

GSS/SSS APRIL 2011 NEWSLETTER
Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections
American Statistical Association

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**UPCOMING DEADLINES AND EVENTS:**

|               |                                                         |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>April</b>  |                                                         |
| 28            | JSM 2011: Housing Reservations Open                     |
| <b>May</b>    |                                                         |
| 3             | ASA election ends: Don't forget to vote!                |
| 6             | FCSM Research Conference: Abstracts Are Due             |
| 26            | JSM 2011: Early-Bird Registration Ends                  |
| 31            | H2R 2010: Contributed Call for Submissions Closes       |
| <b>August</b> |                                                         |
| 31            | Deadline for Submitting a Contributed Paper for ICES IV |

**GSS AND SSS CANDIDATES FOR 2011 ELECTION    UPDATED!**

*Submitted by Natalya Verbitsky-Savitz, GSS/SSS Newsletter Editor*

If you have already voted, thank you. If you have not had a chance yet, please take a few minutes and vote in the ASA election of officers! The election **closes on May 3, 2011**. The list of candidates for Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections is shown below. For more information on the election and the candidates' biographies, please go to the ASA Home Page at <http://www.amstat.org/> and follow the links.

**The Government Statistics Section would like to announce the following candidates for 2011 election:**

|                      |                                                                                               |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair-elect:         | Michael P. Cohen, Independent statistical consultant<br>Lisa M. Blumerman, U.S. Census Bureau |
| Program Chair-elect: | Eric Rancourt, Statistics Canada<br>Mark Harris, U.S. Department of Agriculture               |

**The Social Statistics Section would like to announce the following candidates for 2011 election:**

|                      |                                                                                                   |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair-elect:         | Warren Brown, University of Georgia<br>Linda A. Jacobsen, Population Reference Bureau             |
| Program Chair-elect: | Michael D. Sinclair, NORC at the University of Chicago<br>Deborah H. Griffin, U.S. Census Bureau  |
| Secretary/Treasurer: | Natalya Verbitsky-Savitz, Mathematica Policy Research<br>Anthony Tersine, Jr., U.S. Census Bureau |

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JENISE SWALL RECEIVES THE JEANNE GRIFFITH MENTORING AWARD! NEW!

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

Jenise Swall, a statistician with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, was selected to receive the 2011 Jean Griffith Mentoring Award. The purpose of the award is to encourage mentoring of junior staff in the statistical community in the federal, state, and local government. The award is sponsored by the Government Statistics Section, the National Opinion Research Center, the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics, the American Institutes for Research, the American Educational Research Association, and the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy. Dr. Swall works in a research area where statisticians are greatly outnumbered by other scientists. She has been instrumental in mentoring students, postdocs, younger statisticians and scientists in promoting statistical quality in all research projects.

Dr. Swall will be presented the award at a ceremony scheduled for 4 pm on Wednesday, June 8, at the Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center. The ceremony will follow the monthly meeting of the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy.

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**THE COUNCIL OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS ON FEDERAL STATISTICS: SPRING  
QUARTERLY MEETING    **NEW!****

*Submitted by Carol House, GSS COPAFS Representative, 2010-2011*

The Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS) held its spring quarterly meeting on March 4, 2011. The meeting took place in the period when the 2011 Federal budget was uncertain. Ed Spar started the meeting with the Executive Director's comments. He talked about the budget situation that was on everyone's mind, and noted that most statistical agencies did not know the kinds of cuts they might face. Spar did point to two cuts that seemed to be definite: The Federal Financial Statistics Program at the Census Bureau; and the Statistical Abstract, not just the printed publication but the compilation itself. The remainder of the meeting consisted of three excellent presentations followed by discussion from the floor.

**Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) Redesign**, presented by Jennifer Edgar, Bureau of Labor Statistics. The CE data are used to develop the cost weights for the Consumer Price Index. These data are also used by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Internal Revenue Service, the Department of Defense, the Census Bureau, and economic researchers in the academic community. There is an ongoing program, called the GEMINI Project, to redesign the Consumer Expenditure Survey. The motivations for the redesign are to reduce measurement error, maintain or improve response rates, meeting user needs, respond to changes in society and technology, and to increase flexibility in data collection. Edgar shared details of the GEMINI Project and its timeline. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) plans to assess design alternatives in 2012, with continuing research through 2013. BLS targets the implementation of a redesigned survey in 2013-2014.

**The 112<sup>th</sup> Congress: A Presentation to COPAFS**, presented by Mary Jo Hoeksema, Director of Government Affairs, Population Association of America/Association of Population Centers. Hoeksema discussed the new Congress and its key players from the perspective of likely support for federal statistical programs. She described the legislative agenda in the House of Representatives as being all about cutting federal spending. Other priorities include repeal of the Affordable Health Act and enhanced oversight of the ACS. She pointed out that there was a critical need now for stakeholder engagement, and encouraged stakeholders present at the COPAFS meeting to inform their representatives of the need for federal data, and to do so from a personal perspective.

**American Community Survey 5-Year Data: A First Look at the First Release**, presented by Ken Hodges, The Nielsen Company. The first set of 5-year data from the American Community Survey (ACS) was released by the Census Bureau this past December. The 5-year ACS is based on interviews with 7.6 percent of the countries households, in contrast with the 2000 long form which covered 15.8 percent of households. Hodges focused his presentation on "Households by Type and Size." He reassured the audience that although there were problematic outliers, most block group distributions look reasonable, and showed examples where the ACS provides significant enhancements. Hodges said that it was too early to pass a final judgment on the 5-year data but so far they appeared to be a mixed bag with small area data suffering the effects of a thin sample while still providing useful information.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION AWARD WINNERS! NEW!

Submitted by Nancy Clusen, 2011 SSS Program Chair

Each year the Social Statistics Section co-sponsors with the Government Statistics Section and the Survey Research Methods Section a student paper competition. The overall quality of submissions was excellent, and we found ourselves having to decide between papers that were extremely close in terms of quality. We are pleased to announce this year's winners:

- **Brady Thomas West**, Program in Survey Methodology, University of Michigan, "Bayesian Analysis of Between-Group Differences in Variance Components in Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models"
- **Qi Dong**, Program in Survey Methodology, University of Michigan, "Combining Information from Multiple Complex Surveys"
- **Dan Liao**, RTI International, "Variance Inflation Factors in the Analysis of Complex Survey Data"
- **Joseph Sakshaug**, University of Michigan, "Synthetic Data Generation for Small Area Estimation in the American Community Survey"
- **Anna Sikov**, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, "Imputation and Estimation under Nonignorable Nonresponse for Household Surveys with Missing Covariate Information"

The authors will present their papers at the Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) in Miami and will be recognized at the Sections' business meetings. A subsidy of up to \$800 is provided to each winner to cover JSM 2011 expenses. Please add this session to your schedule for JSM!

**Social Statistics Section Student Paper Competition Winners — Topic Contributed Papers
Tuesday, August 2, 2011, 8:30 AM - 10:20 AM**

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**JSM 2011: DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER FOR ROUNDTABLES! UPDATED!**

*Submitted by Elizabeth Stuart, 2011 Program SSS chair-elect, and Daniell Toth, 2011 Program GSS chair-elect*

Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) 2011 will be held July 30-August 4 in Miami Beach, Florida. The Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections have five lunchtime roundtables lined up; register for any of them when you register for JSM. Further details about roundtables and other exciting sessions are now available in the JSM program.

**Monday, August 1, 2011 12:30 PM – 1:50 PM**

**Can Statisticians Add Value to Teacher Value-Added? (Dan McCaffrey, RAND, Session #205).**

Measuring teachers' performance using "value-added," estimated from their students' longitudinal achievement test score data, is the center of education policy and controversy. It is the centerpiece of the \$4 billion US Department of Education Race to the Top Grant Program and a \$500 million study by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, a part of growing number of state and school district accountability programs, and the source of controversy in Los Angeles and New York, where local newspapers reported or went to court for the right to report

individual teacher's value-added. What role are statisticians playing in the estimation of value-added? What are the key statistical issues in the estimation of value-added? And what role can our profession play in the coming years to make the data most useful for improving the education of our country's children?

**Tuesday, August 2, 2011, 12:30 PM - 1:50 PM**

**American Community Survey Data Products - Past and Future. (J. Trent Alexander, US Census Bureau, Session #377)**

Since there was no long-form census in 2010, American Community Survey (ACS) data have become the most relevant and timely source for a broad range of social and economic statistics, especially for small geographic areas. In December 2010, the Census Bureau released the first-ever 5-year estimates from the ACS. This roundtable will discuss the potential uses of these data, as well as the ways in which the Census Bureau could change or improve ACS data products in the next few years.

**Balancing Data Quality and Data Confidentiality (Larry Cox, National Institute of Statistical Sciences, Session #370)**

This roundtable will discuss the challenges of releasing data to the public while protecting confidential micro-data. A discussion of current methods will address the benefits and drawbacks of the methods as well as experiences from the participants. We will discuss the goal of releasing high-quality disclosure-protected data from both qualitative and quantitative standpoints.

- **Qualitatively:** For a given data set (tabular or microdata), how should quality and confidentiality be defined, and evaluated? What does it mean to "balance" quality and confidentiality--is one more important than the other? Are these dual objectives always in conflict?
- **Quantitatively** (you may wish to bring paper and pencil): How effective is complementary cell suppression for achieving high-quality disclosure-protected tabular data? How effective are controlled tabular adjustment and rounding, and pre-tabulation perturbation of underlying microdata? How effective is microaggregation for achieving high-quality disclosure-protected microdata? How effective is synthetic microdata? Contributions to the discussion of actual participant experiences will be welcome.

**Wednesday, August 3, 2011, 12:30 PM - 1:50 PM**

**Career Development for Statisticians: Making Creative Use of Future Opportunities and Challenges (John Eltinge, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Session #537)**

Over the next decade, all statisticians working with the federal statistical system will encounter an extraordinary range of opportunities and challenges arising from the increasing need for sophisticated statistical information. This roundtable discusses career development for statisticians within the context of these opportunities and challenges, with emphasis on the development and use of skills to do the following:

- a. Understand the societal and scientific context in which we carry out statistical work. Of special importance are the professional norms and perceived utility functions of primary stakeholders.

- b. Exercise well-informed judgment on where and how sophisticated statistical methodology can add substantial value to areas in which stakeholders need high-quality information.
- c. Develop a rigorous understanding of the balance among benefits, costs and risks encountered in development, implementation and operation of the methodology identified in (b).
- d. Articulate all of the ideas above in ways that are clear, accessible and tuned to the norms and perceived utility functions of the statistical profession, primary stakeholders, and the public

**Who is Poor? A New Look with the Supplemental Poverty Measure. (Kathleen Short, US Census Bureau, Session # 546)**

For many years, there have been critiques of the official poverty measure in the U.S. On March 2, 2010, the Commerce Department announced plans for the development of a Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) “that will use the best new data and methodologies to obtain an improved understanding of the economic well-being of American families and of how federal policies affect those living in poverty.” This roundtable will discuss many of the elements recommended by the Interagency Technical Working Group to include in a preliminary Supplemental Poverty Measure. Measurement issues, updating methods, and plans for future research on poverty estimates at the Census Bureau will be described and discussed.

Please contact Elizabeth Stuart, [estuart@jhspsh.edu](mailto:estuart@jhspsh.edu), or Daniell Toth, [Toth.Daniell@bls.gov](mailto:Toth.Daniell@bls.gov), with any comments, questions, or suggestions for future roundtables. We look forward to seeing you in Miami!

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H2R|2012

Survey Methods for Hard-to-Reach Populations

Invited Call for Submissions closes March 31!!
Contributed Call for Submissions opens April 1 – May 31

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

For information, visit www.amstat.org/meetings/h2r/2012 or email H2R2012@amstat.org.



RESEARCH CONFERENCE

CALL FOR PAPERS

January 10-12, 2012

Washington, DC

The Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) is planning a research conference to be held at the Washington Convention Center, Washington, DC on January 10-12, 2012. The conference will feature mostly contributed papers with formal discussion and software demonstrations on topics related to a variety of statistical research issues. Papers and demonstrations should address methodology, empirical studies, relevant issues, or needs for statistical research. Papers must be original and not previously published or disseminated. All conference information can be accessed at the FCSM Web site: www.fcsm.gov/events.

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

Survey design and data collection

- Questionnaire design issues
- Improving coverage and response rates
- Instrument design and pretesting
- Survey integration and cross-survey planning
- Treatment of missing data / imputation methods
- Uses of innovative methods for data collection, processing, and dissemination
- Responsive survey design
- Advances in frame development
- Model-based survey estimation adjustment
- Innovative methods in sample design and estimation
- New edit and imputation methodologies
- Multi-mode and web data collection
- Survey redesign

Estimation and analysis

- Bayesian statistical methods
- Variance estimation
- Small area estimation
- Exposure analysis and modeling
- Forecasting, time series, and seasonal adjustment
- Methods of statistical / econometric modeling
- Meta-analysis
- Application of microdata techniques to economic data
- Estimation of immigration / emigration
- Collection and analysis of survey paradata
- Analysis of complex surveys

Evaluation

- Census and survey evaluation methodologies
- Evaluating mode effects
- Identifying and reducing sources of survey error
- Measuring process and data quality
- Nonsampling error: estimation and evaluation
- Innovative approaches to program evaluation
- Nonresponse and measurement error research

Cross-cutting topics

- Impact of the global economy on national statistics
- Statistical issues in national security, healthcare reform, housing, financial well-being, and the environment
- Special issues related to establishment surveys
- Confidentiality, privacy, and disclosure issues in data dissemination and linkage
- Data mining, warehousing, and metadata
- Design and analysis of longitudinal studies
- Measurement issues and bridging changes in classification systems
- Use of data for policymaking
- Statistical uses and quality of administrative records
- Data sharing and linking
- Usability testing
- Quality standards, best practices, and guidelines
- Geospatial statistics
- Economic measurement concepts and techniques
- Development of economic statistical indicators
- Statistical literacy and communication of results

To submit a paper or demonstration for consideration, submit the abstract via email to fcsm@census.gov as soon as possible but no later than **May 6, 2011**. Use the template found at www.fcsm.gov/events/ for your submission. The maximum length of abstracts is 300 words and should include up to five key words. Please note that authors/presenters are responsible for their travel expenses, but the registration fee is waived for one presenter per paper.

To obtain conference information or to be included on the mailing list, contact:

Anna Halaus, Conference Coordinator
Email: fcsm@census.gov
Phone: 301-763-2308
Fax: 301-763-3682

For questions about abstracts contact:

Kevin Cecco, Program Chair
Email: Kevin.Cecco@irs.gov
Phone: 202-874-0464

Tentative Schedule of Activities

Activity	Date
Abstracts due	May 6, 2011
Papers selected/Authors notified	June 22, 2011
Advance program ready	September 2011
Conference registration open	October 3, 2011
Draft paper due to Organizers/Chairs	November 16, 2011
Final program ready	December 2011
Conference dates	January 10-12, 2012
Final paper due (FCSM Web site)	March 2012

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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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

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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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