

GSS/SSS MAY 2008 NEWSLETTER
Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections
American Statistical Association

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Don't forget these upcoming events ~~

- 106th Meeting of the Committee on National Statistics,
CASM@25: 25 Years (and Counting) of Cognitive Survey Research,
Friday, May 9, at the National Academy of Sciences
RSVP by Tuesday, May 6 to Bridget Edmonds at 202-334-3096 or cnstat@nas.edu.
- Elections for ASA Section Officers Ends May 15, 2008
- JSM 2008 registration opens May 1st – Early bird rates apply until June 26th

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**SSS and GSS Invited Sessions at JSM 2008**

*Sharon Stern, SSS Publications Officer, and Jana Asher, 2008 SSS Program Chair*  
*Sonya Vartivarian, GSS Publications Officer and Mike Davern, 2008 GSS Program Chair*

Are you heading to Denver this August for the Joint Statistical Meetings? If so, you'll have many excellent sessions from which to choose, including seven first-rate invited sessions organized by the Social Statistics Section and Government Statistics Section. They are spread out throughout the conference, so we encourage you to attend all. Juanita Lott was also instrumental in organizing the memorial session in honor of Mollie Orshansky for her role in the development of the official poverty measure. Mark your schedules now!

The four invited SSS sessions are of particular interest to those who work in the field of social statistics. The first session, organized by Juanita Tamayo Lott (U.S. Census Bureau), discusses young leaders in the statistical field. The second session, organized by David J. Fitch (Universidad Del Valle de Guatemala), examines how statistics can help reduce child mortality. The third session, organized by Joseph Gastwirth (George Washington University), focuses on issues with measuring health care disparities. The final session, organized by Mary Batchner (Ernst & Young LLP), will show how statistics can restore confidence in the U.S. election process.

The three invited GSS sessions all touch on crucial issues to government statisticians. The first session, organized by Brian Harris-Kojetin (Office of Management and Budget), examines the use of incentives in survey research. The second session, organized by Susan Schechter (US Census Bureau), will cover issues concerning the American Community Survey as the survey is on the verge of releasing its first three-year data products. The final invited GSS session was organized by Joan Turek (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation).

**Sunday, August 3, 2:00 pm - 3:50 pm**

***Survey Respondent Incentives: Research And Practice***

*Sponsor:* Government Statistics Section

*Organizer:* Brian Harris-Kojetin, U.S. Office of Management and Budget

*Chair:* Ed Spar, Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics

*Panelists:*

- Robert Groves, University of Michigan
- Brian Harris-Kojetin, U.S. Office of Management and Budget
- Daniel Kasprzyk, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
- Richard Kulka, Abt Associates, Inc.
- Clyde Tucker, Bureau of Labor Statistics

**Monday, August 4, 10:30 am - 12:20 pm**

***Helping Data Users Better Understand The American Community Survey***

*Sponsor:* Government Statistics Section

*Organizer:* Susan Schechter, U.S. Census Bureau

*Chair:* Deborah Griffin, U.S. Census Bureau

*Panelists:*

- Linda A. Jacobsen, Population Reference Bureau
- Peter Lobo, NYC Department of City Planning
- Ken Hodges, Claritas Inc.
- John Thompson, National Opinion Research Center
- Joseph Salvo, NYC Department of Planning
- Kennon Copeland, National Opinion Research Center

**Monday, August 4, 2:00 pm - 3:50 pm**

***To The Nth Power: Younger Statisticians Taking The Lead***

*Sponsor:* Social Statistics Section

*Organizer:* Juanita Tamayo Lott, U.S. Census Bureau

*Chair:* Martha Aliaga, American Statistical Association

*Panelists:*

- Juanita Tamayo Lott, U.S. Census Bureau
- Nagambal Shah, Spelman College
- Ben Hansen, University of Michigan
- Gayla Olbricht, Purdue University
- Brian A. Millen, Eli Lilly and Company

**Tuesday, August 5, 8:30 am - 10:20 am**

***Statistics Can Help Reduce Child Mortality***

*Sponsor:* Social Statistics Section

*Organizer:* David J. Fitch, Universidad Del Valle de Guatemala

*Chair:* Gary Shapiro, Westat

- *Child Survival Theory And Practice - How Do They Match?* — Gareth Jones, Adeni Consulting
- *Child Mortality: What We Count Counts* — Jef L. Leroy, National Institute of Public Health; Jean-Pierre Habicht, Cornell University
- *How Can Statistics Save Lives?* — Megan Price, Emory University
- *Guatemalan And Adam Smith World Realities* — David J. Fitch, Universidad Del Valle de Guatemala

**Tuesday, August 5, 10:30 am - 12:20 pm**

***Would The Real Data Please Stand Up: Data Comparisons For Policy Analysis***

*Sponsor:* Government Statistics Section

*Organizer:* Joan L. Turek, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

*Chair:* Connie Citro, Committee on National Statistics

- *Measuring Income and Poverty in Four Surveys: An Overview* — Joan L. Turek, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Gabrielle Denmead, Denmead Services and Consulting; Sameer Desale, Synectics for Management Decisions; Brian James, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- *How Much Is It Worth: Comparing the Policy-Analytic Value of Wealth Data from Four Surveys* — John L. Czajka, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
- *Misreporting of SSI and Social Security Benefits: Evidence from Comparisons of Survey and Administrative Data* — Paul Davies, Social Security Administration
- *A Comparison of the Health Insurance Coverage Estimates from Four National Surveys and Six State Surveys* — Michael Davern, University of Minnesota/SHADAC

**Tuesday, August 5, 2:00 pm - 3:50 pm**

***The Measure Of Mollie Orshansky***

*Sponsor:* Government Statistics Section

*Organizer:* Juanita Tamayo Lott, U.S. Census Bureau

*Chair:* Fritz Scheuren, University of Chicago

*Panelists:*

- Juanita Tamayo Lott, U.S. Census Bureau
- Connie Citro, Committee on National Statistics
- Gordon Fisher, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- John Iceland, University of Maryland

**Wednesday, August 6, 10:30 am - 12:20 pm**

***Measuring Health Care Disparities***

*Sponsor:* Social Statistics Section

*Organizer:* Joseph Gastwirth, George Washington University

*Chair:* Qing Pan, George Washington University

- *Understanding Disparities Within And Among Geographical And Healthcare Units* — Alan Zaslavsky, Harvard Medical School
- *Application Of The Peters-Belson Method For Estimating Disparities* — Barry I. Graubard, National Cancer Institute; Sowmya R. Rao, MGH Biostatistics Center/The Institute for Health Policy; Joseph Gastwirth, George Washington University
- *Improved Analysis Of Weight-Loss Interventions For African-American Women* — Justine Shults, University of Pennsylvania; Xiaoying Wu, University of Pennsylvania SOM CCEB; Shiriki Kumanyika, University of Pennsylvania
- *Empirical Likelihood Method For Determining Nonparametric Spirometry Reference Values For Hispanic Americans* — Nancy L. Glenn, Texas Southern University

**Thursday, August 7, 8:30 am - 10:20 am**

***Statistical Measures Can Help Restore Confidence In U.S. Elections***

*Sponsor:* Social Statistics Section

*Organizer:* Mary Batchler, Ernst & Young LLP

*Chair:* Mary Batchler, Ernst & Young LLP

- *National Election Scorecard* — Fritz Scheuren, University of Chicago; Edward Mulrow, National Opinion Research Center
- *Voter Confidence And The Election-Day Voting Experience* — J. Quin Monson, Brigham Young University; Kelly Patterson, Brigham Young University; David Magleby, Brigham Young University
- *How ASA Members Are Helping States Improve Elections* — Arlene S. Ash, Boston University

In addition to the sessions we are sponsoring directly, the Social Statistics Section and the Government Statistics Section are cosponsoring several interesting sessions. Those can be found on the JSM online program at [www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/](http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/). Please contact the 2008 SSS Program Chair, Jana Asher ([jana@asher-resnick.us](mailto:jana@asher-resnick.us)), or the 2008 GSS Program Chair, Mike Davern ([daver004@umn.edu](mailto:daver004@umn.edu)) if you have any questions.

**What Can You Do For Your Section?**

**Attend SSS and GSS Invited Sessions in 2008.** Please consider attending one or more of these sessions. Come to all of them if you can! Each year, the officers of the Social Statistics Section and Government Statistics Section strive to strengthen the SSS and GSS portions of the JSM program. But, we need you, our members, to support these efforts by attending SSS- and GSS-sponsored sessions and encouraging your colleagues to do so as well.

**Help Plan SSS and GSS Invited Sessions for 2009.** We also want you to know that it's not too early to be thinking about topics for invited sessions for JSM 2009 in Washington, DC. We'll have more information available on this in a future *AmStat News* article and in our monthly electronic newsletter. Until then, if you have any specific ideas or general suggestions, contact the 2008 SSS Program Chair, Jana Asher ([jana@asher-resnick.us](mailto:jana@asher-resnick.us)), or the 2008 GSS Program Chair, Mike Davern ([daver004@umn.edu](mailto:daver004@umn.edu)) if you have any questions.

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JSM 2008 ROUNDTABLE LUNCHEONS

Sharon Stern, SSS Publications Officer and Kathy O'Connor, 2009 SSS Program Chair

Sunghye Lee, 2009 GSS Program Chair

This year, the SSS and the GSS are pleased to sponsor four roundtable luncheons exploring substantive and methodological topics that are central to our work.

Roundtable luncheons allow participants to meet discussion leaders in a more relaxed setting than contributed or plenary sessions, and are eighty minutes in length. Take advantage of these extended, relaxed, and great opportunities to learn about and comprehensively discuss important issues. Since two are scheduled for Monday and two are scheduled for Wednesday, you will doubtless face a difficult choice. Because participation is limited, sign up for these sessions when you register and plan your JSM 2008 schedule! Participation in these sessions will incur an extra charge, \$40, due to the full lunch that will be served during the discussion. Eat and stimulate your brain, not just your digestive system!

Delving into Multiple Different Methods to Examine the Relationship between Psychological Measurement and Empirical Outcome

Sponsor: Social Statistics Section

Monday, August 4th from 12:30 to 1:50 PM

Gideon D. Bahn of Loyola University Chicago will lead a discussion about the use of multiple methods to answer complex research questions. Although this presentation focuses specifically on Korean-American youth, the topic and methods may of interest to researchers in areas such as immigration, multicultural settings, education, and/or

multigenerational immigrant family research. He and his colleagues used multiple statistical methods to examine the relationship between Korean-American students' academic achievement and their family background; specifically, the fundamental ideology of Korean education, the five Confucian moral codes. The data were analyzed by a sensitivity analysis for Hybrid Path Model and Path Analysis in Structural Equation Modeling, post-hoc analysis in Analysis of Variance, and Backward Multiple Linear Regression Modeling. Results suggest that Korean-American students' high academic achievement is related more to their parents' financial support for their children's education than to the degree to which their parents retain traditional beliefs about Korean educational values embodied in the five Confucian moral codes."

How Should Prison Inmates Be Incorporated in Census Tabulations?

Sponsor: Government Statistics Section
Monday, August 4th from 12:30 to 1:50 PM

Tom Belin, professor at UCLA and a member of ASA Census Advisory Committee, will lead a session that focuses on incorporating specific group-quarter counts into census redistricting count. The Census Bureau has traditionally allocated people to places based on their "usual residence", but when a prison location is far from the former residences of the inmates (as when the prison is located in a rural area but is largely populated by former urban residents), allocation based on "usual residence" can have very different implications for political redistricting than would other allocation approaches. This session will discuss the controversy that has emerged around this issue and will consider the merits of a "federalist" approach that would distinguish federal and state prisoners from other group-quarters residents in tabulations for redistricting purposes, which would allow jurisdictions to tailor policy decisions (including redistricting maps) to judgments.

From Data To Action: A Case Study To Disseminate And Communicate Children's Health Statistics To Multiple Stakeholders Through An Online Data Tool

Sponsor: Social Statistics Section
Wednesday, August 6th from 12:30 to 1:50 PM

Kathleen S. O'Connor from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will lead a discussion about an innovative data access tool that readily expands and expedites access to over 60 health statistics to multiple stakeholders. The Data Resource Center (DRC) for Child & Adolescent Health, a project of the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI) at the Oregon Health & Science University, was designed to enhance data access and use for audiences with various degrees of statistical expertise. The DRC database includes data from several large cross-sectional surveys conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and sponsored by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Learn about challenges to select and display various child health and well-being indicators at the national and state levels, while simultaneously offering hands-on technical assistance, and targeted outreach and educational resources. From April 2005 to April 2008, the three DRC websites had over 7.5 million hits (i.e., files requested from their server).

Cell Phone Survey Sampling and Weighting

Sponsor: Government Statistics Section
Wednesday, August 6th from 12:30 to 1:50 PM

Michael P. Battaglia, Vice President at Abt Associates Inc., will host a session titled "Cell Phone Survey Sampling and Weighting." The increasing cell-only population has become a hurdle for landline random-digit-dialing surveys, which led to a growing number of cellular telephone surveys being conducted to supplement traditional landline random-digit-dialing telephone surveys. Those who attend will discuss: 1) cell phone sampling frames, 2) landline to cell ported numbers, 3) trade-offs of screening for cell phone-only household versus using a dual frame sample design that also includes households with landline and cellular telephone service, 4) the two alternative sampling models that have received the most attention -- a household level sampling model versus a person level sampling model, 5) weighting techniques including how the National Health Interview Survey and other surveys

such as the Current Population Survey and the American Community Survey can be used to develop estimates of the size of the cell phone-only population.

If you want more information about these JSM 2008 roundtable luncheons or have ideas for invited sessions for JSM 2009, contact the 2009 SSS Program Chair, Kathy O'Connor (kdo7@cdc.gov) or the 2009 GSS Program Chair, Sunghye Lee (slee9@ucla.edu).

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**106<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on National Statistics,  
CASM@25: 25 Years (and Counting) of Cognitive Survey Research**  
*Submitted by Connie Citro*

Open Session – Public Seminar and Reception  
Friday, May 9, 2008  
The National Academies, NAS building, 2100 C St., NW, Washington, DC, Auditorium

**\*\*\*Please RSVP by May 6 to Bridget Edmonds at 202-334-3096 or [cnstat@nas.edu](mailto:cnstat@nas.edu).**

*Agenda:*

- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2:00 | <i>Light refreshments for seminar guests (NAS Great Hall)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2:30 | <i>Welcome and Introduction—Bill Eddy, CNSTAT and Carnegie Mellon University</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 2:35 | <i>Developments at the OMB Statistical and Science Policy Office—Katherine Wallman, Chief Statistician</i>                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2:45 | <i>Featured Topic: 25 Years (and Counting) of Cognitive Survey Research: Accomplishments, Current Work, and Future Opportunities</i>                                                                                                                                                      |
|      | Panel:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roger Tourangeau, Joint Program in Survey Methodology, University of Maryland</li><li>• Gordon Willis, Applied Research Program, National Cancer Institute</li><li>• Fred Conrad, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan</li></ul> |
| 3:45 | <i>Floor discussion</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 4:00 | <i>Reception (Great Hall)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 5:00 | <i>Adjourn</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

*Abstract:*

The May 2008 seminar celebrates the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NSF-funded “advanced research seminar” organized under CNSTAT. This intense activity brought together survey researchers and cognitive psychologists to brainstorm about how cognitive research insights could enhance the design of survey questionnaires to improve the completeness and accuracy of reporting. The seminar’s report, *Cognitive Aspects of Survey Methodology* (NRC, 1984), boosted efforts by statistical agencies and other organizations to adopt cognitive questionnaire testing as standard best practice for survey work.

A distinguished panel will offer their observations on cognitive survey research—past, present, and future. Roger Tourangeau, director of the Joint Program in Survey Methodology, University of Maryland at College Park, helped produce the 1984 CASM report; he will review the history and past accomplishments of the field. Gordon Willis, who used cognitive methods extensively at the National Center for Health Statistics and is now Cognitive Psychologist at the National Cancer Institute, will discuss current cognitive survey work. Fred Conrad, research associate professor, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, will challenge the field to strengthen its grounding in evidence-based research as it looks to the future.

Note: This venue is handicapped-accessible. There is limited first-come, first-served parking in the visitors’ lot on 21<sup>st</sup> St. The nearest Metro station is Foggy Bottom at 23<sup>rd</sup> and I Sts., NW (Blue and Orange Lines).

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A Major Change at Statistics Canada

Submitted by Robert Lussier

Friday, February 15, 2008, 1:33 p.m.: A message 'hits' the inboxes of some 6,122 Statistics Canada employees. The message is from Dr. Ivan Fellegi, the Chief Statistician of Canada for over 22 years. He announces his imminent retirement. He will continue as Chief Statistician until June 16, and then turn over the reins to a successor.

Dr. Fellegi swore allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen of the Commonwealth on February 16, 1957. He then embarked on a brilliant career with the 'Dominion Bureau of Statistics,' a career which he will end officially this coming June.

This news was expected sooner or later. When one has 51 years of public service, clearly, retirement beckons... Nevertheless, it was still surprising. Many employees came out of their offices; small groups formed and talked about the news.

On the same day, the Prime Minister of Canada announced that Munir Sheikh becomes Chief Statistician Designate, effective March 3, 2008 and, following the retirement of Mr. Fellegi, will become Chief Statistician, effective June 16, 2008. Mr. Sheikh was Deputy Minister of Labour and Associate Deputy Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.

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### **Save the Date: *Elections and Exit Polls* Book Signing**

*Submitted by Wendy Alvey*

Book Signing at Reiter's Books

Wednesday, June 11th 12:00 noon-2:00pm

Wendy Alvey and Fritz Scheuren, Editors  
*Elections and Exit Polls*

Lite refreshments (wine, cheese, and soft drinks) provided.

Both authors will be there:

Reiter's Books  
1990 K Street NW  
Washington DC

Sponsor: WSS Human Rights Section and WSS Public Policy Section

Look forward to seeing you there!

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Section Members Speak Out

This month, the GSS/SSS newsletter is proud to bring you the first in an occasional series of opinion pieces by you, the members. Note that the opinions expressed below do not represent those of the Government Statistics Section, Social Statistics Section, or the American Statistical Association. If you would like to comment on or contribute to this special series, please contact Carrie Dennis (carrie.r.dennis@census.gov).

How Statistics Can Help (OPINION)

Submitted by David Fitch, Universidad Del Valle de Guatemala

Let me suggest that we of the GSS and SSS can think of ourselves as having a special responsibility for watch dogging the statistical work in the U.S. Federal Government. Now some of the best statistical work in the world is done by its agencies, e.g. the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but the statistical situation in the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is very bad. With 10 million children dying each year – 2/3rds needlessly is the estimate in an important 2003 Lancet article – we statisticians need to act. If we do not the reputation of statistics, which should be higher than it now is will, with reason, decline. USAID, supporting to the tune of millions of dollars an obviously statistically erroneous method for evaluating their work, is an indication of their lack of statistical competence. The method is Valadez's Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS). In statistical terms a null hypothesis is posed that some effort, say vaccination against measles of community children, has successfully reached their 80% goal. Unless there is strong negative evidence, the null is not rejected. It is accepted. Now we know that a null hypothesis is never accepted but USAID, to look good - because they don't know, don't want to know statistics - accepts the null! So an USAID effort might claim that community children are protected from the killer measles when there is a 90% chance that they are not. I should note that Lemeshow's LQAS method, and the same industrial method presented by Dodge and Romig are statistically correct. Valadez incorrectly claims his method is supported by the industrial work.

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## Privacy In Statistical Databases 2008 (PSD 2008) - Last call...your opportunity to submit a paper for consideration is fast approaching!

Istanbul, Turkey, Sep. 24-26, 2008

*Submitted by Steve Cohen*

<http://unescoprivacychair.urv.cat/psd2008>

Privacy in statistical databases is about finding tradeoffs to the tension between the increasing societal and economical demand for accurate information and the legal and ethical obligation to protect the privacy of individuals and enterprises (which are the respondents providing the statistical data). The motivation for respondent privacy is one of survival for statistical databases: statistical agencies or survey institutes cannot expect to collect accurate information from individual or corporate respondents unless they feel the privacy of their responses is guaranteed.

Beyond respondent privacy, there are two additional privacy dimensions to be considered: privacy for the data owners (organizations owning or gathering the database, who wouldn't like to share the data they have collected at great expense) and privacy for the users (those who submit queries to the database and would like their analyses to stay private).

"Privacy in Statistical Databases 2008" (PSD 2008) is a conference sponsored and organized by the UNESCO Chair in Data Privacy (<http://unescoprivacychair.urv.cat>) and the CONSOLIDER ARES project (<http://crises-deim.urv.cat/ares>), with proceedings published by Springer-Verlag in Lecture Notes in Computer Science. Its purpose is to gather world-wide, high-level research in statistical database privacy. PSD 2008 is a successor to PSD 2006 (Rome, Dec. 13-15, 2006, <http://crises-deim.urv.cat/psd2006>) and PSD 2004 (Barcelona, June 9-11, 2004, <http://crises-deim.urv.cat/psd2004>), both with proceedings published by Springer in LNCS 4302 and LNCS 3050, respectively.

Those three PSD conferences follow a tradition of high-quality technical conferences on Statistical Disclosure Control (SDC) which started with "Statistical Data Protection-SDP'98", held in Lisbon in 1998, with proceedings published by OPOCE. It continued with the AMRADS project SDC Workshop, held in Luxemburg in 2001, with proceedings published in Springer LNCS vol. 2316.

Like the aforementioned preceding conferences, PSD 2008 originates in Europe, but wishes to stay a worldwide event in database privacy and SDC. Thus, contributions and attendees from overseas are welcome.



**Submission deadline: May 25, 2008**

For information on submissions, proceedings, registration, and other information see:  
<<http://unescoprivacychair.urv.cat/psd2008>>.

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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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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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