American Statistical Association (ASA)
Section on Teaching of Statistics in Health Sciences (TSHS)

Minutes of ASA/TSHS Executive Committee Meeting
San Diego, CA 7/30/2012 (7:30 – 9:00 am)

Present: Carol Bigelow (Chair), Steven Grambow (Chair Elect), Motomi Mori (Past Chair),
Cyndy Long (Council of Sections Representative), Deborah Dawson (Secretary/Treasurer), Jeri
Harwood (Program Chair), Felicity Enders (Program Chair Elect), Bob Oster (Publications
Officer), Ed Gracely (Newsletter Editor), Jodi Lapidus (Chair Emerita)

1. Introductions and Discussion of 2012 Activities to Date

The meeting was chaired by Carol Bigelow, new officers were announced, and introductions
were made. The meeting began with a discussion of section activities for the year to date.

These included the review and amendment of the TSHS charter, as well as the establishment of
a new web site. Bob Oster agreed to arrange for implementation of a redirect from the old
section web site to the new one, and for archiving of materials from the old site. Cyndy Long
will address the problem with the link from the ASA Sections page so that it directs the user to
the new web site.

2. Activities at the Joint Statistical Meetings.

The TSHS offerings at the Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) were reviewed. They included one
invited panel, one contributed panel, one contributed paper session, a contributed poster
session and several roundtables as primary sponsor; several other events were cosponsored by
TSHS. It was noted that the contributed paper session included an “orphan presentation.” Final
arrangements were made for securing books for prizes at the drawing at the TSHS mixer that
evening. Special mention was made of a panel on the teaching of regression.

Dr. D. Keith Williams of the University of Arkansas was selected to receive the Outstanding
Teaching Award for 2012. Dr. Williams’ travel from Europe caused him to be unable to receive
the award in person, and a representative from the University of Arkansas will be at the TSHS
mixer to accept the award. Steven Grambow planned to attend a reception in Dr. Williams’
honor as a representative of the TSHS section on Tuesday evening.

3. Proposed Portal for Educational Resources

Carol Bigelow discussed the proposed portal for educational resources, envisioned as a portal
for the navigation of existing resources, specifically for teachers. Carol Bigelow put forward this
idea at the Council for Education and the Council of Sections, and it was also determined at the
Council of Sections that this activity is not currently supported by COS. It was recognized that
this is an ambitious undertaking and the Chair asked for assistance, including the identification
of possible contributors. It was suggested that a grant proposal under the auspices of the ASA
membership initiatives might be contemplated. It was also suggested that the section might
have a table related to the portal at JSM 2013. The portal topic was placed on the agenda for
further discussion at the TSHS mixer/business meeting, with those interested being invited to
attend a dinner at the Athens Market immediately following the mixer to continue the discussion, with a goal of developing endpoints for the next six months.

Bob Oster noted that a broader set of resources has been identified by the network of centers being funded by the Clinical and Translational Science Award mechanism, but that he did not feel there was too much overlap with the goals of this educational portal. Particular goals of the TSHS initiative would be to identify specifically useful educational content and to direct interested users there. The Chair indicated we might consider whether evaluation of links was desirable, and it was also noted that copyright issues did not apply if the portal simply provided links to content.

The committee discussed a new ASA community for students and recent graduates, called “Teaching Statistics in Practice.”

4. New Web Master

Bob Oster (Publications Officer) noted that a paid individual had maintained the section web site previously, but Constantine Daskalakis would serve as the section’s first Web Master for at least this year, before he assumes the position of Chair-Elect in 2013. It was suggested that a Web Master Elect should be identified in the near future.

5. JSM 2013

It was noted that 2013 has been designated the International Year of Statistics and 2014 is the 175th anniversary.

An invited session around portal development was suggested as a possibility for JSM 2013. The session allocation mechanism was discussed and it was noted that anyone may cosponsor a session, with the designation being arranged by the Program Chair. There are currently 66 allocated slots and 14 competitive slots for sessions. It was noted that the Committee on Outreach Education also has a slot, which might represent an additional possibility for such a session.

6. Council of Sections (COS) Report

Cyndy Long reported on the Council of Sections Meeting and noted that Marie Davidian has been named President Elect of the COS. The large number of concurrent sessions at JSM has caused complaints and the COS is considering alternatives. One possibility is moving to a greater use of poster sessions, with fewer oral sessions and a greater emphasis on plenary sessions. Dr. Davidian has particularly invited suggestions for innovative approaches, one such being the computer-based poster session model, which might be particularly effective for demonstrating graphical / interactive components of presentations. To this end, 20 laptops and 20 large screens have been purchased. Additional ideas are being solicited and Nat Schwenker and Marie Davidian are contacts.

The ASA Committee on Committees has been tasked with examining the ASA award processes, and to address diversity issues, especially the inclusion of women.

A new section, the Section on Imaging, has been established, and another new section focusing on mental health was proposed. This proposal was felt to have made a generally compelling argument, and had assembled about 200 individuals as a starting membership for the proposed
section. The group was requested to develop a more specific charter and a revised proposal for reconsideration.

The committee discussed the proposed JSM format changes, and the advantages and disadvantages of having fewer oral sessions. These included considerations of quality and streamlining, the advantage of a forum for young statisticians to present their first presentations, models from other scientific meetings, and the possible impact on attendance. One specific alternative format was the “soft boiled egg” session, where presenters in a topic-defined group each give a 2-3 minute presentation of their work before reversion to a standard poster session.

7. Budget Report

Deborah Dawson (Secretary/Treasurer) reported on Section membership and finances, noting that membership numbers remained steady and presented a report on the budget. (The summary report is attached; see Addendum below).

8. Closing Comments

The Chair made additional comments requesting future ideas for webinars and continuing education. A report on section activities is being prepared for October 1. She noted that, since the 2013 Program Chair Elect had already been identified, the Chair Elect position was the only one that needed to be filled in the coming year. The section has only two elected positions, the other one being the COS representative. The Chair thanked the attendees before adjourning the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah V. Dawson
Secretary/Treasurer

Addendum: An updated financial report as of October 25, 2012 is attached. It indicates that membership numbers are up slightly, that expenses for the JSM TSHS mixer were somewhat higher than anticipated, and that revenues were less than projected in the previous and current budget years. Expenses, which are primarily associated with JSM costs, continue to exceed revenue, and the section continues to run a budget deficit, as was noted last year. The accumulated surplus will make this sustainable for several years, but some attention should be given to balancing the section budget by consideration of additional revenue streams.
**UPDATED TREASURER’S REPORT**
*Section on the Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences*
*January 1, 2012 – October 25, 2012*

Balance as of 01/01/2012  $7,286.53

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<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
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Current Balance  $6,581.02

**NOTES:**

*Our current fee for dues is $7 per year. Since this is one of the higher rates within ASA sections, the sentiment was to leave dues at the current level when we discussed this at the Executive Committee meeting at JSM.*

*Currently we have 695 members, of which 122 are free memberships. This is slightly up from July 1, 2012, when we had 666 members, of which 115 were free memberships.*

*Since July 1, 2012, an additional $774.90 in revenues was posted, including $691.00 in member dues, and $83.90 in interest.*