

NOTES FROM THE GSS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING December 19, 2007 — ALEXANDRIA, VA.

Attending: Steve Cohen, Carol House, Stephanie Shipp, Carolee Bush, Bill Wong, Chet Bowie, Sonya Vartivarian, Came Simon, Robert Lussier (Telephone), Mike Davern (Telephone). Guests: Andy Orlin, Emerson Elliott, Ron Wasserstein

Committee meeting began at 1 pm, following

- 1) **Minutes** from the JSM meetings, both the Executive Board and Business meetings, were reviewed and approved with minor changes.
- 2) The Committee considered a proposal that GSS become the Operating Sponsor for the **Jeanne Griffith Mentoring Award**. Andy Orlin (Jeanne Griffith's husband) and Emerson Elliott participated in the GSS Executive lunch and first part of the meeting. Andy provided the background for the Jeanne Griffiths mentoring award. Jeanne worked for several federal agencies and always felt that mentoring younger staff was an important part of her job. She died in 2001. Andy started the award in 2003 to honor Jeanne. He asked GSS to consider becoming the Operating Sponsor, working with the cosponsors, to advertise the award, recruit a committee to review applications and select an annual winner. He provided a Handbook for administrating the award.

The announcement for the award goes out in the January / February timeframe and the award is presented in the middle of June in conjunction with a meeting of the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy. Co-sponsors are Council for Excellence in Government, Interagency Council on Statistical Policy, Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics, American Statistical Association, Washington Statistical Society, Social Statistics Section, and GSS. Annual costs are about \$1500, which includes \$1000 to the winner and the remainder for printing program information, a plaque, the award ceremony (cookies and punch), and an annual working lunch for the selection committee. Funding support for the award is currently ad hoc, coming mostly from private donations.

GSS Executive Committee unanimously agreed to be the Operating Sponsor. They also agreed to donate \$500 each year to the award. The committee wants to approach the other sponsoring organizations about contributing similar amounts to get away from the need for ad hoc private funding. Stephanie Shipp agreed to act as liaison between GSS and Jeanne Griffith Mentoring Award committee. She will work with Andy and Steve Porzio at ASA to establish the financial aspects. Next year (2008) will be a transition year in which GSS participates yet the existing committee will run the show. Starting in June (after the 2008 award announcement), GSS will begin to lead the committee.

Treasurer's Report. Steve Cohen passed out a financial summary. The section's funds total \$13,539.89, which is about \$1,000 below this time last year. However, we are still expecting some return from ICESIII survey sponsorship. It may be several more months before we get a final number for that conference. No particular financial issues were discussed, Stephanie Shipp has been following through with various statistical agencies

to see if they will be corporate sponsors. The committee talked once again about seeking commercial sponsors, and decided not to pursue that avenue of Fund raising since it may give an appearance of conflict of interest if there are people on the GSS Executive Committee who have contracts with these commercial sponsors.

JSM 08 Summary. GSS was allocated three invited sessions. One will be on incentives, one on comparing data from different sources, and a third on the American Community Survey. We also are sponsoring a Memorial session for Molly Orshansky of the Social Security Administration who developed poverty thresholds in 1963-64. Orshansky based her poverty thresholds on the “thrifty food plan. These thresholds, updated using the CPI, are still used today. GSS submitted two sessions for competition for invited sessions, but was unsuccessful in that competition. Our program chair is currently working on topic contributed sessions, so good ideas are welcome. GSS is considering two Roundtable lunch sessions. The committee reminded ourselves that we agreed that we want to have 5 or more participants in a Roundtable or else we would cancel it. We also reminded ourselves that we wanted to try to have a Roundtable coffee or breakfast as an alternative. It is too late for this year, but need to pursue that next year.

Report from the Council on Sections. Carolee Bush presented answers she had received from Allen Rossman, Vice Chair of the Council of Section, to questions the GSS had posed to the Council.

First, our suggestion to hold a “poster” competition was warmly received. In further discussion of the Executive Committee, we decided to have a poster competition for the 2009 meetings. We will have to develop a plan this coming year in order to advertise in the fall of 2008. Plan might include **1st, 2nd** and **3rd** place awards. Recipients receiving a large ribbon, certificate, and perhaps a monetary award. Strategy would be to have competing posters displayed on Monday with ribbons awarded early in the day and hung on the winning posters for the remainder of the day. We would also display and congratulate the winning posters at the Business Meeting on Tuesday evening, thus further promoting the value of submitting posters. We need to work with ASA to make this all happen.

Second, we made a suggestion that a way to help ensure high quality paper sessions and possibly reduce the number of paper sessions would be to require a completed written paper by May. Allen indicated that he would give our suggestion to Committee on Meetings for consideration.

Third, our concern that new interest groups may siphon away membership from current sections was not adequately addressed. Allen just stated that subsections no longer existed. The Committee asked Carolee to ask Allen for a more complete response. We made a suggestion that the Council on Section should undertake an analysis to better understand whether new interest groups or new sections did negatively effect membership in existing section or merely attract new members.

COPAFS: Chet indicated that things were going fine. COPAFS had four meetings during the year and that he or Joan attended each one and wrote up a summary for ASA.

Other Topics:

ASA staff had asked if we would consider dropping our joint membership status with Social Statistics Section because the administration of the joint membership is complex. The Committee asked Steve to respond that we did not want to make that change. However, the discussion continued about whether it would be appropriate to combine GSS with the Social Statistics Section. We will start some discussions about the topic.

Bill Wong provided copies of the current GSS web site. We made some minor updates of people and contact information. GSS appreciates the work Bill continues to do in keeping our web site up to date.

Carrie and Sonya indicated that things were going well with the newsletter and other publications. It was sometimes difficult to get articles for publications, so these are always welcome.

GSS Fellows Committee. The committee has been inactive for a number of years. Carol serves on the WSS Fellows Committee, and volunteered to talk with that group about possibilities to network among the groups to support and promote Fellows nominations.

Future International Conferences on Establishment Surveys (ICESIV). The committee supports the concept of institutionalizing the planning for future conferences and wants to be a part of sponsoring this conference. We asked Steve Cohen to be our liaison in this planning. We expressed concern about having the next conference in Europe because very few US and Canadian government statisticians would be able to attend.

Ron Wasserstein spent a few minutes with the Committee talking about his vision for the next few years, and listening to our concerns and ideas. Ron wants to make statistics more visible and be a voice in National issues. The Association will issue statements about pressing issues as one way to gain prominence of statistics.

He offered to visit agencies to what the major statistical issues are for each agency and whether there is a role for ASA to participate in these issues.

He also wants to be sure that the Association is serving the needs of its members. This is also a concern of the 2008 President elect—Sally Morton.