

AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION
SECTION ON GOVERNMENT STATISTICS (GSS)
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Joint Statistical Meetings
August 7 2006
Seattle, WA
Minutes

Those attending were (listed alphabetically):

Name	Position
Wendy Alvey	COPAFS Representative 2005-2006
Michael P. Cohen	2006 Program Chair
Steve Cohen	Chair-elect
Lester Curtin	Secretary-Treasurer-elect
John Hall	Secretary-Treasurer 2005-2006
Carol House	Chair-elect-elect
Robert Lussier	Publications Officer
Dan Kasprzyk	COS Representative 2005-2006
Patricia Melvin	Newsletter Editor
Stephanie Shipp	Chair
Sonya Vartivarian	Publications Officer-elect

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 AM.

Minutes from the March, 2006 meeting were approved with minor editorial comments; the need to include the appropriate attachments was noted.

Financial Support for GSS. Annual contributions for the section have been received from several Federal agencies (Census, NASS, IRS, SSA, BLS). Additional request will be sent to other agencies. It was noted that the GSS newsletter should be changed to reflect the current list of contributors.

Steve Cohen gave an update on the planning for the next ICES to be held in June, 2007 at the Hyatt in Montreal Canada. Plans are for 32 invited sessions and 4 short courses. Decisions on contributed session will be made by next month (September). Steve noted two issues. There is a need to register about 300 participants to meet budget requirements. Also, there is a potential problem involving travel to Canada. US citizens need to show a valid US passport in order to return; there is a concern that students with only a US visa may not be allowed back into the US.

Mike Cohen – gave a report on the current JSM meetings. GSS sponsored 4 invited, 8 topic contributed, 5 regular contributed, and 1 poster session. There was some difficulty with finding discussants for the Round table luncheons. In response to a question, it was noted that a discussant for an invited session does NOT count against the ASA rule for 1 presentation only.

| Dan Kasprzyk gave an update from the Council of Sections (COS). There is an ongoing search for the next ASA Executive Director, with a September 12 deadline. A list has been compiled with at least 60 names of possible candidates. The COS asked each representative to report back on the potential for Statistical Partnership funds available for spring award. The COS wanted to report back a reminder that there is a membership credit of \$10 for getting someone to join ASA. The COS will also be discussing the Strategic Plan initiatives. A question was raised about the 1 talk rule – some sections have a problem (stat education, sports, consulting) and it was noted that an individual can ask for an exception. For the COS there is no proxy for voting, so members need to stay Sunday until Thursday (this led to a brief discussion of the timing and length of the ASA meeting).

The COS would like all sections to review their clusters. Stephanie requested that each GSS officer review the GSS charter for the December meeting. Also on the agenda: the Fall budget and the upcoming election slates. For this meeting, it was noted several issues need to be discussed, namely (1) Poster sessions (2) Coffee roundtable sessions (avoid expense of lunch), (3) the ASA Community booth in the exhibit hall and (4) the strategic planning initiative.

For Posters Sessions Wendy Alvey noted that posters were useful for young people and for Federal employees. There seems to be a need to promote the posters as a viable outlet for presentations. A poster is often considered less prestigious than a paper so there is a need to make them more equivalent. Steve Cohen noted that a poster provided the means to interact with others. At the AAPOR meetings poster sessions are independent of other sessions and not in competition; but they are still considered second rate. A suggestion was raised to give ASA posters more prominence, to have them as a separate session (more of an organized session in a room, not in the hallway) or to put this session at the same time as the Presidential address. Discussion pointed out that a person can give both a poster and a talk and can write up both for the proceedings. There was a suggestion for a best poster award, such as payment for the registration fee for next years ASA. The award could also be a written up in the newsletter.

On the Breakfast or Coffee Round Tables: it was suggested to see how this year's went; and to look at past lunches to see what topic(s) draws the most interest. For the December meeting, Dan will do the additional research.

For the Booth—GSS members were asked to check it out and give feedback.

For the Strategic initiative, one suggestion was to draft a proposal to develop a short course on Federal data bases, to offer this course at other venues, and to focus on a selected set of specific data sets. Discussion focused on what may be currently available (Census users groups; Learn Stat; University of Michigan). Discussion also focused on ASA requirements: that ASA seeks a wide audience for the initiative and that, typically, ASA will not pay for what the Federal government should be doing out of its budget. For the initiative itself, one cannot use the money to pay salaries but (low) honorarium is acceptable and it is possible to pay for travel to chapters. For the discussion of the short course, a question was raised about including information on how data was made available (public data files versus data centers); one thought was that this might be better to be considered by the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology.

Robert Lussier gave a Publication report and discussed turning over his planning for next year to his successors. He gave out a schedule for articles for next year's newsletter. The article for August was delayed until the October newsletter. In response to a question Robert noted that there was no income for 2006 proceedings.

The Treasurer's report was presented by John Hall. Next year's budget is due to ASA by September 30, 2006. John will be preparing and will share drafts with the appropriate officers. A brief review of last years budget noted that there was some reduction in membership, the sections expenses were down, and that \$800 had been used for the student competition.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 AM.

Prepared and submitted by:

Lester R. Curtin, Secretary-Treasurer 2007-2008

John Hall, Secretary-Treasurer 2005-2006