

## Setting and Assessing Your Committee's Goals

### Introduction

Committees are created by the ASA Board of Directors to serve specific purposes, and they serve as “arms of the Board”. Every committee has a charge, approved by the Board, which describes its purpose and responsibilities.

The life of a continuing committee cannot exceed seven years without a formal review of its charge by the Board. However, committees should not wait for the end of this cycle to review their goals, or to seek high-level input from the Board if they are unsure about their direction.

Committees should discuss their direction on an ongoing basis, and committee chairs should notify committee council chairs (or vice chairs) if they decide that their charge needs to be updated or is no longer relevant. Committee chairs should also notify council chairs when they believe that their committee has accomplished its purpose and is ready to be dissolved.

This document suggests various exercises for committees that are interested in assessing their current direction and brainstorming about new goals and initiatives. The exercises are especially helpful for committees that are experiencing difficulty understanding or accomplishing their goals.

### Exercise 1: Questions for Leading a Discussion about Committee Direction

[Insert Current Charge]

Select from the following list of questions as appropriate:

- Does our committee have a clearly defined direction, and does everyone on our committee understand what we should be doing?
- Does our committee charge accurately reflect our current goals and activities?
- Do we need to set fresh goals? Do these depart from our charge, and should we propose a revision of our charge?
- Should we ask the Board for clarification about our direction?
- How do we assess progress toward our goals?
- Is the charge worded in a way that makes our work relevant to the success of our association in “promoting the practice and profession of statistics”?
- Would the charge motivate a new person to serve on this committee?
- Are we duplicating efforts of another committee or ASA group?
- Have we successfully accomplished our goals, and should we recommend to the Board that our committee be dissolved?

### Exercise 2: Brainstorm New Projects and Directions

Assume for this exercise that your committee does not exist, and that you are an ASA Board member who is interested in forming an activity to serve needs in this area.

- What problem would you like to solve?
- Are there any existing ASA groups (committees, sections, interest groups, outreach groups) that should be working on this problem?
- If a new committee should be formed, what activities and projects should be its first priority?
- How will we assess whether these activities are successful?

### **Exercise 3: Evaluate Current Projects/Activities**

[List each major project your committee is currently involved in]

Step 1: On a ballot, each committee member will place each of these projects in one of the following categories:

- a) Project is going well; no major changes needed at this time.
- b) Project is worthwhile and fits our group, but we should reevaluate our processes and/or the level of resources we devote to it.
- c) Project is not a good fit for our group; we should try to pass it to someone else or drop it.

Step 2: Aggregate the votes and write results on a flip chart.

Step 3: Discuss the results and evaluate the projects as a group.

Note: If the meeting is being held face-to-face then the ballot can be done as a secret ballot.

Step 4: Discuss Next Steps

At the end of the exercise, the committee chair should ask:

- What conclusions have we reached?
- How and when should we implement our decisions?
- What issues have we identified for further discussion?
- When should we plan to discuss these issues? Can they be handled through conference calls and e-mails, or should we plan to address them at the next face-to-face meeting?
- Will we need committee members with different experience and skills? (The chair should point this out in recommendations about committee appointments sent to the incoming president-elect.)

Committee chairs are encouraged to share the results with other chairs at council meetings.