

NOTES FROM GSS BUSINESS MEETING JSM, 2007

- 1) Steve Cohen introduced the GSS Executive Committee.
- 2) Review of previous minutes. Copies of the minutes from the 2006 Business Meeting were not available. Steve Cohen indicated that he would post the minutes on the website within the next two weeks. He would then give members a couple of months to review and suggest changes. The minutes, with any revisions, will be brought up for approval during the upcoming December meeting of the Executive Committee.
- 3) Discussion of GSS activities during the past year:
 - a. GSS was a 10% sponsor for the International Conference on Establishment Surveys. The conference was very successful. There was concern earlier in the year about impact from the Federal budget continuing resolution. Several large agencies significantly cut back on attendance. However it now appears that the conference will probably yield a small profit to GSS. We will not get final numbers for about a year.
 - b. GSS currently has four corporate sponsors: IRS, NASS, BLS, and SSA. We are pursuing other agencies about corporate memberships.
 - c. The GSS program for JSM was successful. We had 4 invited session (one from competition), 4 topic contributed sessions, 2 contributed sessions, and 1 contributed poster. There were barriers in moving contributed papers into appropriate sessions that might be sponsored by a different session. We asked our Council of Section representative to bring up the idea of a "form change" that would eliminate this barrier.
 - d. COPAFS. GSS appoints two representatives to COPAFS who report back to the ASA. The issue this year was agency budgets.
- 4) GSS Charter. We are required to periodically review the section charter. The charter was reviewed and revised by the Executive Committee and ASA. It will be presented to the section membership for approval on the next membership ballot. Copies of the revised charter were distributed.
- 5) Awards:
 - a. Student award papers were presented in a session on Sunday afternoon. There were 5 winners (add list).
 - b. Nancy Kirkendall won this year's Herriott Award.
 - c. Stephanie Shipp was awarded the Jean Griffith Award for mentoring.

- d. The Wray Jackson Smith award was given to Romesh Silva. He thanked section members for the award, and indicated that he used the funds to attend a conference in the UK on capture/recapture methods.
 - e. Wendy Alvey was presented Pat Doyle award. She thanked the members and said that she had worked with Pat on the Wray Smith Scholarship committee.
- 6) Steve Cohen wrote an article for AMSTAT News talking about the importance of bring young people into our professional association. He called for ideas from members. Several suggestions: to help younger people become section officers, set up election nominations so that a couple of recent graduates would run against each other rather than against a better known individual; look at Wray Smith winners to run for elected office; appoint young statisticians to non-elected committee roles.
- 7) Report from the Council of Sections – Carolee Bush
- a. There is continuing concern about the size of the meetings. The COS asked that we discuss several options
 - i. Start earlier on Sunday and eliminate Thursday sessions
 - ii. Eliminate contributed sessions
 - iii. Implement a referee process for papers

Comments from the floor:

 - I miss meeting in hotels. It is too much walking in convention centers for older attendees.
 - I don't see how moving a half day would make a difference – it is not clear how this would help.
 - I am not concerned about some sessions not being well attended. I think that the conference should be like a salad bar, with many choices to sample. Cutting out or restricting sessions might end up eliminating sessions I would find interesting.
 - Sessions are more thinly attended because there are so many of them.
 - There is a great diversity of interest among ASA members. The conference needs to reflect that diversity.
 - We need to maintain the opportunity for young people to present their first paper. Reducing or refereeing papers may be counter-productive.
 - There are many well know statisticians who present contributed papers.
 - The JSM proceedings are important for publishing work from government agencies.

The consensus of the members is that all three options proposed by COS were “non-starters”.

- 8) Bill Kalsbeek asked the question whether we have a problem with bring in and keeping young people in the survey profession. He passed out a paper he had prepared on the issue. He had taken an informal poll of past presidents of SRMS and AAPOR on issues in the field. Is this a topic we should seek answers to. The consensus of the membership is that we should seek answers. Discussion from the floor:

- a. There is a major exodus of government employees (statisticians) at the highest level. This will certainly hurt the profession.
- b. From State government perspective, the lack of basic knowledge of survey methodology is a real problem
- c. This issue should be addressed through an ASA strategic initiative.
- d. We need to look back at the group retiring and see how they differed from newer employees. Are there conditions on the job then that facilitated learning on the job that do not exist now?
- e. Some agencies “grow their own” methodologists using programs such as JPSM. Smaller organizations may not have this option.
- f. A comment from the private section – we would be hurting badly if not for the influx of foreign students.
- g. Some people believe that we are less effective at mentoring – that we have become too project oriented.