

GSS/SSS January 2013 NEWSLETTER
Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections
American Statistical Association

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**UPCOMING DEADLINES AND EVENTS:**

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>February 4</b>      | Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) 2013 online submission of<br>abstracts, invited posters, introductory overview lectures, topic and<br>regular contributed abstracts <b>DEADLINE</b> |
| <b>February 21-23</b>  | Conference on Statistical Practice—New Orleans, LA                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>August 3-8</b>      | JSM 2013—Montreal, Quebec, Canada                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>September 16-18</b> | 2013 ASA Biopharmaceutical Section FDA-Industry Statistics<br>Workshop—Washington, DC                                                                                                |
| <b>October 9-11</b>    | 10 <sup>th</sup> International Conference on Health Policy Statistics—Chicago,<br>IL                                                                                                 |

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2012 OUTGOING CHAIRS' MESSAGES NEW!

Submitted by Brian Harris-Kojetin (2012 Chair, Government Statistics Section)

Thank you for the privilege of allowing me to serve as the Chair of the Government Statistics Section for 2012. I greatly appreciated the assistance and support of the Executive Committee, especially Kevin Cecco, Steve Paben, and Rick Peterson, who answered all my questions, and made my job easy. It was also a genuine pleasure working with Joe Salvo, the 2012 chair of the Social Statistics Section, to revise our membership fees and put both sections on firmer financial footing going forward, and to strengthen the ties between our sections.

We had an excellent slate of sessions at the Joint Statistical Meeting (JSM) in San Diego due to the active participation of our members and the organizing abilities of Daniell Toth and Eric Rancourt. We had three invited sessions, 16 topic contributed sessions, four contributed sessions, and two roundtable discussions.

In addition, GSS helped sponsor two international conferences in 2012: the International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES), which was held June 11-14 in Montreal, and the International Conference on Survey Methods for Hard to Reach Populations, which was held in New Orleans October 31-November 3. The fact that the finances of the section remain in good health allows us to take on these sponsorships as services to our members.

GSS also sponsors or co-sponsors a number of awards recognizing the great service and contributions of our members to the profession. This includes the Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award which encourages the mentoring of junior government staff with respect to statistics. The 2012 winner was William Mockovak. We are a co-sponsor for the Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics, which this year recognized the exceptional work of Paul Biemer. The Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship was won by Julia Shin-Jung Lee and John Tipton. The Pat Doyle Award is given in recognition of outstanding service to the GSS, and I am also pleased to announce that we recognized Carol House with this award for 2012. Details about each award can be found on the GSS website <http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/>.

In conclusion, I want to express my thanks to the Executive Committee for their service and contributions in 2012, with special recognition of the service of those who are rotating off this year: Robert Lussier, Daniell Toth, and Sonya Vartivarian. I am delighted to welcome to the Executive Committee this year Jill Montiquilla as 2013 Chair Elect, Grace O'Neill as 2013 Program Chair Elect, and Nancy Bates as Publications Officer. I look forward to continuing to work with my great friend Lisa Blumerman, as she takes over as Chair of GSS for 2013.

My thanks to all of the members of the Government Statistics Section for making this an active and vibrant organization and giving me the opportunity to serve.

Submitted by Joseph Salvo (2012 Chair, Social Statistics Section)

Having spent the last year as Chair of the Social Statistics Section, I just want to say “thank you” to the members of the executive committee who provided me with so much help. My first “thank you” is to Liz Stuart and Debbie Griffin, who served as JSM 2012 Program Chair and Program Chair-Elect. Having served in both of these roles, I can say that I really do understand how much work it takes to produce the kind of fine program we saw in San Diego.

As you know, I began the year with an evaluation of the Section’s finances and leaned on the executive committee for guidance about how best to proceed. With diminishing returns on our reserves and increased costs associated with JSM each year, it became necessary to re-evaluate our dues structure. With the help of John Thompson, Linda Jacobsen, Rob Santos, Natalya Verbitsky-Savitz, Joanna Turner, and other members of the executive committee and Section, we took a close look at our membership numbers, dues structure, and finances. While our request for the ASA Board to rescind its policy of charging Sections for free memberships did not succeed, we did go on record concerning our belief that billing Sections for free memberships was unfair. (Special thanks to Rob Santos, our former Council of Sections Representative and now Chair-elect for his help with this issue.) Just as important, we did manage to update our dues structure in concert with the Government Statistics Section this past September. I want to thank Brian Harris-Kojetin, former Chair of GSS, for working with us on this initiative.

One of my biggest frustrations, and one that is shared by all members of our executive committee, has to do with providing support for causes that promote our profession in an environment of shrinking resources. Providing support for a number of awards, such as the Roger Herriot Award and those given in the Student Paper Competition, along with support for the 2012 Conference on Methods for Surveying and Enumerating Hard-to-Reach Populations and 2012 Statfest, is an essential part of what we do as a Section. While the increase in dues will lead to a modest increase in income, the fact is that setting priorities regarding activities to support will be an important task of the executive committee going forward. Moreover, this past year the executive committee began a discussion on potential new sources of support besides dues, new ways to increase membership, as well as a review of the costs associated with our annual meeting. Finally, the executive committee continues to try to better understand the needs of Section members, and how best to work with the Government Statistics Section to promote greater interest in joint SSS-GSS membership.

Since I am now Past-Chair, I am not “off the hook” on any of these issues! I will be passing the baton to Linda Jacobsen, and assisting her with what will be an interesting and challenging agenda as we move forward.

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**PLANNING FOR JSM 2013: CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS TO CHAIR CONTRIBUTED SESSIONS, CALL TO SUBMIT TOPIC CONTRIBUTED SESSION, AND INVITED PAPER SESSIONS NEW!**

*Submitted by Eric Rancourt (GSS Program Chair) and Deborah Griffin (SSS Program Chair)*

**CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS TO CHAIR CONTRIBUTED SESSIONS**

If you are going to attend the 2013 Joint Statistical Meetings in Montreal, Quebec, Canada (August 3- 8, 2013), you are invited to volunteer as a contributed session chair for SSS or GSS-sponsored sessions. To volunteer, please contact Deborah Griffin (SSS 2013 Program Chair, [Deborah.H.Griffin@census.gov](mailto:Deborah.H.Griffin@census.gov)) or Eric Rancourt (GSS 2013 Program Chair, [Eric.Rancourt@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:Eric.Rancourt@statcan.gc.ca)).

**CALL TO SUBMIT TOPIC-CONTRIBUTED SESSIONS**

If you are interested in submitting a topic-contributed session to the GSS, please enter it directly in the system through the ASA website and identify the sponsoring session as Government Statistics Section. The organizing committee will then determine which session will be retained and whether the right section is identified if retained. Should you have any questions, please contact Eric Rancourt ([Eric.Rancourt@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:Eric.Rancourt@statcan.gc.ca)).

**GSS INVITED PAPER SESSIONS**

We are pleased to announce the GSS invited paper sessions for the 2013 JSM.

**Monday, August 5**

|              |                                                                                                      |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2:00-3:50 pm | “Graphical Approaches for Survey Data,” <i>Organizer: Wendy Martinez, Bureau of Labor Statistics</i> |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Tuesday, August 6**

|                    |                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10:30 am -12:20 pm | “Measuring Relationships in U.S. Federal Household Surveys,”<br><i>Organizer: Brian Harris-Kojetin, U.S. Office of Management and Budget</i> |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Wednesday August 7**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:30-10:20 am | “Elicitation of Data Users’ Utility Functions and Prior Information in Work with Large-scale Data Collection,”<br><i>Organizer: John Eltinge, Bureau of Labor Statistics</i> |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**SSS INVITED PAPER SESSIONS**

We are pleased to announce the SSS invited paper sessions for the 2013 JSM.

**Sunday, August 4**

2:00-3:50 pm                      “The Undercount of Young Children in Official Statistics”

**Monday, August 5**

10:30 am-12:20 pm              “Toward Better Statistical Methods for Causal Inference”

**Tuesday, August 6**

8:30-10:20 am                      “New Developments in the Use of Smartphones for Survey Research”

**Wednesday, August 7**

2:00-3:50 pm                      “Would the Real Steve Fienberg Please Stand Up: Getting to Know a Population from Multiple Incomplete Files”

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NOMINATIONS FOR JEANNE E GRIFFITH MENTORING AWARD NEW!

Submitted by Kevin Cecco, Griffith Award Selection Committee

The Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award was established to honor Dr. Griffith who died in August 2001 after working for more than 25 years in the Federal statistical system. Throughout her career, and especially in her latter senior management positions at the National Center for Education Statistics and the National Science Foundation, one of Jeanne’s highest priorities was to mentor and encourage younger staff at all levels to learn, to grow, and to recognize and seize career opportunities as they came along.

The winning mentor(s) will be selected for his or her efforts in supporting the work and developing the careers of junior staff. Examples of typical mentoring activities include:

- Advising junior staff to help them create career opportunities, networking skills, and contacts for growth and development;
- Counseling junior staff and providing resources to help develop their technical writing, analysis, presentation and organizational skills and knowledge;
- Encouraging junior staff growth and career development through attendance and oral presentations at meetings with higher level officials, staffs of other agencies, professional associations, training courses, and conferences;
- Motivating junior staff and building self confidence through feedback on their efforts, being a listener when that is needed, and creating a caring and supportive environment;

- Serving as a role model for junior staff through professional expertise, information and insights, balancing collegial and personal roles, and including everyone across rank, race, ethnicity, and seniority.

The previous recipients of the Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award are: Rich Allen (National Agriculture Statistical Service), 2003; Beth Kilss (Internal Revenue Service), 2004; Renee Miller (Energy Information Administration), 2005; Martin O'Connell (U.S. Census Bureau), 2006; Stephanie Shipp (National Institute of Standards and Technology – at the time of the award), 2007; Rosemary D. Marcuss (Bureau of Economic Analysis), 2008; Kevin Cecco (Internal Revenue Service), Lillian S. Lin (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), 2009; Deborah H. Griffin (U.S. Bureau of the Census), 2010; Jenise L. Swall (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), 2011, and William Mockovac (Bureau of Labor Statistics) 2012.

Nominations should be prepared in the form of a letter or memorandum for the Award Selection Committee:

- The letter or memorandum should summarize the nominee's actions that support and encourage junior staff in the Federal, State, or Local statistical community in developing their careers.
- **Nominations may be accompanied by up to six supporting letters. These should be attached to, and submitted with, the nomination.**
- The Award Selection Committee finds that descriptions of what nominees actually do are the strongest demonstration of candidate mentoring. Here are some examples: the mentor is a source of advice...counsels with long-term goals in mind...thought I was well qualified even though I had some doubts...encourages staff to seek out positions that will increase their visibility and stretch their professional capabilities. These are more explicit and unique to the mentor than generic statements such as: the mentor is a coach...a teacher.
- Photo copies and email copies of support letters are acceptable.

Nominations for 2013 will be accepted beginning in **January 2013**. The last date for submission of nominations is **April 5, 2013** and the Award Committee will make its determination of the award winner by **April 30, 2013**. The award will consist of a \$1,000 honorarium (to be split if there is more than one awardee), a citation, and a plaque, which will be presented at a ceremony arranged by the co-sponsors in **June 2013**.

The nomination package must be mailed or emailed **no later than April 5, 2013**, to:

The Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award Committee
c/o The American Statistical Association
732 N. Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-1943
rick@amstat.org

Sponsors of the Award: The Government Statistics Section (GSS) of the American Statistical Association manages the award. GSS would like to thank our co-sponsors:

- National Opinion Research Center (NORC),
- Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS),
- American Institutes for Research (AIR),
- American Educational Research Association (AERA),
- STATA,
- Social Statistics Section, American Statistical Association,
- Washington Statistical Society,
- Westat, and
- Interagency Council on Statistical Policy (ICSP).

Please contact Stephanie Shipp (ssh1pp@ida.org), if you would like to contribute to the award.

For more information about the nominating process for the 2013 award, please go to:
<http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/JEGform13.doc> or <http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/JEGform13.pdf>.
If you have questions about the award, please contact **Rick Peterson** at rick@amstat.org or (703) 684-1221, and **Kevin Cecco** at kevin.cecco@irs.gov or 202-874-0464.

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**2013 WRAY JACKSON SMITH SCHOLARSHIP NEW!**

*Submitted by Polly Phipps, Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship Committee Chair*

The Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship (WJSS) was created to honor the memory of a founding member of the GSS and a long-time contributor to federal statistics. Dr. Smith's federal career spanned four decades and included positions in the Office of Economic Opportunity, where he was responsible for the operational start-up of the Job Corps and evaluation of manpower development programs; the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in what was then the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, where he oversaw the policy research data center and directed the Income Survey Development Program (the predecessor to the Survey of Income and Program Participation); and the Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, where he directed energy modeling and data systems development and provided oversight of the Department's surveys of energy consumption in multiple sectors. After retiring from the federal government in 1983, Dr. Smith continued to play a role in federal statistics from the private sector, first as a visiting senior fellow at Mathematica Policy Research and then at Synectics for Management Decisions, Inc., before founding Harris-Smith Research, an operations research/management science consulting group, with Carl Harris. In 1997 Dr. Smith established the independent, nonprofit Harris-Smith Institutes to provide statistical research and a range of other services to other nonprofit organizations and governmental entities. He served as president of the organization until his death at the age of 75, in May 2000.

The WJSS was established by the GSS in 2001, with several other organizations recognized as Founding Sponsors. These include the Social Statistics Section (SSS) of ASA, which joined the GSS in 2005 as a primary sponsor of the award; the Caucus for Women in Statistics; the Washington Statistical Society; and both Mathematica and Synectics. In addition, upon its disbandment in 2002, the Harris-Smith Institutes donated a substantial sum to the scholarship fund, which achieved a milestone in 2004 by reaching \$25,000, sufficient to establish an endowment through the ASA.

The WJSS is intended to encourage young statisticians to consider a career in government service. The WJSS Award provides funding of \$1,000 to be used in ways that will advance the recipient's exposure to or experience with the application of statistics to problems relevant to any level of government. Past winners have used their awards to attend the Joint Statistical Meetings or other professional conferences; to take short courses or college classes on topics related to data analysis, measurement, or data quality; and to support aspects of their continued public policy research. Funds may be used for travel, board, tuition or registration fees, or for the purchase of books, software, data sets, or other supporting materials for research projects.

The WJSS is targeted at students and others early in their careers who show an interest in government statistics. Applicants must have a Bachelor's degree or equivalent level of education. Membership in the GSS, SSS, or the ASA is not required. Applicants are asked to submit a proposal for the activity to be funded and to complete an application form (found on the GSS website at <<http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt>>) and provide two letters of recommendation. Materials should be submitted to:

Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship Committee  
c/o Polly Phipps  
2 Massachusetts Ave N.E., Suite 1950  
Washington D.C. 20212-0001

or electronically to [phipps.polly@bls.gov](mailto:phipps.polly@bls.gov). The application deadline for this year's award is **April 1, 2013**.

Other members of the 2013 Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship Committee are Linda Gage, and Jennifer Park. Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria: relevance of the proposed activity to government statistics, quality of the proposed activity, innovation/ingenuity of the proposed project, feasibility of completion of the activity, the applicant's career stage, and past performance as reflected in the letters of recommendation. The award winner will be announced by mid-April, 2013. All applicants will be notified by e-mail.

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NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR ROGER HERRIOT AWARD NEW!

Submitted by Jill Montaquila, Chair of the Roger Herriot Award Committee

Nominations are sought for the **2013 Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics**. The award is intended to reflect the special characteristics that marked Roger Herriot's career including:

- Dedication to the issues of measurement;
- Improvements in the efficiency of data collection programs; and
- Improvements and use of statistical data for policy analysis.

The award is not limited to senior members of an organization, nor is it to be considered as a culmination of a long period of service. Individuals or teams at all levels within Federal statistical agencies, other government organizations, nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and the academic community may be nominated on the basis of their contributions. As innovation often requires or results from teamwork, team nominations are encouraged. Team innovations often are more lasting, resulting in real paradigm shifts, not just one-off improvements. For an example, see the 1998 Herriot (team) award.

The recipient of the 2013 Roger Herriot Award will be chosen by a committee comprising representatives of the Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections of the American Statistical Association, and of the Washington Statistical Society. Roger Herriot was associated with, and strongly supportive of, these organizations during his career. The award consists of a \$1,000 honorarium and a framed citation, which will be presented at a ceremony at the Joint Statistical Meetings in August 2013. The Washington Statistical Society will also host a seminar given by the winner on a subject of his or her own choosing.

The previous recipients of the Roger Herriot Award are Joseph Waksberg (Westat); Monroe Sirken (National Center for Health Statistics); Constance Citro (National Academy of Sciences); Roderick Harrison (U.S. Census Bureau) and Clyde Tucker (Bureau of Labor Statistics); Thomas Jabine (SSA, EIA, CNSTAT); Donald Dillman (Washington State University); Jeanne Griffith (OMB, NCES, NSF); Daniel Weinberg (U. S. Census Bureau); David Banks (FDA, BTS, NIST); Paula Schneider (U.S. Census Bureau); Robert E. Fay III (U.S. Census Bureau); Nathaniel Schenker (National Center for Health Statistics); Nancy J. Kirkendall (Office of Management and Budget); Elizabeth Martin (U.S. Census Bureau); Lynda Carlson (National Science Foundation); Katharine Abraham (University of Maryland); Michael Messner (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency); and Paul Biemer (RTI International).

Nominations for the 2013 award will be accepted beginning in **January 2013**. Nomination packages should contain:

- A cover letter from the nominator that includes references to specific examples of the nominee's contributions to innovation in Federal statistics. These contributions can be to methodology, procedure, organization, administration, or

other areas of Federal statistics, and need not have been made by or while a Federal employee.

- Up to six additional letters in support that demonstrate the innovativeness of each contribution.
- A current vita for the nominee with current contact information. For team nominations, the vitae of all team members should be included.

The committee may consider nominations made for prior years, but it encourages resubmission of those nominations with updated information.

For more information, contact Jill M. Montaquila, Chair of the 2013 Roger Herriot Award Committee, at 301-517-4046 or jillmontaquila@westat.com. **Completed packages must be received by April 1, 2013.** Electronic submissions in MS-Word or as a "pdf" file are strongly encouraged.

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**COUNCIL OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS ON FEDERAL STATISTICS: DECEMBER 2012 MEETING MINUTES    NEW!**

*Submitted by John Dixon, COPAFS Representative, Government Statistics Section*

Complete minutes are available at <http://www.copafs.org/minutes/december2012.aspx> , as well, copies of presentations are available at [http://www.copafs.org/meetings/december\\_2012.aspx](http://www.copafs.org/meetings/december_2012.aspx).

Brief summary:

- New board voted in, Kitty Smith is the new Executive Director (replacing Ed Spar), FCSM presentations will be posted to the FCSM site, along with Bob Groves address.
- Presentations
  - *Cynthia Clark, National Agricultural Statistics Service.* "NASS Methodological, Operational and Structural Transformation" explained how they reduced the number of regional centers from 46 to 12, as well as performing other streamlining moves to control the budget while maintaining quality.
  - *Clyde Tucker, Consultant.* "Looking at Presidential Polling After the Election" reviewed the various polls used in the election and commented on methodological issues (nonresponse, voter turnout, etc.).
  - *Peter Miller & Michael Thieme, Census Bureau.* "Launching Adaptive Design at the U.S. Census Bureau" described the Center for Adaptive Design at the Census Bureau and how it researches, plans, and implements different phases in survey collection to maintain quality while reducing costs.
  - *Dennis Fixler, Bureau of Economic Analysis.* "Revisions to BEA's Estimates of GDP and GDI" started with a pre-emptive clarification that revisions are not errors – a point often misunderstood by journalists and policymakers. Revised estimates, Fixler explained, are made because

data release schedules are fixed and available data sources become more complete and of higher quality with the passage of time. Revisions are the combination of new data and revisions to seasonal factors. In fact, research shows that revisions to seasonal factors can dominate the total revisions – or sometimes the two can offset to a net of very little overall revision.

- After the presentations, a question was raised about the possibility of a COPAFS blog. One is being discussed.

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GOVERNMENT STATISTICS SECTION

The mission of the Government Statistics Section (GSS) is to promote the use of sound statistical theory and methods in the production of data at all levels of government--be it Federal, State, local, or international; assist in the broad dissemination of those data; and encourage good statistical practice by all users. Areas of interest for the Section include all that involve the production, dissemination, and application of governmental statistics, including concern with statistical policy issues, quality and usefulness of governmental data products, special problems of State and local data, comparability of data among different countries, and the role of professional statisticians in the public sector.

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2013 GSS CORPORATE SPONSORS

U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce
Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), U.S. Department of Commerce
National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), U.S. Department of Agriculture
National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

SOCIAL STATISTICS SECTION

The Social Statistics Section seeks to advance research in social statistics, both in areas which involve the use of methods of statistical inquiry, and in those which involve the use of statistical data and the development of statistical measurement. This section will also plan for active participation in the affairs of the American Statistical Association by those interested in these matters and for representation of activities in this major field in the program of the ASA.

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