

Business and Economic Statistics Section Business Meeting

Tuesday August 2, 2011 5:30pm

Section officers in attendance: William Bell (Chair), Mark Little (Chair-Elect), John Abowd (2012 Chair-Elect), Bonnie Ray (Program Chair), Scott Holan (Program Chair-Elect), Peter Bloomfield (Section Representative to Council of Sections), David Matteson (Publications Officer), Keisuke Hirano (Co-Editor, Journal of Business & Economic Statistics), Beth Andrews (Secretary/Treasurer)

1. Welcome from Bill Bell. Section officers introduced.
2. Kei Hirano reported on this year's Zellner thesis award.
There were fourteen submissions. The selection committee, which consisted of B. Bell, K. Hirano, and J. Wright (Co-Editor, JBES), identified the three top theses for detailed review by outside reviewers Arthur Lewbel (Boston College) and Frank Kleibergen (Brown).
There was one winner: Kirill Evdokimov (PhD, Yale)
and two honorable mentions: Xu Cheng (PhD, Yale) and Bryan Kelly (PhD, NYU).
Thomson Reuters was recognized for providing \$750 of the \$1500 prize.
SAS was also recognized for agreeing to provide \$1500 funding for each of the next 5 years. Thank you to Mark Little for securing this funding.
3. Bill Bell announced this year's winner of the Julius Shiskin Memorial Award for Economic Statistics—Tom Mesenbourg (Deputy Director, US Census Bureau).
This is a \$1000 award which the B&E Section co-sponsors with the Washington Statistical Society and the National Association for Business Economics.
4. Scott Holan discussed invited sessions for JSM 2012.
Section members can submit proposals for an invited session next year. B&E Section has four invited slots. Proposed sessions can also be submitted by the section program chairs to a competition for additional slots. Since the information needs to be submitted by September 7, S. Holan would like proposals by August 24.
5. Peter Bloomfield reported on Council of Sections meeting.
There is a proposal to form a 25th section—Statistics in Imaging. The petition is scheduled to be voted on in September and must be approved by all sections.
The council has been reviewing section charters. The B&E charter is not one that, at this point, is under review.
Questions were raised about the timeline for announcing student travel awards. It has been suggested that the deadlines be moved up so winners can be announced before the JSM program is put together. (Post-meeting note: On 9/13/11, ASA announced revised procedures, applying to all sections, regarding student travel awards. Applications will now be due December 15 with winners to be notified by January 15. Full details of the new procedures are available at <http://www.amstat.org/sections/studentpaperawards.cfm>.)

There was discussion about variation among sections concerning officer selection. In some sections, lower-level officers are appointed by the section chair, while other sections have more elected officers. All B&E officers are elected by the membership.

Representatives were told about preparations for the 175th anniversary celebrations in 2013. Sections could think about activities for the event.

6. Bill Bell reported on Economic Outlook Luncheon (EOL).

Was earlier in the day at 12:30pm. Speaker was Gary Stern, former head of Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

In program, EOL is listed under *Roundtables* as a *Speaker with Lunch*, and is not labeled the Economic Outlook Luncheon. B. Bell contacted ASA about the matter. They seemed amenable to making changes. Next year, ASA should more accurately list the EOL in the printed and online programs.

Since EOL attendance is down from previous years, there was discussion about possibly eliminating the lunch part and making it an invited lecture. Alternatively, we could do more promotion in an effort to boost attendance.

We considered the question “is price a deterrent to EOL attendance?” (Cost is currently \$40.) Only about 4 out of 15 attendees raised their hands.

M. Little and J. Abowd will look into ways to enhance the EOL, especially to boost attendance, in the next couple years.

7. Report on Section membership:

Type of membership	2010	2011
Free	155	40
Paying	961	1,014
Total	1,116	1,054

So membership down from last year, but the number of paying members has increased.

A Section member said that, at the Council of Sections meeting, he learned that ASA section membership is down in general this year.

(Post-meeting note: The reported 2011 membership numbers, which were given to the Section by ASA, are not correct. Instead, the Section has 1,053 total members. 475 of those are free members, and 578 are paying. The 2010 numbers may also be incorrect, but currently we do not have corrections. The dues revenue of \$2300, mentioned at the meeting and below in #8, is correct.)

8. Bill Bell distributed the 2012 budget and a summary handout. Noteworthy budget items discussed. The Zellner award went from 50% to 100% funded.

This year, the Executive Committee meeting was moved from 7am Tuesday to 5pm Monday to avoid having to purchase breakfast for officers. Hopefully that savings can continue in future.

Travel expenses for EOL speaker vary from year to year. They are expected to be roughly \$1500 this year. They were \$0 the last two years. (In 2010, the speaker agreed to have his employer cover his expenses, and in 2009, with the meeting in Washington, a local speaker was easily found.) The Section could require that speaker be from the JSM conference area, but that could be very limiting.

There was a request for B&E Section to co-sponsor the Fourth International Conference on Establishment Surveys in 2012. Section contributed \$750 to 3rd conference in 2007, and \$0 to 2nd

conference in 2000. Given structural deficit of Section, Bell, M. Little, and J. Abowd decided Section should not make substantial contribution to 2012 ICES.

Three major sources of Section revenue noted: dues (\$2300, roughly the same as last year), interest income (\$500, roughly the same as last year), and contributions (SAS contribution of \$1500 per year, 2012-2016, for the Zellner thesis award).

Major expenses: mixer (\$1600 budgeted), EOL (at Executive Committee Meeting, decided to eliminate free tickets for Section officers, so, in future, only need to cover speaker honorarium of \$500, and speaker travel expenses), and awards (Zellner \$1500, Shiskin \$500, student travel \$800). Depending on EOL speaker travel expenses, Section has structural deficit of \$600-\$2100.

Short courses can be a significant source of revenue. The X-13 short course in 2010 earned \$4000 for the Section. (Post-meeting note: A JSM short course offered in 2009 raised about \$1700 for the Section.) Short courses have not been offered every year. Nothing is currently established. Happen when someone takes initiative.

Plans for action to reduce deficit: (1) Will form committee of approximately 3 people to consider short courses that might be offered, and advantages/disadvantages of offering them at JSM and outside JSM. (2) No longer offering Section officers free EOL tickets. (3) Possibly increase dues. There was discussion about raising dues. Currently, Section annual dues are \$5. Among ASA sections, \$5 is the mode, \$6 is the median. Dues need to be \$7 in order to fully eliminate structural deficit. Discussion about how likely members are to quit if dues are slightly higher. J. Abowd noted that dues could always be decreased later if, for example, have recurring short course. S. Holan proposed vote on whether to consider increasing dues to \$7 or \$6: 8 members voted for \$7, 7 members for \$6. Then M. Little proposed we vote on dues increase of \$7, S. Holan 2nd proposal, 18 members voted in favor, 0 members opposed. So motion to increase Section dues to \$7 passed.

Subject to making changes to reflect the approved dues increase, the savings from item (2) above, and the savings from not contributing to the ICES conference, it was moved and seconded that the proposed budget be adopted. The motion passed.

9. Discussion about Section mixer.

One member liked the idea of sharing mixer with another section. Noted that, in the past, we used to have mixer with Statistics in Marketing, but they dropped out. 2010 Chair Richard Davis tried to arrange joint mixer last year, but was unable. J. Abowd suggested we identify section with the most overlapping membership and try to share mixer with them.

Another member suggested we have the mixer in a restaurant, instead of going through ASA and having mixer at convention center or hotel. So reception/mixer would be separate from the business meeting, and could be promoted via email. The Health Policy Statistics Section does this. M. Little (2012 Chair) will consider doing this next year.

10. Business meeting adjourned for reception/mixer.

Summary of actions/decisions:

1. Shiskin award – Bill Bell will contact the chair of the Shiskin award selection committee to discuss more even cost sharing of the award among the three sponsoring organizations (decision from executive committee meeting).
2. Student travel awards – Application deadline will be moved to December 15, with winners to be announced by January 15 (in conformance with revised ASA policy issued 9/13/11).
3. Economic Outlook Luncheon (EOL)
 - a. Bill Bell will follow up with ASA about changing the listing of the EOL in the JSM program (online and printed) so it actually gets listed as the Economic Outlook Luncheon.
 - b. Bell will also check with ASA about why a registration fee was required for the EOL speaker (decision from executive committee meeting).
 - c. Mark Little and John Abowd will look into ways to enhance the EOL, especially to boost attendance, in the next couple years.
4. Short courses – Bill Bell will appoint a short course committee of approximately 3 people with rotating membership to consider possible future Section short course offerings both at JSM and outside JSM.
5. Budget
 - a. Motion passed to increase Section dues to \$7. Mark Little will check with ASA on implementing this. (Post-meeting note: Steve Porzio of ASA responded that the change will be made. In fact, ASA checks with all sections each year following JSM to find out if they voted to change their dues.)
 - b. The Section will no longer cover the costs of EOL tickets for Section officers (decision from executive committee meeting).
 - c. Subject to these changes, the proposed 2012 budget was adopted.
6. Mark Little will explore the possibility of having the Section mixer in a restaurant at next year's JSM in San Diego.