

NOTES FROM THE GSS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING March 19, 2008 – ALEXANDRIA, VA.

Attending: Steve Cohen, Carol House, Stephanie Shipp (Telephone), Carolee Bush, Bill Wong, Chet Bowie, Sonya Vartivarian (Telephone), Robert Lussier (Telephone), Mike Davern (Telephone), Monica Clark (ASA). **Guests:** Ron Wasserstein, Stan Pearson

Committee meeting began at 1 pm, following

- 1) **Minutes** from the December 2007 Executive Board were reviewed and approved.
- 2) Ron Wasserstein and Steve Pierson from the ASA office visited with us. Ron started by observing that he has been with ASA for seven months. He has been focusing on two issues: working with the Board of Directors on positions and issues where AMSTAT news should say something and making sections and chapters more important to ASA members. On the former the BOD approved positions for the Association in the Fall 2007 on Statistics and Global Climate Change and most recently election integrity. The effect of these positions is to make the Association more visible and point out issues where statisticians can contribute.

Ron and Steve Porzio met with the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy (ICSP) to help strengthen the relationship between ASA and government statisticians. The relationship is not as effective as it once was. Ron plans to go around to the statistical agencies promoting this role. The ASA President is also willing to do the same. The night before the June BOD meeting, the agency heads and BOD met over dinner. There was a short presentation by the ASA President and Kathy Wallman.

Ron next introduced Steve Pierson, Director of Science Policy. It was his third day with ASA. Steve's job is to be an advocate for the Association. What can ASA provide that will keep statisticians interested in ASA? ASA needs to find out what makes people feel it makes sense to join ASA. The chapters and sections are important to ASA yet 50% of the membership doesn't belong to a section or chapter.

Treasurer's Report. Steve Cohen passed out a financial summary in Randy's absence. The 2007 budget year was a break even year. The March 14 balance showed an increase of \$1000.00 over the starting balance. However, most expenses occur with JSM. After the meeting Steve reported that the final accounting for ICES III was complete. The section will get back our initial investment plus a small profit. These figures are not yet a part of the budget document.

ICES IV: Steve Cohen reported on activity to begin planning an ICES IV. There is a need to have more structure around the organizing of this conference if it is to continue on a regular basis. GSS will be asked to be a permanent sponsor. John Eltinge has agreed to chair the organizing committee for the next conference. Steve Cohen has agreed to continue to the GSS liaison to that committee. There needs to be a more formal structure with the ASA. There perhaps is a need for a proposal to go to the ASA Board

of Directors. The organizing committee is discussing the possibility of the Conference being held in Europe the next time. GSS will need to think about how that might affect our sponsorship.

Brochures: Wendy Alvey has agreed to continue producing the brochures. A big thank you to Wendy.

Contributions: Stephanie Shipp has been following through with various statistical agencies to see if they will be corporate sponsors. We have received contributions from: NASS, SSA, IRS, BLS and BOC. Stephanie needs to follow up on NSF and BEA. It was agreed that sponsors should get recognition by the section.

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. There will be five topic contributed sessions: Remote Access organized by Julia Lane, IRS data Protection organized by Mike Weber, Innovations in Sample Frames organized by Steve Cohen, Privacy Issues organized by Jonaki Bose and one on Census 2010 organized by Jim Farber. There will be three contributed paper sessions. GSS co-sponsored many other sessions. Credit is given to Janet Asher for helping Mike Davern. We sponsored no coffees and 1-2 lunches. We want to try one or two Roundtable coffees or breakfasts in 2009, as an alternative to Roundtable luncheons.

Report from the Council on Sections: Carolee reported that Donna Strup is our new liaison. We need to start over with the issues we raised on special interest groups. Our concern that new interest groups may siphon away membership from current sections was not adequately addressed in a COS written response. 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 of Sections 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.

Poster Sessions: We had a discussion on holding a "poster" competition. Carol agreed to work with Sunghee on drafting a proposal on a poster competition before August to finalize at our executive meeting and present at the business meeting.

COPAFS: Last meeting was on March 9. Chet will write up an article for AMSTAT News.

Other Topics:

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. We need to write an article on the new poster competition if it is approved.

GSS Fellows Committee. Stephanie verified that this committee has been inactive for a number of years. It was suggested to work with SRMS and WSS jointly would be most effective. Representatives were: Mary Batchner, Rich Allen and Stephanie Shipp. The Executive Committee officially disbanded this committee.

Griffith Award: Plans are moving ahead to transfer administering this award to GSS. Steve, Carol and Stephanie were invited to attend the current ad hoc committee to decide this year's award. GSS will contribute \$500 annually to the award, and will reach out to other organizations to do likewise.

AMSTAT NEWS: The June issue will discuss the JSM program. The July issue will focus on "Is there a State Statistical Office."