

Letter from The Chair

By Mike Messner, 2021 GSS Chair

Stepping Out, Stepping In, Stepping Up & Stepping Forward

Stepping Out: I retired in October, after 23 years with the Environmental Protection Agency. A year of phased retirement eased the transition considerably. During that year, I thought often of advice I got from a statistician who retired from EPA several years ago: “Mike, don’t ever retire!” I didn’t want to end up in the same place, with nothing but time on his hands. As it turned out, I love retirement. I wish I had more time!

Stepping In: Now, following a year as chair-elect, I’m stepping into my role as chair of the Government Statistics Section (GSS). Believe it or not, I feel more stressed about this than I do about stepping into retirement! This stress is eased considerably, when I realize that all the other GSS officers (past and present) wish only for the success of the Section. It turns out that nearly all the work of the Section gets done by these folks, whether working alone or in committees. I don’t want to discount the officers’ contributions, but I do wonder how much more energy and enthusiasm would be realized, if the workings of the Section were more open to all of its members – if members had more opportunities to become active with the Section.

Some of my hesitancy, when asked to run for this office, was due to my not being familiar with the inner workings of the section. Had I been more involved in the past, I might have welcomed the invitation. So now I’m asking you to think about *stepping forward* and pitching in. **Join an award committee, help link mentors with mentees, help plan webinars and roundtable events.** When you see how GSS functions, maybe you’ll *step forward* and run for office in 2022, when a large number of office positions will be on the ballot. Step in and help GSS identify and address the needs of our membership. *Step up* and run for office. You’ll be glad you did!

Happy trails and best wishes for 2021 and beyond.

LATE BREAKING NEWS

March 12, 2021

**Virtual Roundtable:
Time Series and Seasonal Adjustment estimation during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Moderated by William R. Bell (U.S. Census Bureau) on **March 12 at 11:00 a.m. EST.**

To Register & Attend as an audience member **Email**

Kathleen.M.McDonald.Johnson@census.gov

Audience members will have an opportunity to comment or ask questions after the discussion has concluded. **Registration is FREE but is limited to the first 15 registrants on a first-come, first-served basis*.**

*All attendees must agree to be recorded.

Abstract: The pandemic resulting from the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus illness (COVID-19) has caused major disruptions to business activity, creating ongoing challenges for statistical organizations who measure that activity. Formerly predictable behavior suddenly changed, for example, supermarket sales were up dramatically, and restaurant activity was down. Whether long-term time series patterns have changed remains to be seen, and reviewers must decide how to model the behavior in the midst of uncertainty.

Representatives from statistical agencies will discuss time series and seasonal adjustment problems they've faced due to the pandemic, the approaches they've taken to maintain their official time series outputs in real time, and assessments of their status a year into the pandemic.

MEET THE GSS CANDIDATES

GSS Chair Elect 2022

Claire McKay Bowen is the Lead Data Scientist of Privacy and Data Security at the Urban Institute. Her research focuses on comparing and evaluating the quality of differentially private data synthesis methods and science communication. She has been an active ASA member, such as organizing the Symposium on Data Science and Statistics as Vice Chair and leading the Committee on Career Development as Chair. To learn more about her, check out her website: <https://clairemckaybowen.com>



Claire McKay Bowen

Minsun Riddles is a senior statistician at Westat, where she has been evaluating sampling/weighting/imputation methods, developing statistical models, and conducting research to improve the quality of various large-scale national surveys. The surveys include the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (by the National Center for Health Statistics), the Taxpayer Compliance Burden Survey (by the Internal Revenue Service), and the Workplace and Gender Relations Survey (by the Defense Manpower Data Center of Department of Defense).

Currently, she is leading the cross-sectional and longitudinal weighting tasks of the Survey of Doctorate Recipients (by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics). She also has been regularly presenting her research at statistical conferences, such as Joint Statistical Meetings; publishing peer reviewed articles; and organizing paper reading and research group discussions at Westat.



Minsun Riddles

She received her Ph.D. in Statistics from Iowa State University and her Master's in Applied Statistics from Yonsei University in Korea after studying French Language and Literature for her Bachelor's degree. She enjoys sharing ideas and serving various communities. If elected, she hopes to bring her enthusiasm in serving to the GSS and to find ways to increase diversity and inclusion in the section as well as member involvement.

Mentoring Program Update

In Fall 2021, 11 mentor/mentee pairs were matched through the GSS mentoring program. Most are still interacting, to the benefit of both mentors and mentees. The mentoring committee invited participants to join our March 8 meeting to plan for a roundtable or speed-mentoring event later this spring and to structure how the program will function into the future. Look forward to messages kicking off the 2021-22 program. *In the meantime, if you have a particular need for short-term guidance, advice, or just a sympathetic ear, please contact us at gssmentoring2020@gmail.com.*

--the GSS Mentoring Committee

MEET THE GSS CANDIDATES

GSS JSM Program Chair-Elect 2022

Lisa Mirel is the Chief of the Data Linkage Methodology and Analysis Branch in the Division of Analysis and Epidemiology at the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Ms. Mirel directs the NCHS Data Linkage program, leading Agency efforts to integrate NCHS data collection systems with external sources of health related administrative data, to both expand the analytic potential of NCHS data and to develop innovative data resources that better inform public health policy and fill critical information gaps. She also oversees the development and implementation of state-of-the-art data linkage methodologies and data quality assessment tools.



Lisa Mirel

Ms. Mirel has held positions as a Statistician at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the Division of Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys at NCHS, and the Division of Parasitic Diseases at CDC.

Her work has focused primarily on integrating multiple sources of data through data linkage and advising on survey design and estimation techniques for large scale national health surveys. She received her Master of Science degree in Biostatistics from the University of Michigan’s School of

Douglas Williams, Bureau of Labor Statistics I am excited to have an opportunity to be a part of the GSS Executive Board. I have spent many years in the field of survey research, currently as Director of the Behavioral Science Research Center at the Bureau of Labor Statistics and also in the private sector, working nearly 20 years at Westat. In all my roles, I’ve worked to identify and share innovative strategies to further our field. My previous experience as program chair for DC-AAPOR and part of the organizing committee for the Business Data Collection Methods Workshop will be valuable in serving as part of the Executive Board. I feel that my experience can benefit the GSS membership and community.



Douglas Williams

COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITY

American Statistical Associations’ Transportation Statistics Interest Group (TSIG) and Government Statistics Section (GSS) have started collaboration in the areas of transportation statistics. TSIG is a group of professionals, professors, researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, and students with interest, expertise and passion in the statistical analysis of transportation data. Emerging transportation needs and technologies increase the demand for making data-driven informed-decisions to improve the safety, mobility, health and equity of roadway users. This collaboration will create opportunities for both the TSIG and GSS members to start dialogue, and identify and pursue exciting areas for collaborative research. There is much potential for promoting and enhancing the applied statistics in transportation research. TSIG and GSS plan to conduct panel discussions and workshops to uncover opportunities, and identify technology transfer methods for enhancing the use of transportation data in applied statistics. We look forward to this collaboration.