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## Message from the Section Chair: New Survey Research Mentoring Program Announced

Howard Hogan

At the Vancouver JSM business meeting, the section discussed starting a mentoring program for survey researchers. The proposal was enthusiastically supported and we are now proceeding to set up the mechanics.



What is mentoring in our context? It is an honest effort by the mentor to help the protégé understand our profession and advance in his/her career. It may be pointing out professional resources in the statistical field. It may be helping the protégé navigate the process on a first refereed article. It may be pointing out other opportunities for career advancement. It may be helping the protégé get the most out of JSM. The key is an honest effort to help the protégé. What is not allowed is self-serving advice, such as using the relationship to recruit the protégé to the mentor's organization.

The basic program is quite simple. Members of our section can request a mentor, volunteer to be a mentor, or both. Each person requesting a mentor, i.e. each protégé, will be paired up with two or three potential mentors. After a telephone chat between potential pairs (initiated by the potential protégé), the protégé would report back to the mentoring program team, who will make the final assignments.

We would expect the relationship to start at the beginning of the calendar year. We would encourage telephone chats at least monthly for the first few months. We would want the pair to meet at the August JSM and share a “Dutch treat” lunch. The formal relationship would last at least through next winter, but we would encourage a follow up lunch at the next JSM just to see how things worked out. Being good statisticians, we will have an evaluation at the end of the first cycle. This would end the “formal” process, but of course the pair could continue the relationship on their own.

In pairing up potential mentor/ protégé links, we would consider the following criteria:

- Affiliation (Academic, government, industry, other)
- Degree & field of degree
- Male/Female
- Research field: mathematical, design & management, cognitive & testing
- Years in profession
- Geography

We cannot guarantee a suitable match. We will do our best.

We have set up a team comprised of me, Brady West (Michigan), MoonJung Cho and Daniell Toth (both of BLS). We have also set up an e-mail box:

[Srms.mentoring@gmail.com](mailto:Srms.mentoring@gmail.com)

If you are interested in “being a mentor” or “having a mentor” or “both”, send us a message with those phrases in the title by **March 1, 2011**.

Include the following:

- Name
- Agency or company you work for
- Affiliation (academic, government, industry, other)
- Your position in the agency or company
- Work telephone number
- Work mailing address
- Work email address,
- Degree & field of degree
- Male/Female
- Research field: mathematical, design & management, cognitive & testing.
- Years in profession

Potential mentors should also indicate whether they are willing to mentor 1, 2 or 3 protégés. We will get things started. We will point to further resources and guidance at that time. However, please be patient. We are just starting out and there will be glitches and refinement.

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## Report from the Education Officer

Mike Larsen



The ASA SRMS/AAPOR webinar series continues.

On Tuesday, November 30, 1-3pm Eastern, Michael Link of the Center of Excellence at The Nielsen Company presented on "Address Based Sampling: What Do We Know So Far?".

Details and registration links can be found on the website:

<http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/webinar.cfm>.

On Tuesday, February 8, 1-3pm Eastern, Safaa Amer of NORC will present an outreach webinar, "Introduction to Sampling for Non-Statisticians". We hope to attract a large audience from journalists, policy makers, educators who teach in high school and college, and other researchers who use or encounter sample surveys.

The ASA SRMS submitted five applications for continuing education courses for JSM 2011 in Miami Beach. We should learn the results of the competition for slots in January.

The submitted courses are

1. Deborah Griffin and Alfredo Navarro, U.S. Census Bureau, "The American Community Survey," full day
2. Jae-kwang Kim and Wayne Fuller, Iowa State University, "Advanced Sampling," full day
3. Safaa Amer, NORC, "Introduction to Applied Sampling for Statisticians," half day
4. Paul Lavrakas, "Incentives in Surveys," half day
5. Steve Thompson, Simon Fraser University, "Adaptive and Network Sampling," full day.

At Vancouver in 2010, the ASA SRMS had two CE courses that brought in \$1,419.87 for the section.

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## Report from the Council of Sections Representatives

Rachel Harter and Tony An



As we reported at the business meeting in August, the formula for allocating invited JSM sessions to sections has been approved for 2011 and 2012. The formula takes into account the number of section sessions at JSM, the number of section members, and the section attendance at JSM. Posters do count in the allocation, with 5 posters counting as one session. The number of guaranteed invited sessions will be

capped at 4, one fewer than we have had in the recent past. SRMS members' attendance at JSM in recent years are shown in the table below (the number for JSM 2010 in Vancouver is not yet available).

SRMS Section Member Attendance Ranking at JSM in Recent Years

<b>JSM</b>	<b>Ranking Among 24 ASA Sections</b>	<b>Number of SRMS Attendees</b>
Washington DC, 2009	4	515
Denver, 2008	6	382
Salt Lake City, 2007	8	356
Seattle, 2006	8	446

Source: <http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/SectionAttendanceJSM.pdf>

For more information about the invited session allocation formula, see <http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/InvitedSessionAllocationFormula.pdf>.

We received the following announcement from ASA's Stephen Porzio, which was passed on to section membership in the fall:

ASA members are invited each year to submit proposals for initiatives that support the Association's mission. In the past, we have funded initiatives with wide-ranging emphases, from reaching out to the K-12 system to enhancing technological access for chapters and sections to increasing diversity in our profession. The 2011 ASA budget again includes funding to support these Member Initiatives. We hope you will consider participating in this activity and will think of a project that has the potential to contribute to the advancement of the association.

If you plan to submit a proposal, please do so no later than February 1, 2011. For more information about how to submit a proposal and a list of proposals funded in prior years, please see <http://www.amstat.org/about/index.cfm?fuseaction=memberinitiatives>

If you do submit a proposal, your section officers would be pleased to know about it.

Also note that the section can submit a proposal. If you have an idea and would like the section to take the initiative, please let your section officers know as well.

Even you do not think you have time to draft a proposal for 2011 funding, you may consider a proposal for a future year, such as 2012. "Member Initiatives" are an ongoing project.

We are in the process of updating our section charter to include Education Officer in our section officer list, in addition to the other changes recommended by the executive committee in 2010. The updated charter is scheduled for a vote by section members in 2011.

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## Report from the JSM 2011 Program Chair: Many Ways to Participate in the 2011 JSM

Paul Beatty



Preparations are already well underway for JSM 2011 to be held in Miami, Florida! We have already completed arrangements for four invited sessions on the program, which will bring together speakers reporting up-to-date research on paradata, total survey error, administrative data, and Bayesian modeling. But this is only the beginning of the process of putting together rich content for our 2011 program.

We are now accepting proposals for topic contributed sessions, including paper, panel, and poster sessions. Topic contributed paper sessions bring together five presentations on a common theme, and allow presenters 20 minutes as opposed to the typical 15 minutes. Topic contributed panels bring three to five presenters for a 110-minute discussion on a particular topic. Similarly, topic contributed posters can bring together a cluster of posters organized around a common theme.

If interested, please send me an email ([pbeatty@cdc.gov](mailto:pbeatty@cdc.gov)) as soon as possible to discuss potential topics and proposed speakers. All abstracts for topic contributed must be entered by February 1, 2011, and the sessions must be approved prior to that date.

Proposals for individual contributed papers and posters are also being accepted at this time. The deadline for submission is February 1 for these contributions as well. One advantage for poster submissions is that presenters will be entered into the Section's Poster Competition, now entering its four year, with cash prizes for the best entries.

Roundtable discussions are another way to be involved and to generate discussions with attendees who share similar interests. The responsibilities of roundtable leaders are fairly moderate: you should be willing to provide some background on the topic, bring a few key discussion points, and lightly moderate the ensuing discussion. Leading a roundtable does not preclude additional involvement in the conference. Proposals for roundtables should be submitted to Mike Larsen ([mlarsen@bsc.gwu.edu](mailto:mlarsen@bsc.gwu.edu)).

Also, we are always in need of volunteers to chair contributed sessions. The responsibilities are modest, but it is a needed service and a nice way to be a part of the program. If you are planning to attend and would be willing to serve, please send me an email.

In short, there are many ways to contribute to the content of the 2011 JSM. We hope to hear from many of you, and to see you in Miami in August!

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## Two Decades of Survey Methods Research Pay Off for the Census

Roderick Little

Associate Director for Research and Methodology, Bureau of the Census,  
Richard D. Remington Collegiate Professor of Biostatistics, University of Michigan

Government statistical agencies face challenging problems in meeting their missions in the modern world. To address these problems, the U.S. Census Bureau, under the leadership of Robert Groves, is forming a new Research & Methodology Directorate. As its first director, I'd like to describe for you some of the goals of this exciting venture.

The mission of government statistical agencies is to produce relevant, timely and credible statistics about key social and economic phenomena. Statistical agencies face increased demand for data products, and the questions asked by our society are becoming increasingly complex and hard to measure.

On the other hand, individuals and organizations are less willing to respond to requests for information, voluntary or not. Surveys and censuses are expensive and challenging to mount. Combining information from a variety of data sources is attractive in principle, but difficult in practice. Disseminating information for small areas is subject to the dangers from disclosure of confidential information from respondents.

In short, the standard statistical approach of taking a random sample of the target population and weighting the results up to the population no longer meets our needs.

The United States has just conducted a census, and early evidence suggests that it was successful. However, the traditional design of the census is increasingly being questioned because of difficulties in finding mobile populations, non-traditional families, rapidly changing dwelling structures, increased use of internet over "snail mail", the expense of personal interviews, and the difficulty of including people who are hard to reach or reluctant to participate. New technology offers new data collection tools, and administrative records offer promise, but how should they be used? How can the quality of census results be measured?

The world of survey methods is also changing. Participation rates are declining, costs are rising, and true (fully-measured) probability samples are an admirable but unrealistic goal. New technology offers new data collection tools, but deploying them in an optimal way is tricky. The traditional survey should be increasingly seen as one of an array of data sources, including administrative records and other information gleaned from cyberspace. Tying this information together to yield cost-effective and reliable estimates is not simple, and requires modern statistical analysis tools.

Meeting these challenges requires innovation; successful innovation requires scientific methods, with controlled comparisons of alternative approaches, sophisticated and creative cognitive research, economic and statistical modeling. In short, the Census Bureau needs a strong research directorate to remain relevant to the U.S. society.

The heart of the R & M Directorate is five centers, focused on economic studies, statistical research and methodology, survey measurement, disclosure avoidance, and administrative record research and applications. The twin goals of the directorate will be (a) excellent peer-reviewed methods research, aimed at finding generalizable knowledge that has application to government statistics, and (b) collaborative research with the other directorates and external researchers to solve key agency problems and move ideas from conception to production. Researchers need to bridge across the various directorates, allowing a solution discovered in one area to be applicable in others, and create real innovation within practical work processes, solving economic and social measurement problems. To be sustainable as an enterprise resource, the Research Directorate must be a valuable and valued partner to program areas.

R&M will research process innovations to free up resources, such as better use of technology to improve efficiency/quality of data capture, editing, imputation and dissemination, and will work with program areas to discover, refine and implement process innovations. Resources saved through successful implementation are then available to apply towards the production of new data products and processes.

We also envisage more collaborative research with outside academic institutions, in conjunction with increased development of the Census Research Data Centers. As a first step, the recently-announced NSF/Census Research Network will fund 8 to 12 interdisciplinary academic research proposals to the amount of \$18.5 million over the next five years. Deadline for submissions is February 16, 2011.

It is an exciting time to be a statistician, and I feel privileged to have the opportunity to advance this exciting development in government statistics.

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## Announcements

### 2010 JSM Poster Award Winners

We would like to congratulate the Poster Award winners for the 2010 JSM.

#### 1st place:

**Dhuly Chowdhury, Karol Krotki, and Lauren Courtney:** "Effective Sampling Methodology for Program Evaluation in Developing Countries."

#### 2nd place:

**Sahar Zangeneh and Roderick Little:** "Spline Models for the Population Total from PPS Samples: the Precision Gain from Knowing the Sizes of Nonsampled Units"

**Jennifer Parker, Lester R. Curtin, and Van Parsons:** "A Simulation to Evaluate the Impact of Design on Model-Based Methods for NHANES Data Linked with Environmental Exposures"

## 2010 Student Paper Competition Winners

We would like to congratulate the four students who won the 2010 Student Paper Competition.

- Brady T. West**, University of Michigan
- Qi Tang**, University of Wisconsin Madison
- Jörg Drechsler**, IAB – Institute for Employment Research, Germany
- Mauricio Sadinle**, National University of Colombia at Bogotá

## Lyberg Receives Certificate of Appreciation from SRMS



At the JSM 2010, Howard Hogan, Rod Little and Steve Cohen presented a certificate of appreciation from the Survey Research Methods Section to **Lars Lyberg** for his outstanding contribution to survey methodology, most notably as founder and chief editor of the Journal of Official Statistics since its inception in 1985.

## 2011 JSM Student Travel Award Application

The Survey Research Methods Section (SRMS) of the American Statistical Association offers a Student Travel Award for students in doctoral programs in statistics, survey methodology, or allied disciplines. Support is offered for students to attend this year's Joint Statistical Meetings in Miami Beach, Florida, July 30 to August 4, 2011. Preference is given to students presenting a paper or poster at the conference. In addition, applications must be supported by a current member of the SRMS section (see below). Up to THREE awards will be granted to cover expenses up to \$500. Winners are expected to attend JSM sessions and the SRMS mixer on Wednesday night in order to be recognized by our section for your award. Previous winners are ineligible for this award.





# Call for Invited Paper Session Proposals



International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-IV)

<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2012>

June 11-14, 2012

Le Centre Sheraton Montréal Hotel, Montréal, Quebec, Canada

As the fourth in the series of international conferences on establishment surveys, ICES-IV is designed to look forward at key issues and methods pertaining to establishment surveys via introductory overview lectures, invited and contributed sessions, and panel discussions. Poster sessions and software demonstrations provide further opportunities for cross-national, interdisciplinary discussions and the exchange of ideas. The program and proceedings from ICES-III can be viewed at: <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2007>.

The conference is co-sponsored by: the American Statistical Association, the ASA Section on Survey Research Methods, the ASA Section on Government Statistics, the International Association of Survey Statisticians, and the Statistical Society of Canada.

We invite you to submit a proposal for an invited paper session by March 1, 2011. The ICES-IV program committee will review the proposals and notify session organizers by the end of May 2011 to let them know whether their proposal has been accepted.

Invited sessions will have three 25-minute presentations, a 15-minute formal discussion in which a discussant draws out the main themes of the session and asks questions of the authors, and a 5–10-minute floor discussion.

## **Proposal Submission**

Online submission of invited session proposals will open December 1, 2010, and close March 1, 2011. Session organizers will be asked to submit a proposal describing the session topic and why it is important or what has changed since ICES-III in 2007, and include the names of session presenters and abstracts for each presentation. If a session proposal is accepted, session presenters will be asked to upload an abstract to the conference system by September 30, 2011.

There will be a limited number of invited sessions, and the program committee is seeking sessions of a consistently high quality for ICES-IV, so we request that organizers provide sufficient information to clearly demonstrate the importance of the topic and the quality of its contributions. We encourage proposals that incorporate presenters and perspectives from different countries and agencies/departments.

If a proposal is not accepted as an invited session, the organizer will be invited to resubmit the session as a topic-contributed session. The deadline for contributed papers (including topic-contributed sessions) is August 31, 2011. Information about the differences between the invited and contributed sessions and their formats is available at:

<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2012/index.cfm?fuseaction=programtypes>.



## 2011 International Methodology Symposium

Statistics Canada  
November 1-4, 2011  
Ottawa, ON, Canada

### Strategies for Standardization of Methods and Tools – How to get there

Statistics Canada's 2011 International Methodology Symposium will take place at the new Ottawa Convention Centre, located in the heart of downtown Ottawa, from **November 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011**.

The Symposium will be titled "**Strategies for Standardization of Methods and Tools – How to get there**". Members of the statistical community, such as those from private organizations, governments, or universities, are invited to attend, particularly if they have a special interest in methodological issues resulting from the standardization of statistical methods and tools.

The first day will consist of workshops, while the following days will consist of both plenary and parallel sessions covering a variety of topics. Additional research and results may be presented via poster sessions.

We are soliciting contributed papers related to the methodological issues resulting from the standardization of statistical methods and tools. Topics may include:

- Sampling Frames and Sample Design
- Coordinating Samples
- Content and Questionnaire Design
- Data Collection
- Administrative Data
- Generalized Systems
- Registers (population, enterprises, etc.)
- Time Series
- Data Processing
- Edit and Imputation
- Weighting and Estimation
- Dissemination and Data Access
- Record Linkage
- Measurement Errors
- Treatment of Nonresponse
- Confidentiality
- Quality Control and Evaluation
- International Surveys

Your proposal must be submitted by e-mail to: [symposium2011@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:symposium2011@statcan.gc.ca) by **March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011**. It should include a 250-word abstract (French or English) of the content of the presentation, as well as its title and your full contact information.

We will contact you by **May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011** to inform you whether or not your proposed communication has been accepted. If accepted, the final slides of your presentation will have to be submitted (in English or French) by **September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011**. Proceedings from the conference will be published and disseminated to participants. Your final paper will need to be sent by **December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011**.

Visit our Internet site regularly to obtain further details about the program, workshops, registration, accommodation, tourism information and more at:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/conferences/symposium2011/index-eng.htm>



Statistics Canada  
Statistique Canada

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Canada

## SRMS Mission Statement



SRMS has 1500 members, of which over 100 are based outside of North America and is one of the largest ASA Sections. The SRMS mission is to promote the improvement of survey practice and the understanding of survey methods by encouraging both theoretical and applied research on survey-related topics and by disseminating information on survey methods.

Areas of interest for the Section include all that employ survey methodology as a focus or as a prime tool of investigation. Of special interest are:

- ❖ Theoretical foundations of sampling;
- ❖ Sample design and estimation;
- ❖ Nonsampling errors and data collection methods;
- ❖ Analysis and presentation of survey data;
- ❖ Education of the public and students on the importance of scientific survey research;
- ❖ Publication and dissemination of survey research findings; and
- ❖ Ethics related to survey conduct and standards for survey practice.

**Not a member yet?** Here is how you can join:

- If you are not an ASA member, go to the membership page of the ASA and fill the application at [www.amstat.org/membership/index.cfm?fuseaction=becomeamember](http://www.amstat.org/membership/index.cfm?fuseaction=becomeamember). Then sign up for the SRMS section as part of your membership.
- If you are already an ASA member, just call customer service at 1-888-231-3473 to add SRMS membership.

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The SRMS has produced material and resources that are available on our website including:

- ❖ The “What is a Survey?” series for non-specialists, free of charge
- ❖ The SRMSNET Mailing List
- ❖ List of other related associations
- ❖ Survey Analysis Software (under Links and Resources)
- ❖ Universities and Laboratories
- ❖ ...and much more.

For more information, including links to specific officers, check out the SRMS website at: [www.amstat.org/sections/SRMS/index.html](http://www.amstat.org/sections/SRMS/index.html)

There is also a link from the ASA website at [www.amstat.org](http://www.amstat.org).