

**Section on Government Statistics  
Executive Committee Meeting  
March 25, 2015 at 12:45pm  
Minutes – final version 7/5/2015**

Attended:

Wendy Martinez, Michael Davern, Jill Montaquila, Jenny Guarino, Morgan Earp, Jennifer Parker, Sylvia Miller Dohrmann, Kennon Copeland, Aneesah Williams, Rick Peterson, and William Wong.

**1. Welcome and introduction of members**

- Introductions were completed.

**2. Review of Agenda**

- Wendy provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting.

**3. Communication Activities**

- Aneesah Williams mentioned that she distributed GSS newsletters every 3-4 months, with the most recent in January 2015.
- Next newsletter planned to be distributed in mid-April 2015.
- Aneesah continues to encourage folks for ideas and content for articles and material in 2015. Many articles for the next newsletters will focus on the 2015 JSM.
- Wendy will contribute an article on the Data Challenge to the newsletter.
- Sylvia will be working on publications in other venues, such as Amstat News. Articles need about a month lead time (e.g. submitted by May 1 for the June issue.).
- We also talked about getting an article into the May Amstat News "Section News" section about the Data Challenge at this year's JSM (we did that). We also discussed getting another article into the June publication summarizing the GSS sponsored sections at this year's JSM.
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**4. Approval of minutes from GSS December meeting**

- There were no additional comments from the December minutes submitted by Kevin.
- Jennifer will email Bill Wong with finalized version of December minutes.

**5. Finances**

a) Jennifer provided an update on the March 2015 GSS budget:

- Trend in Membership totals: In March 2015, there were 359 Joint SSS/GSS members (down 12 from December 2014) and 436 GSS only members (down 5 from December 2014).
- The budget balance March 2015 is \$22,164.79, an increase of \$1,714.68 from December 2014.

b) Our primary expenses were discussed (food and beverages at the JSM meetings and awards).

c) We will not receive funds from the ICES conference; unlike previous ICES conferences, our sponsorship for this one was strictly a donation to support the travel awards. We might receive funds (a share of profits, if there are any) from the TSE15 conference.

**6. Ron Wasserstein joined the meeting for a few minutes to provide an update on ASA activities.**

- Ron thanked us for our participation in the section and reminded us all to vote in the upcoming election.
- Themes for 2015
  - Big Tent for Statistics – How do we meet the diverse needs and include more people in our organization?
  - Increasing the Visibility of the Profession.
- Two new websites
  - stats.org – to improve the reporting of statistical information in media.
  - thisisstatistics.org – outreach to students in college, high school and middle school.
- Considering the creation of a second advocacy position in ASA, possibly a policy fellow or post-doctoral fellow.
- Director of Development, Amanda Malloy. This is a new position with the responsibility to assess how to obtain external funding. Amanda can be reached at [amanda@amstat.org](mailto:amanda@amstat.org)
- Discussions with ASA board of directors
  - Student members: how do we encourage student members to convert to regular members?
  - Mentoring will be a major initiative of David Morganstein. (GSS, with WSS, is the only section with a mentoring award, the Griffith Award.)
  - Where is statistics in the bigger world of data science?
- There was some discussion of other skills statisticians need, such as communication and collaboration. The Conference on Statistical Practice emphasizes many of these other skills.

## 7. JSM 2015

- Jenny summarized the GSS sessions:
  - GSS has 3 invited sessions. (details will be sent to Jennifer for the minutes)
  - GSS will have 7 topic contributed, 7 contributed, 1 speed poster and 1 regular poster session.
  - Jenny will write an article about these sessions for the newsletter and for Amstat news.
  - The number and distribution of sessions is similar to that for 2014.
  - New this year, the number of topic contributed sessions is capped and the number differs by section.
  - The student competition had 5 winners.
- Luncheons and roundtables.
  - Morgan will send the details of the roundtables for the minutes.
  - Roundtables added to minutes below on June 21, 2015
    - Monday – AM: Issues in Implementing Adaptive Survey Design, Peter Miller
    - Monday – PM: Applications of Regression Trees in Survey Data Analysis, Daniell Toth
    - Tuesday – PM: Writing for Publication, Ingegerd Jansson, Statistics Sweden
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- GSS Data Challenge
  - 15 people expressed an interest, 8 submitted abstracts. Of the 8, 4 will be in a Topic Contributed session and 4 will be in the Speed Poster session.
  - Jill will be the discussant at the Topic Contributed session.
  - We need judges for the talks and posters. Wendy will send out a call to the GSS members. Sylvia will share the criteria used to judge posters at the CSP.
  - Thank you to Nancy Bates for coordinating the data set for the Data Challenge.
- Tentative dates for the Executive Board Meeting (Tuesday Aug 11 @ 7:00 am) and the Business Meeting (Tuesday Aug 11 @ 5:30 or 6:00 pm) need to be confirmed. Food is more expensive in Seattle than it was in Boston.

- Continuing Education proposals can be sponsored by sections with shares in the gains or losses. Proposals for JSM 2016 are due Sept 30, 2015 so now is a good time to think about this. Financial risk can be shared with co-sponsorship. ASA and the section (or sections) share responsibility 50-50.
  - CE courses require room, catering, AV, presenter honorarium and travel, etc.
  - JSM courses of possible interest to GSS member are not well attended, in part due to the courses offered in the DC area by WSS and JPSM.
  - Some possible courses were mentioned: federal resume writing, using government data, personal skills (effective presentations, collaboration, leadership).

## 8. Awards

- Jeanne Griffith Mentoring Award – Nominations are due April 3.
- Wray Jackson Smith Award – Wendy will send Jennifer the email from Jennifer Park about the winner of this award. Only one person applied this year but he had a good proposal.

(from Amstat News, added to minutes June 21, 2015)

### **WRAY JACKSON SMITH 2015 SCHOLARSHIP AWARD WINNER**

*Submitted by Jenny Guarino (Wray Jackson Smith Award Selection Committee)*

Jonathan Auerbach, a doctoral student in the Statistics Department at Columbia University, is the winner of the 2015 Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship.

Jonathan graduated with a bachelor's degree in economics from Cornell University, and is currently a first year Ph.D. student in statistics at Columbia University. Jonathan's interests lie in the intersection of policy and statistics. Prior to starting his PhD program, he worked as a research associate at the CUNY Center for Urban Research and, prior to that, as an analyst for the New York City Council. Jonathan has participated in a variety of research projects with New York City agencies, with a focus on program evaluation. Currently he is working with the Department of Parks and Recreation to assess their response to natural disasters and with the Departments of Small Business Services and Design and Construction on identifying the impact of the MWBE program.

Jonathan is also interested in open data and government transparency. He has presented before the City Council at a 2013 hearing on the NYC Open Data Plan, and has written into publications such as Amstat News on the political challenges. Jonathan also demonstrated the value of open data by estimating the number of rats in New York City, which won the 2014 YSS/Significance Young Statistician's Writing Competition.

Jonathan plans to use the Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship to subsidize travel expenses to JSM this year and next year where he will present recent work with Parks and Recreation.

Members of the 2015 Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship Committee are: Jennifer Park (Chair), Joseph Salvo, and Jenny Guarino. Join us in congratulating Jonathan on his accomplishment.

- Roger Herriot Award – Nominations close April 1. Jill will distribute an update on this award.
- Student paper (see above from Morgan). There were 27 submissions and 5 winners. The award will be given at the session. Morgan will confirm with SMRS and SSS about specifics of the award amount. The most likely option is that the award will be in the form of a reimbursement for expenses.
- Pat Doyle Award. Mike, Jill and Wendy will meet about this award. Wendy will send out a call to the message board for nominees.

## 9. Conference Sponsorship

- ICES V
  - Conference will be held in Geneva, Switzerland on June 20-23, 2016; coordinated by the Swiss Statistical Office
  - GSS has contributed toward the “base” sponsorship for the conference, at a fee of \$500.
- Total Survey Error (TSE) Conference 2015
  - TSE 15 planned for Sept 19-21, 2015
  - Conference will be held in Baltimore, MD, sponsored by several organizations, including GSS.

#### **10. Council of Sections report**

- Ken Copeland provided an update
  - An update on awards – if there are awards that involve paying for registration or travel, ASA has changed from paying up front to paying reimbursements
  - New section proposal being developed: Lifetime Data Analysis

#### **11. Other business**

- Update on corporate sponsorship
  - Ken will be preparing to seek section sponsors and will work with Amanda. There were 3 sponsors last year.
- Wendy will look into door prizes for a raffle at the business meeting.
- Further discussion on the Data Challenge
  - Should it be annual or alternate years?
  - What are the downsides? The cost of the award is \$500 each (not too much money), too few entries, judges are needed for specific sessions
  - Ken suggested targeting programs in Data Science
  - The Challenge can be a good classroom tool – this could be shared with the Caucus of Academic Representatives and the ASA student chapters.
  - Should the Data Challenge become a separate GSS position given the large amount of work required?
- Jill has begun looking for the election slate for the next election (for the 2017 board).

#### **12. Meeting closed.**