American Statistical Association  
Section on Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences  
Minutes of the September 18 2017  
Executive Committee Conference Call

Attendees: Jose-Miguel Yamal (Chair), Jeff Syzchowski (Chair-Elect), Felicity Enders (Past Chair), Amy Nowacki (Chair-Elect-Elect), Wenyaw Chan (Program Chair), Kendra Schmid (Program Chair-Elect), Bob Oster (Secretary/Treasurer), Ed Gracely (Webmaster), Laila Poisson (Newsletter Editor)

Unable to attend: Ann Brearley (Publications Officer), Carol Bigelow (Council of Sections Representative), Jacqui Milton (Program Chair-Elect-Elect), Katy Wright (Book Review Editor)

Jose-Miguel called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM (Eastern).

REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: To approve the minutes of the August 21 meeting. The motion was made and seconded. The motion was approved.

WEBINARS – UPDATE

Jose-Miguel began this part of the call by sharing information that he obtained from ASA regarding the hosting of webinars. He first noted that ASA has a subscription to a webinar hosting service. Costs associated with using the Internet service itself are included in this subscription; however, audio costs are not included. The costs for ASA hosting the webinar are approximately $650-$700 if we do not charge a registration fee; however, if we charge a fee, then ASA would collect $6 of that fee per individual who registers (in addition to the $650-$700 webinar hosting fee). The webinar-hosting service includes the use of an online registration system, a link to the website (for registrants), advertising to ASA members, coordinating with the webinar service vendor, a live event to show how a webinar would be run, webinar instructor training, a host and moderator for the webinar, web support, sending an honorarium to the webinar instructor, and evaluation of the webinar.

As an alternative, we could produce this ourselves and run it using WebEx or GoToMeeting or perhaps another service. We should speak with other individuals who are producing and running webinars themselves. Jeff will check webinar hosting capabilities/limitations at UAB, Laila will check these capabilities/limitations at Henry Ford Health System, and Jose-Miguel will check these capabilities/limitations at UT Health Sciences Center at Houston. One of the potential limitations is the number of attendees.

Other questions that were raised included the following:

- Should we charge to cover the costs of the webinar only (i.e. without making a profit)?
- Should we post the webinars on our internal website (after completion of the webinar)?
- Can we obtain sponsorship of the webinars?
- Should we do a webinar with no live feedback from the audience and no face-to-face interaction? If we did this, webinar attendees could submit questions in the chat window.
It was decided that we will propose that our webinars be one hour in length, with approximately 40 minutes for the lecture and 20 minutes for questions.

Jose-Miguel mentioned that John Fox could be ready to give a webinar on R Commander by the first part of November. He will follow up with John regarding a more definite timeline. Laila will follow up with Rebecca Andridge. Jose-Miguel will follow up with Sandra Stinnett to do a webinar on team-based learning.

Bob noted that our section treasury could absorb the cost of one webinar if we decided not to charge for this. However, we cannot absorb the cost of three webinars per year. He said that we could use part of the funds that were donated by R and Stata to cover the costs of a webinar.

**UPDATES ON FUNDRAISING**

Jose-Miguel reported that R Studio agreed to contribute $500 to TSHS during each of the next three years. He also announced that Stata agreed to contribute $5000 to TSHS for the next year. Much of these funds would be used to cover the costs of our mixer at JSM 2018.

**JSM 2017 – SESSION EVALUATIONS**

Jose-Miguel mentioned that Rick Peterson of the ASA is in the process of sending us session evaluations (for TSHS sessions) that were submitted via the JSM 2017 app. These will be used to determine the TSHS Best Contributed Paper Award for JSM 2017.

**JSM 2018 – INVITED SESSIONS – UPDATE**

After input from the executive committee, Kendra selected the proposal entitled “Building computing age #Statistics Curriculum for biomedical scientists” for the section’s invited session for JSM 2018. Another section picked up the proposal entitled “Collaborative Biostatistics: Finding a Happy Medium in Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice” as its invited session. Kendra will submit the proposal entitled “Educational Tools for Causal Inference in the Health Sciences” to the competition among sections for the remaining invited sessions, with the hope that this will serve as an additional invited session for TSHS.

**UPDATE ON TSHS MENTORING PROGRAM**

Constantine Daskalakis sent an email update on the progress of the TSHS mentoring program. He noted that four junior-level individuals received mentoring, and that three TSHS members served as mentors. Of these four individuals, one received mentoring during the ASA-sponsored CSP (February 2017), and three received mentoring during JSM (August 2017).

In recent emails, mentees expressed very high satisfaction with the matching, which they found to be extremely appropriate and fitting. They were also very enthusiastic about their overall experience.

Prior to JSM, Constantine provided some guidance, including an outline of a possible structure for the meeting to both mentor and mentee. He also asked each mentee to communicate in advance to the mentor current strengths, skills they wish to develop/strengthen, things they would like to focus on during the meeting and related objectives (medium-term or long-term goals), and things they would like to have accomplished coming out of the meeting.
OTHER ISSUES – SECTION BLOG

Laila suggested that we look into posting issues of our section newsletter on a new blog site that we would be responsible for setting up and maintaining. She mentioned that Stat Ed is using a blog to post their newsletter and other material, and then showed us that blog. Following are some points from the subsequent discussion.

- Would a blog be more user-friendly than a Word document?
- Would using and maintaining a blog become a “time sink”?
- A blog would track who is reading what post. It also tracks the frequency of how often specific posts are read.
- All newsletter articles would be blog posts.
- Should we transform our newsletter into blog posts?
- A blog would allow us to set up subscribers.

Laila will follow up on this and obtain more information for the executive committee.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place during on Monday, October 16, 2017 at 1:00 PM (Eastern).

ADJOURNMENT

Jose-Miguel adjourned the meeting at 1:45 PM (Eastern).