA MAKES PLANS FOR 2012 TRAVELING COURSES**

Traveling Course Committee Chair Glenn White explained the procedure of the selection and allocation of short

courses, the responsibilities of the ASA and the chapters, and the financial commitment of the chapters. Glenn also

reported the titles of 2011 short courses, discussed which chapters received the opportunity to offer short courses, provided a brief review of short courses offered from 2008 to 2011, and gave an update of this initiative's budget.

Glenn concluded by reminding COC meeting attendees that the ASA makes the honorarium and travel arrangements for a presenter, the host chapter is responsible for local arrangements, and the cost of a short course for host chapters is \$25 per person (with a

minimum \$500 payment to the ASA). Finally, Glenn reminded all that the deadline for applications by chapters to host short courses is January 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in question (but exceptions may be made pending availability of the short course instructor), the available courses for 2012 and names of the presenters will be announced by December 2011. For more information about ASA Short Courses, please see the article [Information on Council of Chapters Traveling Courses](#) later in this issue of *Chapter Chatter*.

## **IS YOUR CONGRESSPERSON ENGAGED ON STATISTICAL LITERACY? ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A WORTHWHILE ACTIVITY FOR YOUR CHAPTER?**

The COCGB asks your chapter to meet with your U.S. Representative(s) to ask them to sponsor the STAT Act, a bill that promotes statistics education through teacher professional development. Meeting with your Congressperson and/or her/his staff is an excellent opportunity to share your enthusiasm for statistics education and introduce the local statistical community. ASA will

assist you with requesting the meeting and preparing for the meeting. ASA will also provide you with materials for the meeting. Sign up at <http://www.amstat.org/outreach/statliteracy/index.cfm> and contact ASA Director of Science Policy Steve Pierson at [pierson@amstat.org](mailto:pierson@amstat.org) or (703) 302-1841 for more information or to discuss this issue in more detail.

## **COC HOLDS WORKSHOP AND RECEPTION AT 2011 JSM IN MIAMI BEACH**

Shane Reese, Chair-Elect of the COC, chaired the COC workshop and reception on August 3. In Shane's words, the objective of this workshop was to answer the frequent question, "What does the ASA do for me?"

The workshop provided participants with opportunities to network with officers from other chapters, find out about other chapters' successful initiatives, and learn from seasoned and experienced chapter officers.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION ON COC TRAVELING COURSES**

The Council of Chapters Traveling Courses provides low cost, local courses for ASA Chapters. The Council of Chapters sponsors this activity by covering speaker travel expenses, speaker honoraria, and course materials. Chapters in turn cover advertising, local arrangements including hotel and local travel and registration with \$25 for each attendee or \$500 minimum, whichever is larger, returned to the ASA.

The Traveling Course committee is made up of at least one member of each of the six Chapter Districts and ASA staff liaisons. The Travel Course committee meets once a year at the JSM to review the current year course activities and discuss course offerings

for the next calendar year. Committee members confirm/secure speakers resulting from the JSM committee meeting as timely as possible.

Once the courses and speakers are confirmed, an announcement with the upcoming courses, course abstracts and applications are distributed via e-mail to all Chapters. This announcement is typically in the Fall with applications due back to ASA by the end of the year or January.

The Committee Chair, in consultation with ASA, awards courses to Chapters and works with the speakers and Chapters to select dates for each course. Each course is typically given more than once in one trip by the

speaker. The courses are awarded according to geographical proximity to keep travel cost low, with special

consideration given to smaller Chapters and Chapters that have not had a traveling course recently.

## CHAPTER REPORTS

### **New Jersey Chapter Report**

The New Jersey chapter of the ASA, in partnership with the Department of Biostatistics at UMDNJ, held its 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Spring Symposium in June. This year's symposium revolved around Bayesian and Frequentist Adaptive Designs in Clinical Trials. Over 70 people from industry and academia attended informative talks by Scott Evans (Harvard), Scott Berry (Berry Consultants), Gene Pennello (FDA), and Qing Lu (Johnson & Johnson). In addition, Ram Kamath (Vsoft Infoware) demonstrated a randomization software with capabilities of implementing eDC, ePRO, IVRS/IWRS, and design adaptations useful in clinical trials.

### **Bay Area Chapter Report**

ASA President Nancy Geller gave the seminar *Confirmatory Clinical Trial Designs for Biomarkers* for the chapter on September 15. Nancy's presentation on the proposed use of randomized clinical trials to confirm the validity of a

biomarker as predictive of response to therapy, which she gave after a reception at Genomic Health, Inc. in Redwood City, was well received.

The Bay Area Chapter also inaugurated a two day workshop for Bay Area AP Statistics teachers. The course was held August 11 -12 at Carlmont High School in Belmont. The chapter kept the registration fee to \$50, enabling some teachers to attend who otherwise likely would not have been able.

Feedback was very positive and our Chapter is planning to hold a workshop in Summer 2012. The chapter thanks Allan Rossman and Beth Chance from Cal Poly (who gave lectures for the short course) and Michael Posner (who recruited Allan and Beth).

### **Colorado/Wyoming Chapter Report**

The Colorado/Wyoming Chapter boasts about 200 members from Denver, Boulder, Fort Collins, and Cheyenne, among other localities. Members

represent a wide range of interests including biostatistics, computing, geostatistics/climatology, business, economics, and marketing, as well as various industries such as manufacturing and pharmaceuticals.



Ben Dyhr discusses his research on random walks at the Annual Fall Colorado/Wyoming Chapter Meeting

The chapter holds semiannual meetings in spring and fall. The Annual Spring Meeting is a half-day affair consisting of 8-10 talks and is held at the National Center for Atmospheric Research outside of Boulder in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

Attendees enjoyed spectacular views

from NCAR, and the more adventurous take excursions into the foothills along hiking trails during lunch. The Annual Fall Meeting is a smaller event featuring 5-6 speakers and is held at the University of Colorado's Anschutz Medical Campus.

The chapter is also active in the community. It sends judges to the annual Colorado Science and Engineering Fair and offers awards to entries for which statistical methods play an important role. It also offers its Maurice Davies award, named after one of its founding members, to a small number of outstanding undergraduate students of statistics each year. Chapter members also participated in the recent drive to garner support for the ASA's Statistics Literacy Campaign and the U.S. Congress's STAT Act by visiting three of Colorado's U.S. representatives.

In addition to the upcoming spring and fall meetings, the chapter will be hosting a travelling short course on Monte Carlo simulation with Zachary Skrivanek this fall. Overall, the Colorado/Wyoming Chapter is alive and well and the future looks bright for its members!

## COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS GOVERNING BOARD (COCGB)

### **Chair (2011)**

Kathleen Morrissey  
29 N. Wacker Dr. #701  
Chicago, IL 60606, United States  
(312) 212-3144  
[kmorrissey@strategy2market.com](mailto:kmorrissey@strategy2market.com)

### **Past-Chair (2011)**

V. A. Samaranayake  
Missouri University of Science and  
Technology  
Department of Mathematics and  
Statistics  
400 West 12th Street  
Rolla, MO 65409-0020, United States  
(573) 341-4658  
[vsam@mst.edu](mailto:vsam@mst.edu)

### **Chair-Elect (2011)**

C. Shane Reese  
Brigham Young University  
Department of Statistics 230 TMCB  
Provo, UT 84602, United States  
(801) 422-9250  
[reese@stat.byu.edu](mailto:reese@stat.byu.edu)

### **Vice-Chair, District 1 (2009-2011)**

Nicholas J. Horton  
Smith College  
Clark Science Center  
44 College Lane  
Northampton, MA 01063-0001, United  
States  
(413) 585-3688  
[nhorton@smith.edu](mailto:nhorton@smith.edu)

### **Vice-Chair, District 2 (2006-2011)**

Glenn D. White  
Ernst & Young LLP  
12701 Live Oak Court  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-5217,  
United States  
(202) 327-6414  
[glenn.white@ey.com](mailto:glenn.white@ey.com)

### **Vice-Chair, District 3 (2010-2012)**

Delray J. Schultz  
Millersville University  
7 Lark Lane  
Lancaster, PA 17603, United States  
(717) 872-3535  
[dschultz@millersville.edu](mailto:dschultz@millersville.edu)

### **Vice-Chair, District 4 (2010-2012)**

Morteza Marzjarani  
Saginaw Valley State University  
Computer Science Department  
7400 Bay Road  
University Center, MI 48710-0001,  
United States  
(989) 964-4341  
[marzjara@svsu.edu](mailto:marzjara@svsu.edu)

### **Vice-Chair, District 5 (2011-2013)**

Scott J. Richter  
University of North Carolina at  
Greensboro  
107 Petty Building PO Box 26170  
Greensboro, NC 27402, United States  
(336) 256-1123  
[scott\\_richter@uncg.edu](mailto:scott_richter@uncg.edu)

**Vice-Chair, District 6 (2011-2013)**  
Daniel R. Jeske  
University of California Department of  
Statistics  
900 University Ave Room 1340 Olmsted  
Hall  
Riverside, CA 92521, United States  
(951) 827-3014  
[daniel.jeske@ucr.edu](mailto:daniel.jeske@ucr.edu)

**Board Representative (2011-2013)**  
Bonnie LaFleur  
University of Arizona  
1295 N. Martin PO Box 245211  
Room A242  
Tucson, AZ 85724, United States  
Phone: (520) 626-1393  
[blafleur@email.arizona.edu](mailto:blafleur@email.arizona.edu)

**Board Representative (2009-2011)**  
David A. Marker  
Westat  
1600 Research Blvd  
Rockville, MD 20850-3195, United  
States  
(301) 251-4398  
[davidmarker@westat.com](mailto:davidmarker@westat.com)

**Board Representative (2010-2012)**  
Thomas H. Short  
John Carroll University  
Dept of Mathematics & Computer  
Science  
20700 North Park Blvd  
University Heights, OH 44118, United  
States  
(216) 397-1626  
[tshort@jcu.edu](mailto:tshort@jcu.edu)

**Secretary/Treasurer (2010-2012)**  
Ananda A. Jayawardhana  
Pittsburg State University  
1701 South Broadway  
Pittsburg, KS 66762, United States  
(620) 235-4414  
[ananda@pittstate.edu](mailto:ananda@pittstate.edu)

**Communications Officer (2010-2012)**  
James J. Cochran  
Louisiana Tech University  
College of Business  
P. O. Box 10318  
Ruston, LA 71272, United States  
(318) 257-3445  
[jcochran@LaTech.edu](mailto:jcochran@LaTech.edu)