

THE STATISTICAL CONSULTANT



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Tzu-Cheg Kao, Editor

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Comments from the 2003 Chair

Matilde Sanchez, Merck Research Labs

It was a pleasure to serve the Section with so many supportive and contributing members. Thank you to all the officers and members who actively participated and made the sections activities in 2003 successful. I would like to highlight some of the major accomplishments and recognize the efforts of our members.

As I mentioned in my first column, a major project for 2003 is the publication of the brochure "When you consult a statistician... What to expect". The purpose of this brochure is to facilitate the interaction between a statistical consultant and a client, and it is also to provide a potential client or employer of a statistical consultant with an

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overview of what is involved in working with a statistician. I'm happy report that we've accomplished this goal and distributed about 600 copies during the JSM in San Francisco.

I would also like to give special thanks to David Daniel who organized an excellent program with three invited sessions, four special topic contributed sessions and two regular contributed sessions.

Our section's business meeting and mixer at the JSM was well attended. This year the mixer was supported in part by Genentech, for which we are very grateful. The three travel award winners for the Best Topic Contributed

Session were announced. As in previous section meetings, we had a small-group brainstorming session on current and future Section projects and plans. Door prizes donated by various exhibitors were also given out. Thanks to Thomas Loughin and James Colaianne for all their hardwork in soliciting for prizes.

And finally, I would like to welcome our new editor for this newsletter, Tzu-Cheg Kao.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve the section as chair in 2003. Good luck and best wishes to Jane Pendergast, the chair in 2004. For more information on our Section, please check www.amstat.org/sections/.

Thanks to Donors of JSM 2003 Door Prizes

As always, our August 2003 Annual Business Meeting of the Statistical Consulting Section concluded with drawings for many door. Prizes were generously contributed by book publishers and software vendors, many of whom donated multiple books and copies of software. Their donations were greatly appreciated by our section members.

We would like to give thanks to the following donors:

Addison-Wesley	Oxford Press
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Statistical Consulting Sessions: Clients' Perspectives

H. Dean Johnson, University of Idaho*

I. Objectives of Study

In a university setting, statistical consultants play the important role of helping graduate students and faculty members with statistical issues related to their research.

In particular, statistical consultants are instrumental in helping researchers analyze their data, in designing their studies, and in providing advice on statistical methodology. Research done at colleges and universities is greatly enhanced through the collaboration of statistical consultants and researchers.

One important question, however, is how a consultation should be carried out by the consultant to best benefit the client. Much has been written by statistical consultants regarding how they think a statistical session should be conducted, based on their own experiences and observations (e.g. Mead, 1976; Boen & Zahn, 1982; Zahn & Isenberg, 1983; Stegman, 1985; Kirk, 1991; Derr, 2000).

Certainly such information is very valuable, but for a consultant to be most effective in the way he or she conducts a consulting session, it is imperative for the consultant to have an understanding of the perspectives of clients involved in the consulting sessions.

Very little has been written regarding the perspectives that clients bring to statistical consulting sessions (Derr, 2000; Finch, 1999). For any person who provides statistical consulting, it is important that he or she has an understanding of these perspectives.

The aim of this study is to provide an inside view of the experiences of university statistical consulting clients necessary for quality consulting practices.

To gain an understanding of the perspectives of statistical consulting clients, I surveyed, interviewed, and observed statistical consulting clients at West University and East University, two land-grant universities located in the Pacific Northwest.¹

There were two objectives in conducting the study: (a) identify factors that relate to the success enjoyed by clients in statistical consulting sessions and (b) understand, from the point of view of statistical consulting clients, how and why these factors play an important role in statistical consulting sessions.

II. Data Collection

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were utilized and these are described below.

Quantitative Methods. To understand the perspectives of past clients at West University and East University, I conducted a survey ($n = 129$); 86 surveys were returned by WU clients and 43 by EU clients.

The response rates for the WU and EU clients were 59 percent and 45 percent, respectively. A description of the 126 persons surveyed is found in Table 1.

Qualitative Methods. Between September 2000 and December 2001, I observed 26 consulting sessions that took place at WU and EU. During each of the sessions, detailed field notes were taken.

After each of the sessions that were observed, I interviewed the client involved in the consulting session. Interviews lasted 40-50 minutes and were taped and transcribed for

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¹Pseudonyms have been used for all individuals, places and organizations in this study.

Table 1: Description of the Clients Who Were Surveyed

	Category	Count	(%)
Classification	Faculty	45	(35)
	Graduate Student	60	(47)
	Other	24	(19)
College	Food Science/Human Nutrition	15	(12)
	Social Science	22	(17)
	Animal Science	27	(21)
	Forestry/Ecology/Crop & Soil Science	47	(36)
	Other Science (Bio., Chem., Geo., etc.)	18	(14)
Ethnicity	African American	6	(5)
	White	104	(81)
	Other	19	(15)
Gender	Female	63	(49)
	Male	66	(51)
University	East	43	(33)
	West	86	(67)

Table 2: Description of the Clients Who Were Observed and Interviewed

	Category	Count	(%)
Classification	Faculty	3	(12)
	Graduate Student	22	(85)
	Other	1	(4)
College	Food Science/Human Nutrition	9	(35)
	Social Science	1	(4)
	Animal Science	4	(15)
	Forestry/Ecology/Crop & Soil Science	7	(27)
	Other Science (Bio., Chem., Geo., etc.)	5	(19)
Ethnicity	African American	0	(0)
	White	19	(73)
	Other	7	(27)
Gender	Female	17	(65)
	Male	9	(35)
University	East	4	(15)
	West	22	(85)

analysis. Table 2 provides a description of the 26 persons who were observed and interviewed.

III. Analysis and Discussion

The analysis of data in this study involved a two-stage process.

In the first stage, a statistical analysis of the survey data was conducted. In this part of the analysis, several factors were identified as explaining the degree to which clients deem their statistical consulting sessions to be a success.

After identifying these factors, the second stage of the analysis involved analyzing qualitative data (interviews and field notes) in the context of these factors.

In this paper, I provide a very brief description of the quantitative analysis, and then detail the findings from the analysis of the interview data. The details of the quantitative analysis can be found in Johnson (2002).

First Stage: Analysis of Quantitative Data

A proportional odds model was applied to the survey data to identify which variables, of the collection of explanatory variables listed below, are significantly related to an ordinal variable measuring the degree to which clients deem their consulting experience to be a success.

The explanatory variables considered were:

1. The university at which the client received statistical consulting.
2. Field of study of the client (food science, animal science, ...).
3. Classification of the client (faculty, graduate student, staff, ...).
4. Race of the client.
5. Gender of the client.

6. The client's rating of his or her statistical skills, on a scale from 1 to 10.
7. Whether or not the client requested or was assigned to the consultant.
8. The role the client considers most important for the consultant to play (teacher, data analyst, guide, ...).
9. A measure of the skills of the consultant as both a statistician and collaborator. It is a weighted sum of 10-13 and 15-17 below, with the weights being higher for the following four variables.
10. *Client's opinion regarding how well the consultant understood his or her research.*²
11. *Client's opinion regarding the statistical competence of the consultant.*²
12. *Client's opinion regarding the success of the consultant in providing a direction or solution to the problem of the client.*²
13. *Client's opinion regarding how well the client was able to understand the statistical advice presented to him.*²
14. A measure of the personal qualities of the consultant. It is a weighted sum of 10-13 and 15-17 with the weights being higher for the following three variables.
15. *Client's opinion regarding the interest of the consultant in the client's research problem.*²
16. *Client's opinion regarding how personable and easy to talk to the consultant was.*²
17. *Client's opinion regarding how enthusiastic the consultant was.*²

²Ordinal variable: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree

To determine which variables, of the several explanatory variables listed above, are useful predictors of the degree to which a client deems a consulting session to be successful, I utilized a stepwise procedure, with the stopping rule being that the p -value of all variables not in the model is greater than 0.05.

Three factors were identified:

1. the skills of the consultant both as a statistician and collaborator,
2. the personal qualities of the consultant, and
3. whether or not the client requested the consultant with whom he or she worked.

After identifying these factors, the next step was to detail the importance of these factors using interview data.

Second Stage: Analysis of Qualitative (Interview) Data

When analyzing the interview data in the context of the three factors identified in the logistic regression, several themes emerged in regard to each factor that helped to illuminate the importance of the factors to clients. The inductive categories that emerged are briefly summarized below.

1. The Skills of the Consultant Both as a Statistician and Collaborator. In regard to the importance of this factor, several themes emerged in analyzing the interview data. A discussion of these themes is provided below.

Providing a Viable Solution using Statistics

In research, students and faculty often have to use statistics to analyze data or in deciding how to collect data and, often at this point, the statistical consultant is contracted to assist in performing these tasks.

Researchers who come to statisticians often realize the importance of statistics in their re-

search and profession. To illustrate, the following are responses that clients provided when they were asked to describe their perception of statistics.³

Teresa: For me, statistics helps me to analyze my data. If I get some results from the research, I can see the difference from the graphs but I couldn't tell if there's any significant difference from the results.

Gina: Statistics is a good way to actually get some true numbers. You can always manipulate things but I think statistics gives you a better idea of what's actually going on. As a dietitian, I have a perception that I know that my job actually improves the patient's outcome. However, when I can have numbers to show that there's actually an improvement, administrators and your boss are a little bit more understanding or willing to give you additional funds and hire more people. So I think statistics helps us justify our jobs.

Statistics plays the vital role of enabling researchers conducting quantitative research, like those mentioned above, to draw scientific conclusions from their data. Also, if inappropriate statistical techniques are used in a research paper, the paper might not be accepted for publication. Because of the important role that statistics plays in their research, students and faculty want a person that can provide them with a viable statistical solution to their problem.

Understanding the Research of the Client

Clients consider it important for the consultant to try to develop an understanding of their research. Understanding the research of the client, however, is often more difficult than one might think.

One must recognize that university clients who come to statistical consultants are doing

³To prevent the long sentences that can occur in oral communication, quotes from clients have been slightly edited.

research in a wide variety of fields (nutrition, soil science, zoology,). Statistical consultants are consulted only for their expertise in statistics and are typically not experts in areas such as these.

As a result, if they want to understand the nature of the research being done by the client, they need to ask critical questions. Clients appreciate it when consultants ask a variety of questions to develop an understanding of their research problem. As one client in this study explained in an interview,

Gina: Judy, she's worked with Linda on other projects, so she's already familiar with some of the actual terms common with nutrition. But, if some new variable come up, she asks questions to know specifically what the variable is and to know, for example, whether it's good to have it high or low. I think it gives her a better understanding and it just reinforces, makes us really think in terms of are we getting the information that we truly need.

Thus, Gina believed that the consultant heard what she was saying and was developing a customized solution to her particular statistical research problem.

Regardless of whether the consultants were truly able to understand the diverse problems presented to them, it was important that they conveyed to clients a desire to learn and gain an appreciation for their unique problem. It is thus important for the mutual respect between client and consultant to be cultivated.

Explaining Statistical Solutions to Clients

Clients want the consultant to do more than merely provide a statistical solution to their problem. They also want some understanding of the statistical solution presented to them.

Emily: The statistician, he must have ability to teach, to explain, that's the main thing he does. I might be very laid back

with statistics but if the statistician is very good at explaining the data, I mean the results, then that should not be a problem.

As Finch (1999) quite rightly points out, for the consultant to simply provide the solution without simultaneously teaching the client, does a disservice to the client. It is important to teach clients the how and why of their techniques in addition to pointing the way towards a solution. In other words, knowledge leading to independence on the part of the client is a critical aspect of statistical consulting.

Many of the clients who come for statistical consulting at these two universities are graduate students. For these persons, it is especially important that they have some level of understanding so that they can ultimately explain their statistical results to a thesis or dissertation committee.

Additionally, when they enter the work place, these students may not have the luxury of having access to a statistical consultant. Thus, it is important that students have enough understanding of such statistical procedures to be able to apply the procedures on their own.

Gauging of and Speaking at the Statistical Level of the Client

It is important for the consultant to gauge the statistical level of the client and to speak at that level. According to two clients,

Bruce: Stephen is able to talk to me to know my level of statistics. He is able to talk to me at that level. To talk way over my head would just confuse me. I think he knows my level of ability and he can talk to me at that level.

Helen: Today, I was meeting with Judy and she wrote down the cookie analogy, and that is helpful because we were talking about fatty acids and it can be confusing. So, I think the ability to break things

down to an elementary level, at least for me, that's very good.

As mentioned earlier, clients often have to present and explain the statistical results of their research to others. If the consultant explains the statistical results at too high of a statistical level, the client will quickly become confused and frustrated and as a result will not learn enough to be able to explain their results.

From the above comments, it is evident that clients are appreciative of and benefit from the ability of the client to explain the statistical results at the statistical level of the client.

2. The Personal Qualities of the Consultant. In the analysis of interviews conducted with consulting clients, many personal qualities emerged as being important personal qualities for statistical consultants to have.

Being a Good Listener

In a consulting session, it is crucial for the consultant to be a good listener.

For a consultant to be able to suggest the most appropriate statistical technique, it is important that he or she knows, for example, the details of how data were collected by the client. To ascertain such details, the consultant needs to be able to listen carefully as the client describes his or her research.

As mentioned earlier, it is important for the consultant to gauge the statistical level of the client. One way of effectively doing this is to listen as the client discusses his research. In regard to the importance of listening in determining the statistical background of the client, one client comments,

Cynthia: They need to listen to the person's situation and get a feel for where they're going and what their level of understanding is. I think he's good at that. It seems like he wants to listen first to what I have to do or what I'm working on and worried about and then offer suggestions.

Also, from the conversation, listening plays the important role of enabling the consultant to determine what exactly the client wants from the consulting session.

Being Personable

In a consulting session, clients also need to feel comfortable and at ease. While seemingly a matter of comfort or courtesy, establishing a relationship of ease and trust is critical for the learning that takes place.

The value that clients placed on being personable is vividly illustrated by the words of one of the clients in this study.

Tom: I can know the best statistician, the best teacher, the guy who explained everything to me, but at least for me if I don't get this comfortable feeling after talking with him, I will choose somebody else. If I feel comfortable talking all this kind of stuff, I'm going to learn more.

For some clients, merely coming to statistical consultant, having to admit they do not know they are doing, puts them in an uncomfortable and vulnerable situation. In such case, a client wants someone who is not going to be critical in regard to his or her lack of knowledge. In regard to the importance of not being critical and perhaps even arrogant, a client in the study comments,

Sandra: For me, not being very comfortable with statistics, puts me in the somewhat uncomfortable situation of coming into the session not having any knowledge, basically coming in and saying I don't know what I'm doing. It is important for me to have somebody that's willing to work with me and not be judgmental and arrogant and speak down to me while we're going through these calculations. It is also important that the consultant doesn't mind if I ask stupid questions. So, I need somebody, obviously

with a good basic knowledge or statistical analysis, but I think equally important is their attitude. I need someone who is willing to work with me to bring me up to the place that I need to be in my understanding of statistical analysis.

In a consulting session, it is essential that the client openly discusses his or her research. As the above client goes on to say,

Sandra: I'm looking more for a personal relationship, that they're going to make me feel comfortable so that I can ask questions that I think I need to ask.

It is difficult for a consultant to give advice to the client if he does not know about the nature of the research being conducted. Participants in this study argued that the extent to which they were able to open up to a consultant was affected by the extent to which they felt comfortable with the consultant. Thus, clients considered being comfortable an important element of a statistical consulting session.

Being Patient

For clients, it is important that consultants are patient both in explaining the statistical solution and in listening as the client describes his or her research. According to one of the clients in the study,

Gina: Paul is definitely very patient with my stuff. I don't know too much of what's going on. He'll go and think about all of it and then explain to me what he did, as opposed to just pretty much blowing me off and saying here's your answer. Some people can be really short and not explain things, but Paul really explains everything and he takes the time to listen and he doesn't make me feel dumb. So that's the biggest quality and then I think the second biggest quality is to be able to listen. It might take me a while to get to my point because I'm not sure what kind of point I'm trying to make.

Statistical consulting clients enter consulting sessions with varied backgrounds in statistics. For those clients with a weak background in statistics, understanding the statistical information provided to them by the consultant may be difficult. In such case, it is important for the consultant to demonstrate patience in explaining the statistical results to the client.

Also, in a consulting session, the consultant may not immediately understand the research of the client, perhaps due to the lack of detail in the client's description of the research or perhaps due to the complete unfamiliarity the consultant has with the field of research. In either case, it is important for the consultant to have patience in gaining an understanding of the research problem. According to one client,

David: If the consultant is not understanding what you are explaining, they need to continue to bore at you until you actually explain it in a way that they understand it.

3. Whether or Not the Client Requested the Consultant with whom He or She Worked.

As mentioned earlier, clients can request a particular consultant with which to work.

The degree to which the client indicated that he or she was pleased with the consulting session was, not surprisingly, related to whether or not the client requested the consultant. Those persons who request a consultant have formed a favorable opinion prior to the consulting session, an opinion that is not likely to change over the course of the consulting session.

In this study, there were several reasons mentioned for a client requesting a particular consultant with whom to work.

Some of the clients had taken a class from the consultant and liked the consultant as a teacher. Some chose a particular consultant based on a recommendation from someone else. Also, there were some who requested a consultant because he or she had a background in the type of research being conducted

by the client. As one client indicated,

Carol: I requested her because a lot of people in our department had worked with her in the past and so she was a little bit more familiar with the kind of study that I was doing.

As Carol describes, the consultant having prior knowledge of the type of research being conducted by the client facilitates the interaction that takes place between the consultant and client.

It is important to note, however, that the relationship between the extent to which the client deems the consulting session to be a success and whether or not the client requested the consultant was only marginally significant (p -value = 0.0495) in the logistic regression model.

In this study, a few clients who filled out the survey indicated that they were not pleased with the consulting services provided to them despite having requested the consultant. Perhaps in these cases, the consultant was recommended to the client by someone (friend, thesis advisor, etc.) who valued something very different in a consultant relationship.

IV. Conclusion and Implications

In this study, three factors were identified as being related to the degree to which a client judged his or her consulting experience to be a success. Of critical importance for a statistical consultant is the relationship established between client and consultant based on attitudes towards each other and the shared experience of the consulting event.

These findings have important implications for the training of statistical consultants. In college and university statistics departments, many faculty members are required to provide statistical consulting to researchers at their respective universities.

In graduate programs in statistics, students often receive training in teaching and research, two of the other duties that are often required of statistics faculty members.

In regard to teaching, graduate students are often required to teach an introductory course in statistics thus acquiring some teaching experience. In regard to research, graduate students are required to write either a thesis or dissertation thus providing them with research experience. Statistical consulting, however, was often an area for which many graduate students received very little training.

For Dr. Paul Morgan, a consultant at WU, the lack of training in statistical consulting he received as a graduate has made his work as a statistical consultant difficult. As he discusses,

Dr. Paul Morgan: Consulting, to me, is the hardest part of the three facets of my job, which are teaching, research and consulting. I think consulting is the hardest thing to learn, the hardest thing for a new faculty member to really get comfortable with and learn. This is because we're trained in teaching for years and years and get some training in terms of doing research throughout the latter portions of our graduate careers, but graduate students do not get much direct experience at consulting. So, it's really tough, partly because you don't have those personal skills and I think partly because you don't have as many tools in your bag of tricks that you need to pick up later.

The comments made by Dr. Morgan underscore the benefits of graduate students in statistics being educated in doing statistical consulting. More and more programs are now including statistical consulting as an integral part of graduate education. The knowledge of client perspectives gained in this study could be used as part of this education.

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Announcement of Travel Awards Competition for 2005

The Section on Statistical Consulting invites proposals for Topic (Special) Contributed Paper Sessions for the Joint Statistical Meetings to be held August 7-11, 2005, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Proposals submitted will compete for up to three travel awards. Each award consists of \$500 *and* a registration fee waiver for the organizer. Each organizer will be responsible for lining up speakers for the session and for coordinating submission of abstracts in the fall of 2004.

A proposal should consist of a short (one-page) description of the session, including a description of the session theme, the types of papers or discussions to be included, and the intended audience. A list of possible speakers is helpful.

The proposal submission deadline is September 1, 2004.

Send your proposal to:

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Remember to check the Section website often!

www.amstat.org/sections/cnsl/

You'll find all information relating to the Section on Statistical Consulting, such as our charter, officer list, Section activities, past issues of *The Statistical Consultant*, minutes of past meetings, and more.

Comments from the Chair

Jane Pendergast, University of Iowa

As the 2004 chair of the Section, it is my pleasure to welcome you with this, our first newsletter of the year.

I feel I can speak for the entire Executive Committee when I say that we are honored to be serving you and encourage you to share your ideas, concerns and suggestions with us. In addition, we are always looking for more volunteers to keep the section strong and vibrant, so please don't be shy if you would like to become more involved.

We appreciate that these are tough economic times, and we will make every effort to keep the section operating as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Our plans for this year include revamping and updating our website to be more useful to members. We also will be initiating a remote version of the JSM roundtable discussions. We want to create a roundtable-like environment outside of the JSM in which section members can interact with an expert. While the format is not yet completely finalized, we anticipate using either conference calling or internet capabilities.

Look to our section website:

www.amstat.org/sections/cns1/

for more information as these plans are finalized. While you are there, check out some of the informational resources (newsletter archive, books and journals, centers and facilities, courses) available to you.

We would welcome your input on additional materials and links that could be added and your opinion on the usefulness of what you see.

Shirlene Pearson (2004 program chair) has

been working hard to organize another great program for you at the 2004 JSM in Toronto (August 8-12). We encourage you to attend both the sessions and our business meeting.

(By the way, it is becoming quite a tradition for our section to have excellent and plentiful door prizes at that meeting. Come see for yourself!).

These meetings take years to plan, so now is the time to make suggestions for topics, courses, and specific sessions or speakers you would like to see at the 2005 JSM in Minneapolis (August 7-11, 2005). Please send these to our 2005 program chair, Susan McGorray (spmcg@biostat.ufl.edu), and let her know if you would be interested in organizing or chairing a session.

We will again be offering the travel award program, in which your proposal for a Topic (Special) Contributed Paper Session could win you \$500 and a waiver of the registration fee.

Our section, like the ASA as a whole, would not be able to function without the volunteer efforts of the membership. In recognition of such, I would like to thank those whose terms of service have come to an end for their dedication and leadership. We all probably wish we had more hours in our day, and these individuals chose to donate their time (in some cases, a great deal of time) to this section. Some will be continuing on in different roles, and we hope all of them will stay active in the section.

Please join me in thanking Barbara Mann (2003 past-chair), Stuart Gansky (secretary-treasurer), Christina Guillion (newsletter editor), I. Elaine Allen (webmaster), David Daniel (2003 program chair), Ray Tamura

University of Iowa, Department of Biostatistics C22K-GH, 200 Hawkins Drive, Iowa City, IA 52242-1009 (jane-pendergast@uiowa.edu)

(Council of Sections representative), and Thomas Loughin (at-large member of the Executive Committee) for their years of dedicated service.

Thanks as well to Matilde Sanchez for all her work as the 2003 chair, and I look forward to her continued involvement on the Executive Committee this year as the past-chair.

I would also like to welcome those newly elected and appointed to positions in the section: Susan Devlin (2004 chair-elect), I. Elaine Allen (secretary-treasurer), Brenda Gaydos

(Council of Sections representative), Harold Dyck (at-large member of the Executive Committee), Tzu-Cheng Kao (newsletter editor), Chuck Kincaid (webmaster), and Susan McGorray (2005 program chair). We thank them as well for their willingness to serve.

The role of a statistical consultant is so critical to our profession and, for many of us, to our livelihoods as well. Our mission is to support statisticians in that role, and we look forward to an exciting and productive year in that pursuit.

Notes from the Editor

If you thought you missed an edition of *The Statistical Consultant* over the winter, you didn't! To ease the transition from one editor to the next, we decided to combine the Winter 2003 and Spring 2004 issues. Normal publication will resume in the future, with Spring, Summer, and Winter issues.

I would like to thank Karla Genter for her continued assistance in typesetting the newsletter and congratulate her on the birth of her baby boy in January. In addition, I am grateful to Christina Gullion, the previous Editor, for her generous work as Editor of *The Statistical Consultant* as well as providing her guidance during the transition.

I hope *The Statistical Consultant* continues to be a stimulating forum for ideas and issues

that can be shared with our Section members. Comments on the articles or anything published in the newsletter are welcome.

If you want to write a short article related to statistical consultations, please contact me as soon as possible. Submission deadlines for future issues are February 1, May 1, and October 1 for Spring, Summer, and Winter issues. Acceptance of articles will be decided subject to the recommendations from reviewers.

I would like to thank the volunteer reviewers who gave very helpful comments and suggestions after reviewing the article by H. Dean Johnson. Special thanks to Dr. Johnson who was willing to share with us part of his recent research work on the clients' perspectives of statistical consultations.

Tzu-Cheng Kao, Editor

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