

Section Organized

The Section on Defense and National Security (SDNS) was approved last fall, and is completing its organizational activities. ASA members who had previously expressed an interest in the section were enrolled in the section at no charge, through their ASA renewal date. All members were mailed an advisory ballot for chair-elect and program chair-elect in January, and we hope to announce these two officers shortly.

If you are interested in joining the section, please contact Monica Clark, the ASA Chapters and Sections Coordinator, monica@amstat.org.

JSM Activities

SDNS is sponsoring three invited paper sessions at the 2004 JSM in Toronto.

The first session is “Early Warning of Bio-Terrorism: Syndromic Surveillance”, and is organized and chaired by Michael Cohen. Syndromic Surveillance refers to methods for early detection of biological outbreaks by seeking out information on reported symptoms. Besides the obvious importance of this topic in terms of public health and national security, it poses many interesting and cutting-edge statistical and computing challenges. These challenges will be explored in this session by eminent researchers in the field.

The second session is “Attack Detection, Interdiction, and Response”, and is organized by Doug Samuelson and chaired by Ron Fricker. This session will deal with statistical methods to detect and monitor attacks, primarily biological attacks, and to assess effectiveness of responses. It pulls together a number of current concerns in defense and national security, health policy, biological statistics, risk assessment, measurement and indicators, and methodology.

The third session is “Adaptive Sampling Applications in Homeland Security”, and is organized and chaired by Fritz Scheuren. This session will examine and discuss adaptive sampling methodologies that are applicable to homeland security applications, such as the detecting and biological and chemical attacks.

The section is also organizing some round-table luncheons, and we'll provide details shortly.

Student Paper Competition

The 2003 student paper competition for the best paper applying statistics to defense issues was won by Thomas Cioppa for his paper, "Advanced Experimental Designs for Department of Defense Analyses: A Military Peace Enforcement Application." Cioppa completed his Ph.D. at the Naval Postgraduate School, and Professor Thomas Lucas was his dissertation advisor.

The prize will again be offered in 2004. The competition is open to any undergraduate or graduate student enrolled in any institution of higher education. The paper must have been written in the preceding academic year (for this year's prize, July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004). The paper must be nominated and submitted by a faculty member at the institution. Papers are limited to 5,000 words or 20 pages, including graphics. Student theses meeting these length requirements are acceptable.

Papers are judged on the quality of the statistical work, the quality of the written presentation, and the significance of the contribution to understanding of defense issues. For 2004, the prize consists of a plaque and \$500.

Nominations and three copies of the paper should be submitted to Professor Dave Olwell, Department of Operations Research, Code OR/OL, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 93943, by 1 July 2004. Questions should also be addressed to Professor Olwell (dholwell@nps.navy.mil). The prize announcement will be made at the annual JSM meetings.

Miscellaneous

The section has an initial website at <http://www.amstat.org/sections/defense/>. The website is adding significant content as the section is established, and is a good source of current information about section activities. We recommend that you add it to your favorites!

Dale Anderson has compiled a list of people who are willing to serve as peer-reviewers for defense-related publications, proposals, etc. These names are posted on the Section website. If you would like to be added to the list, please contact Dale at dale.anderson@pnl.gov.