

GSS/SSS May 2005 NEWSLETTER
Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections
American Statistical Association

GSS web site: <http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/>

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Roundtable Luncheons for JSM 2005 and Organizing Invited Sessions for JSM 2006

By Michael P. Cohen, GSS Program Chair-Elect

Roundtable luncheons are a great way to learn more about a topic and to share your experiences with others with similar interests. The discussion leader keeps things on track and supplies insights that come from experience. And you get lunch, too!

For JSM 2005, Michael P. Cohen, the Program Chair-Elect of the Government Statistics Section, has organized three roundtables that span a wide range of interesting topics:

“Measuring Processes in Statistical Agencies,” led by John Bushery.

Government statistical agencies measure and analyze all aspects of our lives to help guide the government's decisions: the economy, employment, health, safety, and transportation, to name a few. Statistical measurement and analysis are also key components of quality management. Ironically, government statistical organizations seldom apply statistical tools to their own work processes - the type of processes that statisticians, survey methodologists, and software engineers perform. Even some of the most basic measures often are not available. For example, what is the real cost of producing a statistical report? At this roundtable, participants will discuss measures that would help us manage and improve statistical processes and how to obtain them.

“A-76 Competitive Sourcing and Government Statistics,” led by Arthur Kendall.

Often government employees, including statisticians, perform services or produce products that some view as commercial in nature. Expanding on a 50-year history, President Bush's management agenda includes more vigorous efforts to either outsource such activities or to demonstrate that government employees can carry out these activities more inexpensively than can contractors. The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Circular A-76 gives rules to determine whether activities are commercial and to carry out competitions to determine who will provide commercial services and products. There has been much controversy over the issues. Many federal statistical positions have been classified as commercial. In this luncheon we will discuss issues related to this matter. For example, will outsourcing undermine the quality of government statistical programs and activities? Will contractors indeed perform the contested activities more efficiently? Should the ASA (or the Government Statistics Section) assess the validity of outsourcing studies? Should the ASA take action, for example, to help contest categorization of statistical positions as commercial?

“Statistical Issues Arising in Transportation,” led by Promod Chandhok.

Transportation poses many interesting and challenging issues for statisticians. These include: survey sampling issues in freight and travel surveys and application of Bayesian viewpoint in estimating variation in average annual daily traffic estimates. Our roundtable discussion will be around these and other issues in transportation statistics. The lunch organizer, Promod Chandhok, is the Project Director of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics Research Grants Program and has served as a referee for proposals and research papers in the area of transportation statistics. Prior knowledge of transportation is not required for this roundtable discussion.

Organizing a Proposed Invited Session for 2006:

Too early? No! The best developed proposals have the greatest chance of selection. Proposals are due in early summer of this year. Even if you have a good idea for a session, it takes time to prepare a description of the session and line up speakers and a discussant. The format of invited sessions is very flexible, one example being three 30-minute talks, a 10-minute invited discussant, and 10 minutes of floor discussion. Feel free to contact Mike Cohen at Michael.Cohen@dot.gov if you need further information. PS: The 2006 JSM is in Seattle!

Gearing Up for JSM 2006 in Seattle for Social Statistics!

By Juanita Tamayo Lott, 2006 Program Chair for Social Statistics

You're probably wondering why we're writing about JSM 2006 when you're still working on your June 1 draft for JSM 2005. But did you know that the program for JSM 2006 Invited Sessions is finalized in August 2005? Well, it's true! So before you get too busy with plans for JSM 2005, we thought you should have a heads up about 2006.

Some Initial Proposed Sessions

We want the members of the Social Statistics Section to be thinking NOW about proposals for Invited Sessions at the 2006 Joint Statistical Meetings in Seattle. Invited Sessions have two main benefits -- they offer more time per speaker, and they are designed for extensive discussion on a single theme or topic. Although the slots for Invited Sessions are limited, we also have the opportunity to enter the 'best' ideas

in a competition for additional slots not yet allocated to a specific section or committee. To get your thoughts flowing, we are providing a list of proposed sessions and organizers thus far:

- **Human Welfare and Population Trends**, *Kelvin Pollard, Population Reference Bureau*
- **The Status of U.S. Children Based on the 2000 Census**, *William O'Hare, Kids Count, Annie Casey Foundation*
- **A Multigenerational Conversation among Statisticians**, *Gladys Reynolds, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
- **Grooming the Next Generation of Applied Statisticians**, *Kelly Zou, Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital*
- **Human Capital Research for Succession Planning**, *Mark Holdrege, Human Resources Division, U.S. Census Bureau*
- **Frontline View: The Increasing Challenges of Data Collection**, *Kathleen Ludgate, Boston Regional Office, U.S. Census Bureau*
- **Comparisons of Population Estimates from Censuses and Surveys**, *Antonio Bruce, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau*
- **The American Community Survey: Multi-Year Estimation Uses**, *Deborah Griffin, Decennial Directorate, U.S. Census Bureau*
- **The Role of Administrative Records in 21st Century Surveys and Censuses**, *Ronald Prevost, Demographic Directorate, U.S. Census Bureau*
- **Which Is the Greater Danger---False Positives or False Negatives?** *Margo Anderson, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee*
- **Data Collections, Results, and New Research on NSF Surveys on Higher Education, the Workforce, and R & D**, *Lynda Carlson, National Science Foundation*
- **New Methodologies for the 2010 Round of International Censuses**, *Jay Keller, Office of the Director, U.S. Census, Bureau*
- **Cross-National Research on Immigration**, *Kevin Deardorff, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau*

Additional Information

A few more specifics about Invited Sessions are in order. Typically, these sessions include three 30-minute invited talks, a 10-minute talk by a discussant, and 10 minutes of floor discussion. Furthermore, invited panels are another option and usually include 5 panelists on a specified topic. Did we already mention that we need to hear from you NOW about your ideas? Yes, we really do. Even if you aren't quite sure about the speakers you would include, don't let that stop you. If you have a good idea for an Invited Session, contact your Program Chair right away, and we will be happy to help. We're looking forward to hearing from you! Thank you.

Please send Invited Session proposals or questions to:

Social Statistics Program Chair 2006, Juanita Tamayo Lott

Email: juanita.t.lott@census.gov,

Phone: 301.763.3127 or 9620

Your SSS Executive Committee at Work

As a member of the Social Statistics Section, you may not be aware that the executive committee you elected has been hard at work behind the scenes over the past year organizing sessions for the upcoming meetings in August, setting up roundtable luncheons, putting together newsletters, writing articles, and planning for next year's annual meeting. This is the more visible stuff. But there are also a lot of other things going on that we'd like you to know about, which is what this article is all about.

Who's on the SSS Executive Committee? Since you don't have a lot of contact with us during the year, you may have forgotten who we are. This group consists of **Jerry Gates**, 2005 Chair; **Colm O'Muircheartaigh**, 2004 Chair; **Susan Schechter**, 2006 Chair; **Renee Miller**, 2005 Program Chair; **Juanita Tamayo Lott**, 2006 Program Chair; **Susan Hinkins**, 2005 Secretary/Treasurer, **Trivellore Raghunathan**, 2005 Council of Sections Rep; **Beth Kilss**, 2005-06 Publications Officer; and **Monica Clark**, ASA Ex Officio.

What Have We Been Up To? For your information, we thought you'd like to know that this group has recently embarked on some new initiatives behind the scenes, which include a review of our section's history and its mission, purpose, and activities. In fact, we are in the process of drafting a strategic plan to share with members at our annual business meeting. This year's meeting will be a combination **Business Meeting/Mixer**, and it will take place at JSM 2005 in Minneapolis on **Monday, August 8, at 5:30 PM**. (Be sure to check the final program for exact location.) As part of that plan, we are considering new activities such as:

- Offering continuing education programs at JSM 2006
- Providing some support for students and new members to attend JSM
- Looking into conducting a small survey of our existing members
- Updating our section's history (knowing where we came from will help us all get where we want to go and become what we would like to become)

What Can You Do To Help? Since you asked, we would be happy to hear from you concerning the following few important pieces of information; namely:

- Why you are a member of the Social Statistics Section?
- What should the key purposes of the section be?
- How could SSS better serve you and your colleagues?

Let Us Hear From You! If you just take a minute to tell us what's on your mind, it will really help us shape our plans to fit our members' needs. Please email Susan.Schechter@omb.eop.gov with your thoughts. Thanks for your help. We're looking forward to hearing from you! And don't forget to join us in August at the business meeting and mixer on **August 8**. We're counting on it!

Request For Data

Looking for Suggestions ... Can you help? We're looking for a comparison group to use for analysis of morbidity in a group of nuclear industry workers. Data on the nuclear workers includes age, gender, illness or injury information, and year of occurrence (1995 forward). Ideally, we would like to use workers from the petroleum industry for the comparison, but we will consider an available file of similar data on illness and injury occurrences in another group of employees, preferably industrial workers. The file should be a public-use microdata file with no way of identifying the individual workers. If you have any leads on where to obtain a file of comparison data, please let me know, even if age and gender are not included. Thanks!

Contact: Janice Watkins
Center for Epidemiologic Research
ORAU/ORISE
(865) 576-3395
watkinsj@orau.gov

National Association for Business Economics (NABE) Seminar

The NABE's statistics professional development seminar is coming up on **June 5-7** at the **University of Maryland Conference Center**.

The seminar, "Statistics: Telling the Economic Story," will present a wide range of Federal Government economic statistics. It will explain what they measure, what questions they can answer, and how they can be accessed. Attendees will meet and learn from senior government officials who produce the data and the business analysts who use the data professionally.

Reserve your space today for registration and hotel savings. (Deadlines are April 30 (for discounted registration) and May 13, respectively.) For program, speaker list, and registration visit <http://www.nabe.com/stats2005/index.html>

Fourth Funding Opportunity Seminar in Survey and Statistical Research

Organizer: Research Subcommittee of the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology
Date/Time: **Monday, June 13, 2005, 9:00 A.M.- 3:00 P.M.** (NOTE SPECIAL TIME)
Sponsors: Washington Statistical Society, and Washington DC/Baltimore Chapter AAPOR
Location: **BLS Conference Center, Postal Square Building, 2 Massachusetts Ave., N.E.**
Take the Red Line to Union Station. Bring a photo ID to the seminar.

(Note: If you have not registered by May 31 with SDockery@CDC.gov, please e-mail your name, affiliation, and the name of this seminar to wss_seminar@BLS.gov (underscore after wss) by noon June 9 or call (202) 691-7524 and leave message.)

Registration: There is no registration fee. If you plan to attend, please e-mail SDockery@CDC.gov, by May 31 if possible, to guarantee seating, help with planning refreshments, and to be put on the BLS seminar attendance list.

Abstract: Since 1998, 12 Federal statistical agencies, in collaboration with the National Science Foundation, and with the support of the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology, have been funding and administering the Funding Opportunity in Survey and Statistical Research, a research grant program oriented to the needs of the Federal Statistical System. The Fourth Funding Opportunity Seminar features the reports of the principal investigators of three research projects that were funded in 2003, and invited speakers and discussants.

**The Funding Opportunity Seminar In Survey and Statistical Research Program
Conference and Training Center
June 13, 2005**

8:45 a.m. Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Welcoming Remarks

Brian Harris-Kojetin, OMB

9:10 a.m. Session 1. Invited Speaker

Future Directions of Total Error Research, Paul Biemer, RTI

10:00 a.m. Session 2. *Topics in Small Area Estimation*

Investigators: Malay Ghosh – University of Florida

Tapabrata Maiti – Iowa State University

Discussant: Jerry J. Maples – USCB

11:00 a.m. Refreshment Break

11:15 a.m. Session 3. *Improved Methods of Estimating Production and Income Across Nations*

Investigators: Alan Heston – University of Pennsylvania

Robert Feenstra – University of California-Davis

Discussant: Raymond Mataloni Jr.- BEA

12:15 p.m. Lunch on your own

1:30 p.m. Session 4. *Regression and Deconvolution with Heteroscedastic Measurement Error*

Investigator: Leonard Stefanski – North Carolina State University

Discussant: Stephen M. Miller – BLS

2:30 p.m. Refreshment Break

2:45 p.m. Session 5. Remarks on the Funding Opportunity, Past and Future

Speaker: Robert E. Fay - USCB

National Center For Education Statistics (NCES) Training Opportunity

The NCES, U.S. Department of Education, is sponsoring a 3-day training session on the use of the National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES) databases for research and policy analyses. The NHES is a series of surveys that provides descriptive data on the educational activities of the U.S. population, from early childhood to adult education. These data are collected through telephone interviews with individual parents, youth, and adults.

The training takes place in **Washington, DC, June 15-17, 2005**. The training is free, and travel, hotel, and per diem expenses are paid by NCES.

To apply, or for more information, see <http://nces.ed.gov/conferences/confinfo.asp?confid=120>

For more information on the NHES, see <http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/>

For other NCES trainings, see <http://nces.ed.gov/conferences/>

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