## GSS/SSS JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections American Statistical Association

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### **UPCOMING DEADLINES AND EVENTS:**

| rebruary |  |
|----------|--|
| 28       | Nominations Deadline for the 2011 Gertrude M. Cox Award            |
| March    |  |
| 1        | Deadline for Submitting Invited Paper Session Proposal for ICES IV |
| 25       | Nominations Deadline for Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award        |
| April    | ·  |
| 1        | H2R 2010: Contributed Call for Submissions Begins                  |
| 1        | Nominations Deadline for Herriot Award                             |
| August   |  |
| 31       | Deadline for Submitting a Contributed Paper for ICES IV            |
|          |  |

### GOVERNMENT STATISTICS SECTION 2010 OUTGOING CHAIR'S MESSAGE NEW!

Submitted by John Dixon, 2010 Chair, Government Statistics Section

The accomplishments of GSS over the past year are due to the work of an excellent executive committee. The Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) have the most member participation, as well as the most effort from the executive committee. GSS had an excellent program at JSM 2010 (thanks to Lisa Blumerman and Iris Shimizu). We had a successful poster competition with one winner (Kirsten Jones) and two honorable mentions. We succeeded in having six sold out roundtables/breakfast sessions. Participants seem to have enjoyed the choice of subjects and the discussion with the roundtable leaders.

We are a permanent sponsor for ICES (the International Conference on Establishment Surveys). This very successful event takes place every three or four years and explores the current state of the art in survey methodology for business, institutional, and agricultural surveys. The next conference (ICES IV) will take place in Montreal in June 2012. GSS is also one of the sponsors of the International Conference on Methods for Surveying and Enumerating Hard-to-Reach Populations in New Orleans, October 31-November 3, 2012. The fact that the finances of the section are in good health allows us to take these initiatives as services to our members.

Our membership declined slightly over the year, particularly as free memberships expired. This was typical of most sections of the ASA. We hope all current GSS members continue to encourage other statisticians to join the Section. You are welcome to submit articles for our monthly newsletter by contacting Natalya Verbitsky-Savitz, GSS newsletter editor, at NVSavitz@mathematica-mpr.com. Also do not miss our regular articles in Amstat News (including our summaries of COPAFS meetings).

GSS took over the management of the Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award (2010 recipient was Debbie Griffin). This award encourages mentoring of junior government staff with respect to statistics. Stephanie Shipp and Beth Kilss did an excellent job setting up the procedures for the management of the award. This includes not only the publicity, solicitation of nominations, selection of recipients, etc, but also the raising of funds to cover the annual honoraria as well as the expenses associated with a reception and the awards.

GSS also sponsors or co-sponsors several other awards. I want to encourage members to submit names as potential recipients for these awards. There is a monetary contribution that accompanies most of these awards. Details about the awards can be found on the GSS website <a href="http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/">http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/</a>, including the purposes of the awards, the contact persons and how to make nominations. GSS sponsors the Pat Doyle award (2010 recipient Bill Wong), the Roger Herriot Award (2010 recipient Katherine Abraham), the Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship, and finally awards for a student paper competition (5 awards were given in 2010) and for a poster paper competition at JSM (3 awards were given in 2010).

Finally, I want to thank all my colleagues on the executive committee as well as all contributors to the activities of the Section who have made 2010 a very successful year. I especially want to thank the three members who are leaving the executive committee (Lisa Blumerman, Steve Cohen, Lester Curtin) for their contributions over the years. I also want to thank our eight sponsors for their support (Bureau of Labor Statistics; CDC - National Center for Health

Statistics; Internal Revenue Service–Statistics of Income Division; National Science Foundation; U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Dept of Agriculture–National Agricultural Statistical Service; U.S. Dept of Commerce–Bureau of Economic Analysis; and U.S. Social Security Administration).

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION SCIENCE INTEGRITY MEMO INCLUDES GOOD NEWS FOR ASA GOVERNANCE AND GOVERNMENT STATISTICIANS: MORE STEPS NECESSARY NEW!

Submitted by Steve Pierson, Director of Science Policy, American Statistical Association

Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Director John Holdren issued a scientific integrity memo to the heads of administration departments and agencies on December 17. While the scientific community and others will welcome many parts of the memorandum, the following excerpt on promoting professional development of government scientists is especially welcome to American Statistical Association (ASA) because of the integral role government scientists play in ASA governance:

"Allow full participation in professional or scholarly societies, committees, task forces and other specialized bodies of professional societies, including removing barriers for serving as officers or on governing boards of such societies."

With ASA's practice of having a president and vice-president from the government sector every three years (with presidents and vice-presidents from academia and industry completing the cycle), the ASA Nominating Committee has reported difficulty in securing candidates from the government sector. Such restrictions can also apply to service in ASA sections, chapters and committees. The reasons vary from such service not being allowed to requiring the person to use personal leave time for the professional society service. The widely varying policies across agencies are partially influenced by differing interpretations of a criminal statute (18 U.S.C. §208) regarding business with private organizations where financial conflicts of interest might arise.

From ASA's point of view, the restrictions are a hindrance because it is important for the professional needs of federal scientists be directly represented in ASA governance and because ASA would benefit from the perspective of federal scientists.

Joining with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the Ornithological Council, the Wildlife Society, and the Society for Conservation Biology, ASA had meetings at OSTP, the Office of Government Ethics and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) requesting a government-wide set of standards to guide federal employee participation on the boards of scientific professional societies and a legislative or regulatory measure to 18 allowing service on the scientific professional society boards.

To make our case, the groups cited the potential to raise the profile of a federal scientist's department/agency as place for high-quality, cutting-edge research, thereby helping to recruit scientists to federal service. We also noted the converse, that current restrictions could dissuade the best scientists from entering federal service because of the role professional society governance can play in helping one advance professional stature. We also pointed out OPM's

Research Grade Evaluation Guide listing "invitations to address or to assume a leadership role in national professional organizations and associated committees" as a highest level factor for its evaluation system grading criteria.

Recognizing the important ethical issues, the groups also cited the current practice of government scientists to excuse themselves from any professional society discussion where a possible conflict of interest could apply.

Holdren's memo, which was a follow up to Obama's Presidential Memorandum on Scientific Integrity from March 9, 2009, is but a first step. A regulatory or legislative fix to U.S.C §208, on which we understand the Office of Personnel Management and Office of Government Ethics are working, is still an objective. Government agencies must also review and change their respective policies regarding government scientists serving in scientific professional society leadership.

I invite ASA Members to join the Science Policy Group in the ASA Community. I will send members of this group updates on ASA science policy actions, notifications of new blogs, and ask for input on ASA science policy activities.

For more information and links to relevant documents, please, go to http://community.amstat.org/AMSTAT/AMSTAT/Blogs/BlogViewer/Default.aspx?BlogKey=dd 97cda2-e8b4-4e63-b093-d1aab355b078

#### THE NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD TRAVEL SURVEY NEW!

Submitted by Adella Santos, NHTS Program Manager, U.S. Department of Transportation

Good information helps make good decisions. The Federal Highway Administration's National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) is the flagship survey of the Department of Transportation that serves the Administration, Congress, state and local agencies, researchers and the public by providing sound information on the daily travel of the United States' residents.

The NHTS has been conducted since 1969, and the most recent iteration—the 2009 NHTS—caps the data series which now includes 40 years of trends in travel behavior. Importantly, the NHTS includes information on all modes of travel (e.g., by foot, bike, public transportation, car) and for all purposes (e.g., going to school or work, shopping, short-term pleasure trips, walking the dog).

In addition to providing travel statistics, the detailed information about the households, persons, vehicles, and travel day activities can be used to understand:

- Characteristics of drivers and passengers, such as age, sex, and household income;
- Trends in active transportation, such as walking and biking;
- The impact of on-line shopping and deliveries to the home on trip making;
- The aging of the population and growing unmet mobility needs;
- The effect of gas prices on vehicle use and shifts to other modes;
- The impact of flexible hours, working at home, and working past retirement on travel.

2009 NHTS is the largest household travel survey in the series. It consists of a nationally-representative core sample of 26,000 households and an add-on sample of over 125,000 households across 15 states and five localities to be used for local planning purposes. The total sample is made up of over 150,000 households, 300,000 person interviews, and nearly 1 million types of trips they made.

One of the example new initiatives associated with the 2009 NHTS is child travel to school data collection. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) partnered with the Safe Routes to School program to coordinate definitions and collect data for school travel across the nation. Data were collected on distance to school; whether the child attends before and/or after school activities; mode of transportation used to get the child to and from school; party size if they walk or bike; time it takes to arrive and more.

We found that, since 1969, there has been a dramatic increase in the use of private vehicles to transport children to school. In 1969, NHTS found that only 15 percent of school aged children were driven to school in private vehicles. Four decades later, the 2009 NHTS finds that 75 percent of children arrive at school in a private vehicle. This concerns planners and policy makers because walking contributes to children's health, reduces emissions and congestion around schools, and adds to the quality of life in a community.

Furthermore, national and local policies focus on encouraging children who live less than 2 miles from school to walk or bike to school. Until the NHTS 2009, however, there was no national estimate of the number or percent of school-aged children nationwide who lived within that distance. The 2009 NHTS estimates that nearly half (46 percent) of school aged children live within the 2-mile target area.

Understanding the number of children who live within walking distance of school, and listening to parent's attitudes and concerns about letting their children walk, is instrumental in formulating guidance to the Safe Route to School initiatives, and for other policies related to this special population's health and safety. In the survey, parents of school aged children between ages of 5 and 15 who lived within 2 miles of school were asked in detail about what concerned them about allowing their child to walk or bike to school. The number one concern was traffic (37%), followed by too far to walk or bike (~33%).

For more information on this topic and many others, look for the NHTS Topic Briefs on our website:

http://nhts.ornl.gov

# NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR THE 2011 GERTRUDE M. COX AWARD NEW!

Submitted by Karol Krotki, Chair, WSS 2011 Cox Committee

The Gertrude M. Cox Award Committee is seeking nominees for the 2011 Gertrude M Cox Award. The award was established in 2003 through a joint agreement between the Washington Statistical Society (WSS) and RTI International. The award annually recognizes a statistician in early to mid-career (less than 15 years after his/her terminal degree) who has made significant

contributions to one or more of the areas of applied statistics in which Gertrude Cox worked: survey methodology, experimental design, biostatistics, and statistical computing.

The award is in memory of Gertrude M. Cox (1900-1978). In 1945, Dr.Cox became director of the Institute of Statistics of the Consolidated University of North Carolina. In the 1950's, as Head of the Department of Experimental Statistics at North Carolina State College, she played a key role in establishing Mathematical Statistics and Biostatistics Departments at the University of North Carolina. Upon her retirement from North Carolina State University in 1960, Dr. Cox became the first head of Statistical Research Division at the newly founded RTI. She was a founding member of the International Biometric Society (IBS) and in 1949 became the first woman elected into the International Statistical Institute. She served as president of both The American Statistical Association (1956) and the IBS (1968-69). In 1975 she was elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

The award is presented at the WSS Annual Dinner, usually held in June, with the recipient delivering the keynote address on a topic of general interest to the WSS membership.

This award is made possible by funding from RTI International, and the recipient is chosen by a six-person committee - three each from WSS and RTI. This year's committee consists of Jonaki Bose, Michael Brick, and John Eltinge from WSS; Marcus Berzofsky, Phil Kott, and Karol Krotki (Chair) from RTI. The award consists of a \$1,000 honorarium, travel expenses to attend the WSS Annual Dinner, and a commemorative WSS plaque. Past recipients have been Sharon Lohr, Alan Zaslavsky, Tom Belin, Vance Berger, Francesca Domenici, Thomas Lumley, Jean Opsomer, and Michael Elliott.

Please email your nominations to Karol Krotki (kkrotki@rti.org) by **February 28, 2011**. A bio or cv is sufficent – there is no formal application form.

### NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR JEANNE E. GRIFFITH MENTORING AWARD

Submitted by Carol House, 2011 Chair, Griffith Award Selection Committee

It is time to start thinking about nominating an outstanding supervisor, technical director, team coordinator, or other member of a governmental statistical staff who encourages mentoring of junior staff in the Federal, State, or Local statistical system for the 2011 Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award. Nominations must be submitted no later than March 25, 2011.

If you're not familiar with the award or would like more information about the current honoree and the history of the award, see the excellent article (including some pictures from the ceremony) in the August 2010 issue of *Amstat News* or go to http://magazine.amstat.org/blog/2010/08/01/governmentstataug10/.

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.

**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), and
- Interagency Council on Statistical Policy (ICSP).

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

Nominations for 2011 will be accepted beginning in **January 2011.** The last date for submission of nominations is **March 25, 2011**, and the Award Committee will make its determination of the award winner by **April 22, 2011**. 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 2011**.

The nomination packages are reviewed by a committee comprising six members who each serve a six-year term. Andy Orlin, Jeanne Griffith's husband, serves as emeritus member, thus providing continuity and historical perspective.

The recipients of the Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award previous to this year's awardee 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) and Lillian S. Lin (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), 2009.

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.

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.

For more information about the nominating process for the 2011 award, please go to: http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/JEGform11.doc or http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/JEGform11.pdf.

If you have questions about the award, please contact **Rick Peterson** at rick@amstat.org (703) 684-1221, and **Carol House** at housea@gmail.com 703-989-1334.

The nomination package may be mailed or emailed **no later than March 25, 2011**, 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

# NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR HERRIOT AWARD

Submitted by Robert Fay, Chair of the Herriot Award Committee and Social Statistics Section Representative, 2010-2011

Nominations are sought for the 2011 Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics. The award is intended to reflect the special characteristics that marked Roger Herriot's career:

• Dedication to the issues of measurement;

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- 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 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.

The recipient of the 2011 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 2011. 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 (NCHS), Constance Citro (CNStat), Roderick Harrison (Census Bureau), Clyde Tucker (BLS), Thomas Jabine (SSA, EIA, CNStat), Donald Dillman (Washington State University), Jeanne Griffith (OMB, NCES, NSF), Daniel Weinberg (Census Bureau), David Banks (FDA, BTS, NIST), Paula Schneider (Census Bureau), Robert E. Fay III (Census Bureau), Nathaniel Schenker (NCHS), Nancy Kirkendall (EIA), Elizabeth Martin (Census Bureau), Lynda Carlson (NSF), and Katharine Abraham (U of MD).

Nominations for the 2011 award will be accepted beginning in February 2011. Nomination packages should contain:

- A cover letter from the nominator that should include 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, including contact information.

Both individual and group nominations may be submitted. The committee may consider nominations made for prior years, but it encourages resubmission of those nominations with updated information. For more information, contact Robert Fay, Chair, 2011 Roger Herriot Award Committee, at 240-314-2318 or bobfay@westat.com. Completed packages must be received by April 1, 2011. Electronic submissions in MS-Word or as a "pdf" file are strongly encouraged. Please contact the chair if you need to make arrangements to fax or mail a nomination.



# International Conference on Methods for Surveying and Enumerating Hard-to-Reach Populations

October 31-November 3, 2012

Marriott New Orleans at the Convention Center, New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S.A.

The H2R 2012 conference will bring together survey methodologists, sociologists, statisticians, demographers, ethnographers, and other professionals from around the world to present new and innovative techniques for surveying hard-to-reach populations. Addressing both the statistical and survey design aspects of including hard-to-reach groups, researchers will report findings from censuses, surveys, and other research related to the identification, definition, measurement, and methodologies for surveying and enumerating undercounted populations.

# Identifying, Defining, and Measuring the Hard-to-Reach (H2R)

Defining H2R populations
Measuring undercounts for H2R groups
Improving measurement with administrative records
Sampling H2R populations

# **Techniques and Methodologies**

Recruitment methods
Targeting the H2R
Use of social marketing and outreach campaigns
Overcoming language and literacy barriers
Use of community-based organizations
Dealing with complex living and housing situations
Tracking and tracing H2R populations

### **H2R Subpopulations**

Racial minorities
Immigrant populations
Indigenous populations
Highly mobile and migrant populations
Homeless and refugee populations
Sexual minorities
Populations affected by natural disasters
Populations in zones of armed conflict
Stigmatized populations
Cross-cultural similarities and differences in H2R populations
Linguistic and cultural minorities

Calls for Submissions
February–March 2011: Invited Call for Submissions
April–May 2011: Contributed Call for Submissions

For information, visit <a href="www.amstat.org/meetings/h2r/2012">www.amstat.org/meetings/h2r/2012</a> or email H2R2012@amstat.org.

### **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.

### **OFFICERS AND CONTACTS**

Steven P. Paben NEW!

Chair, 2011

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Brian A. Harris-Kojetin **NEW!** 

Chair-elect, 2011

Brian A. Harris-Kojetin@omb.eop.gov

John S. Dixon NEW!

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Iris M. Shimizu NEW!

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### **2010 GSS CORPORATE SPONSORS**

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), U.S. Department of Commerce
Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor
Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS), National Science Foundation (NSF)
National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Statistics of Income Division, Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
U.S. Census Bureau
U.S. Social Security Administration

### **2011 GSS CORPORATE SPONSORS**

Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS), National Science Foundation (NSF)

#### 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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