

Minutes: Government Statistics Section December 2, 2009

Attended:

Natalia Verbitsky-Savitz	Carol House	Robert Lussier
Bill Wong	Carolee Bush	Lisa Blumerman
Sonya Vartivarian	John Dixon	Steve Cohen
Sunhgee Lee (phone)	Lester Curtin	Stephanie Shipp
Iris Shimizu	Steve Paben	Ron Wasserstein
Ken Copeland	Monica Clark	

The meeting started with a conversation with Ron Wasserstein. He is meeting with statistics agencies and will accept all invitations. Some recent examples of interaction with the government area, participation in the NHANES 50th anniversary and participation in the NORC sponsored meeting on privacy and confidentiality. The usual agency meetings include the ASA presidents (past, current, elect) who come in a day early to meet with agencies to discuss issues of communication and collaboration. Tomorrow to EIA, maybe to ERS.

For ASA president and vice-president, by tradition not by charter, rotate candidates from industry, government and academia. Current VP is from government (Nat Schenker) with Nancy Geller as incoming president. Nominations for next year will not include government candidates. In the past, nominations for government suffer from lack of agency support. Perhaps ICSP could encourage Fed stats agencies to allow participate. Agency attorneys interpret OPM rules differently even when there is no real conflict of interest. Sometimes the issue is just interpretation of the appropriate use of government time. Also approval of supervisor is needed and their opinions may differ. One potential follow up actions: Ask OPM, or maybe start with ICSP, on how to write-up ASA positions to minimize participation issues

Ron next discussed the Guidelines for evaluating statistical accreditation. There is a committee for recommending the details of implementation of accreditation. There is some current information on ASA website and in AMSTAT news. Current schedule is for a committee report in April; implementation should include a phase in starting by 2010 JSM. At this time, no single specific job needs to be accredited and for the most part employers are not asking for credentials. Underlying rationale for accreditation includes experience in other countries. Also people in industry value accreditation, especially when a single person is working with others who have credential in their field (biology, etc). Accreditation may not be applicable for government jobs. A question was asked if government agencies would require accreditation from contractors. Given the current evaluations systems in place, this is not likely. Ron, as personal opinion, feels that credentials are a positive step – this opinion is based on use of credentials in other scientific fields of work. Ron is hopeful that initial guidance on accreditation will be posted with comments due by next February or March. One additional complication is

how to deal with ASA members who are outside the United States (and Canada?) Currently there are about 2,000 members outside US in 90 countries. A suggestion was made to try to engage Federal agencies in the review process, perhaps through the FCSM.

Ron's discussion ended here with the meeting starting on the agenda items. Bill Wong discussed issues with the new ASA websites. There is space allocated for each section, with certain, networking tools, shared documents, and e-groups. GSS could move newsletters there. Robert asked if anyone was still using a list-serve function. Moncia noted that the Council of sections and governing board were still using some but will eventually stop. It was noted that the intent of the ASA web redesign was to be more friendly to nonmembers, including reporters, as well as a means to enhance communication.

Robert noted an issue for JSM round tables would be to pay for lead speakers, For example, if session is full, then the fee for the speaker could be covered and if it was jn not full, perhaps the section could pay. Monica noted this would require an adjustment to the price per persons and current level is already an issue for many Ron suggested this could be an issue raised with the council of sections. If the section were to pay, this could be considered as the section providing a service to it's members.

A side issue was discussed. The regular meeting minutes should be posted on the GSS website, Also, minutes for business meting at JSM should be taken and posted to better inform all members. Action is required by Randy to bring all minutes current and posted before the next JSM

GSS membership changes with this meeting, those who rotate out include Stephanie Carolee and Sungee . A special thanks was given to those members for their service to GSS, For newsletter Carol House will list the candidates for office for Chair, program chair, Secretary/Treasurer and Publication officer (list to be added)

The ICES IV continuation committee has Carol, Steve, and Mark Harris. They are looking for a long term host ASA has be n the hose in past. A draft letter to ASA is being prepared from GSS and SRMS to have an ICES every 4 or 5 years and to appoint a standing organizing committee Another possible host would be ISI but this raises the issue of location and should ICES just stay in North America? In Europe attendance could be a proplem. Conference committee to vote on this in January

A short discussion ensued on the proposed (Nancy Bates /Brad Edwards) conference on surveys for rare and elusive populations. An official response from GSS is needed soon. Nancy is now preparing a contract with ASA and will meet will ASA soon to discuss logistics and details, including a clearer idea of timing. Roger T (UMd and JPSM) has agreed to serve as editor of a proceedings/and/or special journal edition for selected presentations. He is looking for other editors and for a specific journal for potential publication

The Budget report was presented. It was noted that the JSM food expense included somewhat excessive bar fees as we were required to pay for 4 hours as minimum. At the march meeting there should be a decision how to proceed with the food functions for 2010 JSM.

Budget report (INSERT)

Membership totals

	2007	2008	2009	Free
Joint	383	383	419	26
GSS only	435	485	527	194

GSS Budget

End 2005	\$13,042.51	
End 2006	\$14,592.03	
End 2007	\$14,705.38	
End 2008	\$19,221.07	(Note: ICES-III “profit”)
11/10/2009	\$21,154.77	

At the present time, it looks like section expenses will slightly exceed section income. To increase income, the section could consider CE courses or WEBinars to make money for section. Asking for sponsors from outside government creates problems as government officials can't solicit funds due to ethnics regulations. OPM would likely consider this a conflict of interest. One suggestion is to raise government agency contributions 300 to 400 per year.

At 2009 JSM, the Student paper award this year had an issue of travel for non US person. Further discussion needed to prevent this in future. JSM 2009 had 3 invited sessions 10 topic contributed sessions, 1 set of 12 posters for topic contributed poster session and another 63 sessions as sponsor or cosponsor

JSM 2010 currently considering 4 potential invited session (The US Federal Stat System, How government stats work, non-response bias, and disclosure limitation) Social Statistics section considering 5 possible invited sessions – confidentially, Census 2020 Impact of poverty act, global capacity, measurement of elusive population. Student paper deadline is Dec 18th with only 1 submitted to date

Roundtables - Iris just getting started, several suggestions from members to follow up

Jeanne Griffith award announcement will be in December AMSTST article. There are revised application forms. Committee membership and rotation pattern to be discussed at next meeting

Carolee - final breakdown of Council of Section activities to be sent out as e-mail

Natalia on newsletter - Award announcements upcoming: Wray Jackson by Mark Harris .Pat Doyle is not in newsletter ? ICES IV article needed Jan poster competition article is needed.

Frank Potter discussed the Herriot award. Right now, only “nibbles” for nominations, waiting for many more to come. Need to Plan session at JSM program for award presentation in past this has been in a session related to poverty. Other Herriott award sponsors are WSS, SMRS, and Social Statistics. Bob Fay will write an article for WSS newsletter There is a need to document this award process, eg to provide handbook on process and procedures for future reference

A question was raised at JSM business meeting on putting together a pdf version of past proceedings papers for GSS section, Last two years are on the JSM CD, but the issue is how to scan and upload past GSS sessions and the potential for cost associated with this. SRMS did this back to 1983, but their files are not searchable by keyword . Bill has CDs for proceedings back to 2001 but they are not indexed by section Bill will investigate further,

Next COPAFS meeting on Friday with minutes in Feb newsletter

Next GSS Executive meeting March 24 at noon