

**GSS/SSS OCTOBER 2009 NEWSLETTER**  
**Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections**  
**American Statistical Association**

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**UPCOMING DEADLINES AND EVENTS:**

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|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>December 18, 2009</b>             | Deadline for Submitting to the 2010 Student Paper Competition |
| <b>December 1 – February 1, 2010</b> | Abstract Submission Open for 2010 JSM Contributed Sessions    |

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**PLANNING FOR JSM 2010: VOLUNTEERS TO CHAIR CONTRIBUTED SESSIONS**

*Submitted by Joseph Salvo, SSS 2010 Program Chair, and Lisa Blumerman, GSS 2010 Program Chair*

If you are going to attend the 2010 Joint Statistical Meetings in Vancouver (July 31 - August 5, 2010) and wish to volunteer as a **contributed session chair** for SSS or GSS-sponsored sessions, please contact Joseph Salvo (SSS 2010 Program Chair, [jsalvo@planning.nyc.gov](mailto:jsalvo@planning.nyc.gov)) or Lisa Blumerman (GSS 2010 Program Chair, [lisa.m.blumerman@census.gov](mailto:lisa.m.blumerman@census.gov)). Complete details are provided below.

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**Planning for JSM 2010: Call for Contributed Session Abstracts**

The 2010 SSS and GSS program chairs encourage you to organize a contributed session and submit an abstract for the 2010 Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM). The theme of JSM 2010 will be “**Statistics: A Key to Innovation in a Data-Centric World.**” There are two types of contributed sessions: regular and topic-contributed. Before you submit an abstract to ASA for a **topic-contributed** session, please contact Joseph Salvo (SSS 2010 Program Chair) or Lisa Blumerman (GSS 2010 Program Chair) at the email addresses above. They will keep track of the sessions SSS or GSS may either sponsor or co-sponsor.

**Parameters for contributed session options are listed below.** Please plan ahead. All abstracts must be submitted online at the ASA website from **December 1, 2009 through February 1, 2010.**

**Topic-contributed paper session:**

- 110 minutes in length; collection of contributed talks & **discussions that share a common topic**
- Must be 5 presentations (including discussants) of 20 minutes each, with 10 minutes of floor discussion at the end
- Three format options: five (5) papers; **OR** four (4) papers and one (1) discussant; **OR** three (3) papers and two (2) discussants
- All speakers must submit an abstract to ASA, and indicate they are in a topic-contributed session (give the name of the organizer)
- **Coordinate through the JSM program committee member**

**Topic-contributed panel session:**

- 110 minutes in length; panel discussion format; panel members provide commentary on a particular topic
- Minimum of three (3) and maximum of five (5) panelists; panels each require ONE abstract submitted by the organizer
- **Coordinate through the JSM program committee member**

**Topic-contributed poster cluster:**

- Three (3) to six (6) posters on a related topic - theme can be applied, methodology-related, or theoretical

**Regular contributed session:**

- 110 minutes in length
- Opening remarks by session chair (5 minutes), followed by six (6) or seven (7) speakers (15 minutes each)
- If 6 speakers: 15 minutes of floor discussion at the end; if 7 speakers: no discussant or floor discussion

**Contributed poster:**

- 110 minute session
- 8 ft by 4 ft board

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**Planning for JSM 2010: Student Paper Competition**

The 2010 program chairs for the Social Statistics, Government Statistics, and Survey Research Methods sections are pleased to announce a competition for student and post-graduate papers to be presented at the Joint Statistical Meetings in Vancouver on July 31 – August 5, 2010. Papers entered in this competition must involve either a new statistical methodology, or a creative application of statistical analysis to a problem, issue, or policy question pertinent to the subject area of one of the sponsoring sections. The competition announcement is posted below. **All materials are due by 5 PM Eastern Standard Time December 18, 2009.** If you have any questions please contact Joseph Salvo (SSS Program Chair – [jsalvo@planning.nyc.gov](mailto:jsalvo@planning.nyc.gov)), Lisa Blumerman (GSS Program Chair – [lisa.m.blumerman@census.gov](mailto:lisa.m.blumerman@census.gov)), or Michael Elliott (SRMS Program Chair – [mrelliot@umich.edu](mailto:mrelliot@umich.edu)).

**Complete Details: 2010 Student Paper Competition, Sponsored by a Consortium of Sections**

The Social Statistics, Government Statistics, and Survey Research Methods Sections are pleased to announce a competition for student and post-graduate papers to be presented at the Joint Statistical Meetings in Vancouver, on July 31 – August 5, 2010. At least five awards will be granted. Winning papers are presented by the authors at a JSM session and recognized at the Sections' business meetings. A subsidy of up to \$800 is provided to each winner to cover JSM 2010 expenses.

To be eligible to participate you must be a current undergraduate, graduate student at any level, or a 2009 graduate who presents research conducted as a student. *Faculty members are urged to encourage students to apply for these awards.*

Papers entered in this competition must involve either a new statistical methodology, or a creative application of statistical analysis to a problem, issue, or policy question pertinent to the subject area of one of the sponsoring sections. The research does not have to be complete, but competitors must be able to submit an abstract prospectus that describes the planned research and nature of the intended innovation(s).

To apply, please send the requested materials below to Joseph Salvo (SSS 2010 Program Chair), Lisa Blumerman (GSS 2010 Program Chair), or Michael Elliott (SRMS 2010 Program Chair) at the email addresses listed above.

The application must include:

1. a cover letter with the applicant's name, current affiliation and status, and contact information (address, telephone, e-mail);
2. an abstract (300 words maximum);
3. a draft paper (if available); otherwise, a 3-page research prospectus; and
4. a letter from his/her adviser that certifies the applicant's status (e.g., current student or new graduate who completed the degree within the past year), and describes plans to complete the research.

**All materials must be received by December 18, 2009. Winners will be notified by mid-January 2010.**

If a student receives an award from more than one section, he/she must immediately inform the other cosponsoring sections and decline one of the awards.

Please refer to the section websites below for updates:

Social Statistics Section	<a href="http://www.amstat.org/sections/ssoc/">http://www.amstat.org/sections/ssoc/</a>
Government Statistics Section	<a href="http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/">http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/</a>
Survey Research Methods Section	<a href="http://www.amstat.org/sections/SRMS/index.html">http://www.amstat.org/sections/SRMS/index.html</a>

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**GSS AND SSS SPONSORED ROUNDTABLES FOR JSM 2010**

*Submitted by Iris Shimizu, GSS 2011 Program Chair-Elect, and Nancy Clusen, SSS 2011 Program Chair-Elect*

The 2011 Program Chairs-Elect for GSS and SSS, Iris Shimizu and Nancy Clusen respectively, are responsible for organizing roundtables for JSM 2010. If you are interested in hosting a roundtable lunch or breakfast please contact either Iris ([ishimizu@cdc.gov](mailto:ishimizu@cdc.gov)) or Nancy ([NClusen@Mathematica-Mpr.com](mailto:NClusen@Mathematica-Mpr.com)).

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**HERRIOT AWARD NOMINATIONS SOUGHT**

*Submitted by Frank Potter, Chair of the Herriot Award Committee GSS COPAFS Representative, 2009-2010*

Nominations are sought for the 2010 Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics. The award is intended to reflect the special characteristics that marked Roger Herriot's career:

- Dedication to the issues of measurement;
- Improvements in the efficiency of data collection programs; and
- Improvements and use of statistical data for policy analysis.

The award is not limited to senior members of an organization, nor is it to be considered as a culmination of a long period of service. Individuals at all levels within Federal statistical agencies, other government organizations, nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and the academic community may be nominated on the basis of their contributions.

The recipient of the 2010 Roger Herriot Award will be chosen by a committee comprising representatives of the Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections of the American Statistical Association, and of the Washington Statistical Society. Roger Herriot was associated with, and strongly supportive of, these organizations during his career. The award consists of a \$1,000 honorarium and a framed citation, which will be presented at a ceremony at the Joint Statistical Meetings in August 2010. The Washington Statistical Society will also host a seminar given by the winner on a subject of his or her own choosing.

The previous recipients of the Roger Herriot Award are Joseph Waksberg (Westat), Monroe Sirken (NCHS), Constance Citro (CNStat), Roderick Harrison (Census Bureau), Clyde Tucker (BLS), Thomas Jabine (SSA, EIA, CNStat), Donald Dillman (Washington State University), Jeanne Griffith (OMB, NCES, NSF), Daniel Weinberg (Census Bureau), David Banks (FDA, BTS, NIST), Paula Schneider (Census Bureau), Robert E. Fay III (Census Bureau), Nathaniel Schenker (NCHS), Nancy Kirkendall (EIA), Elizabeth Martin (Census Bureau), and Lynda Carlson (NSF).

Nominations for the 2010 award will be accepted beginning in February 2010. Nomination packages should contain:

- A cover letter from the nominator that should include references to specific examples of the nominee's contributions to innovation in Federal statistics. These contributions can be to methodology, procedure, organization, administration, or other areas of Federal statistics, and need not have been made by or while a Federal employee.
- Up to six additional letters in support that demonstrate the innovativeness of each contribution.
- A current vita for the nominee, including contact information.

Both individual and group nominations may be submitted. The committee may consider nominations made for prior years, but it encourages resubmission of those nominations with updated information.

For more information, contact Frank Potter, Chair, 2010 Roger Herriot Award Committee, at 609-936-2799 or FPotter@Mathematica-MPR.com. Completed packages must be received by April 1, 2010. Electronic submissions in MS-Word or as a "pdf" file are strongly encouraged. Please contact the chair if you need to make arrangements to fax or mail a nomination.

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**JEANNE E. GRIFFITH 2009 MENTORING AWARD WINNERS: KEVIN CECCO AND LILLIAN LIN**

(This article, with pictures, appeared in the August edition of AmStat News)

*Submitted by Stephanie Shipp and Beth Kilss, Jeanne E. Griffith Award Selection Committee*

On the afternoon of June 17, the Conference Center at the Bureau of Labor Statistics was the setting for the presentation of the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award. This year, for the first time, there were two award winners – **Kevin Cecco**, Internal Revenue Service, and **Lillian Lin**, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This year also marked the transfer of oversight of the award selection process to the ASA's Government Statistics Section. The audience of approximately 60 attendees comprised colleagues, family, and friends of Jeanne Griffith and both awardees, as well as the members of the award selection committee and the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy.

## **The Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award**

Jeanne E. Griffith worked for more than 25 years in the Federal statistical system. Throughout her career, and especially in her senior management positions at the National Center for Education Statistics and the National Science Foundation, one of Jeanne's highest priorities was to mentor and encourage junior staff to learn, to grow, and to recognize and seize career opportunities as they came along. After her death from breast cancer in 2001, the Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award was set up to honor Jeanne's memory by encouraging mentoring of junior staff in the Federal statistical system.

The Jeanne E. Griffith award has honored mentors across the government since 2003:

### **Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award Winners**

|                                                                 |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Rich Allen, National Agriculture Statistical Service            | 2003 |
| Beth A. Kilss, Internal Revenue Service                         | 2004 |
| Renee Miller, Energy Information Agency                         | 2005 |
| Martin O'Connell, Census Bureau                                 | 2006 |
| Stephanie Shipp, National Institute of Standards and Technology | 2007 |
| Rosemary D. Marcuss, Bureau of Economic Analysis                | 2008 |
| Kevin Cecco, Internal Revenue Service                           | 2009 |
| Lillian S. Lin, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention      | 2009 |

## **The Tree on the Jeanne E. Griffith Plaque**

Each year, awardees are presented an impressive plexiglass and granite plaque. Upon seeing it for the first time, one is drawn to the tree engraved in the center. Andy Orlin, Jeanne Griffith's husband, said that:

*In designing the plaque for the Jeanne E. Griffith mentoring Award, we were looking for a symbol that would represent the mentoring and training function. We finally hit upon the thought of a tree with its branches and leaves. From the sturdy, well seasoned, and developed trunk emanate branches and leaves, the latter being nurtured and supported by the strength of the trunk. Over time, young, fragile branches become strong outgrowths of the tree and begin to sprout new branches also. As time goes by, branches and leaves fall and are replaced by new leaves, new branches and the process repeats itself and begins anew. Also as the leaves and the fruit from the tree fall, they result in the growth of new trees.*

*It was envisioned that this whole process was symbolic of mentoring. The sturdy, well seasoned senior staff helps grow and develop the younger and junior staff who over time becomes experienced and well seasoned senior staff and managers. These junior staff mentees then become the mentors of new staff that join the organization. In addition, a number of junior staff mentees do not stay in the organization that originally trains them, but move on to other organizations. As they do so, they take the values of the mentoring experience with them to their new organization settings and spread the mentoring seed to other places for it to grow and develop anew.*

*When Jeanne died in August of 2001, we planted a Japanese maple sapling in our back yard as a living memory of her. While planted in ground that is filled with clay and rock (we live near Rock Creek Park, which is named that for a reason), we hoped that this sapling would grow into a tall, beautiful, hardy tree. And over the years since she died, it has thrived and done so. The tree is now around 12-15 feet tall, very healthy and thriving. Today, the tree, like the Award Program, has grown and developed far beyond the initial artistic concept, portrayed in the plaque picture."*

## **The 2009 Award Presentations: Kevin Cecco and Lillian Lin**

To be nominated for the Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award, the nominator seeks letters of support and then prepares a summary statement of support. The brochure for this year's award ceremony highlighted careers and mentoring accomplishments of each winner as presented in their respective nomination packages as follows:

**Kevin Cecco, is the Chief, Corporation Statistics Branch, Statistics of Income Division, Internal Revenue Service.** Kevin has been a Supervisory Statistician/Mathematical Statistician in the Statistics of Income (SOI) Division of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for over 10 years in two key positions. Currently he is the Chief of the Corporation Statistics Branch. Previously, he was a Supervisory Mathematical Statistician, managing SOI's Statistical Support Section in the Statistical Computing Branch. Kevin received a B.S. degree in mathematics from Bloomsburg University and has completed several graduate courses in statistics from the Joint Program in Survey Methodology at the University of Maryland. Prior to working in SOI, he was a mathematical statistician at the Bureau of the Census from 1990-1995 and also worked for the General Motors Acceptance Corporation from 1988-1990.

As chief of SOI's Corporation Statistics Branch, Kevin manages staffs that sample, edit, and produce critical tax statistics associated with active domestic corporations, such as C-Corporations, S-Corporations, as well as Partnerships. These data are then analyzed and disseminated on SOI's website, known as Tax Stats, and through SOI's Corporation Complete Report, and SOI's Corporation Source Book. In his previous position, Kevin supervised a group of mathematical statisticians which provided general statistical consulting services on over 90 projects for various organizations throughout the IRS. His areas of expertise include statistical consulting, sample estimation, quantifying sampling variability, and producing performance measurement indicators.

Kevin regularly asks each staff member about their career goals, and he works with them to develop strategies to attain them. He revisits these periodically, assessing progress and refocusing as needed. Staff recognition is also important to Kevin and he often goes above and beyond to acknowledge his staff's important contributions. As a result, employees have frequently responded with extra efforts. Outside the office setting, Kevin has volunteered in school science fairs and career days. A guidance counselor at an elementary school wrote that Kevin "demonstrates a passion for mentoring students and instilling in them a desire to reach higher goals." A principal of another school acknowledged Kevin's "enthusiasm and love of statistics" and also for being "creative and willing to share his expertise." Tom Petska, recently retired as Director of the Statistics of Income Division, IRS, and Kevin's nominator and former supervisor, briefly spoke, saying that

*Kevin's outstanding abilities and accomplishments as a mentor include devoting quality time to each new employee to learn about their strengths and personal interests; teaching basic statistical skills, team protocol, and how to mitigate tough situations and tough customers so employees will eventually lead their own projects; and pairing each new employee with a senior staff member of the team so they can learn and develop.*

Kevin Cecco, in conveying his thanks talked about the five ingredients for "creating an ideal mentoring environment." These ingredients include trust; carving out the necessary time to devote to your employees; a caring attitude; an understanding of the differences between an employee's skills, knowledge, and talent; and knowing when to let go. "In time, the mentee becomes a peer of sorts, and eventually, in some cases, the mentee grows in a particular direction where he/she becomes the teacher of the mentor ... Over the course of time, they have become experts in various statistical areas. When this happens, the mentor knows he/she has accomplished their job."

**Lillian S. Lin is a Mathematical Statistician, Division of HIV and AIDS Prevention, at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** Lillian has served as the Lead Mathematical Statistician for the Statistical Science Team in the Quantitative Sciences and Data Management Branch in the Division of

HIV and AIDS Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) since 2002. After receiving her master's degree, Lillian began her career as a biostatistician at the Harvard School of Public Health. This experience inspired her to further her education. After earning her Ph.D. in biostatistics from the University of Washington, Lillian taught biostatistics for the next 6 years at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University. During this time, she collaborated with behavioral and social scientists, epidemiologists, and clinician researchers. Then, in 1996, Lillian joined the CDC as a mathematical statistician in the Division of HIV and AIDS Prevention. Under her leadership, twelve statisticians collaborate with scientific researchers and program officials throughout the division. Lillian also regularly organizes continuing education activities for statisticians at CDC.

Dr. Sherri L. Pals states in her nominating letter that one of Lillian's greatest strengths as a mentor is her ability to help junior staff develop the skills to collaborate with other scientists and she is "quick to provide support, motivation and help with problem-solving." "Lillian frequently encourages those of us on her team to participate in opportunities for training and growth, and she also takes an active role in providing these opportunities." Lillian's supervisor, Dr. Timothy Green, states: "She has nurtured each new staff member, helping him or her to focus on role definition and to become productive, respected contributors to scientific projects throughout the division." He also noted that she has worked diligently "to encourage her staff to present their work at professional meetings, attend relevant trainings and conferences, and develop nonstatistical skills such as oral and written communication."

Others who work with Lillian state that she is "an advocate for continuing education and urges their team members to attend conferences and courses." "Lillian supports and fosters both the statistical and personal growth of junior statisticians..." "She manages to lessen my anxiety, increase my confidence in my ability to handle the situation and help me learn from the situation." "As a servant leader, Lillian takes the time to listen to her employees and values what they say and feel; she cares about her employees and is there for them in the good times and when the chips are down;...she plans ahead and tries to improve the work environment under which her team operates and interacts with collaborators; and she builds links across the statistical community at CDC."

Tim Green, Lillian's supervisor (who could not attend the ceremony) wrote a note congratulating Lillian, stating,

*Several years ago, as we were in the process of removing the "acting" from your title, I was asked by a member of the senior division leadership, "Is she the best statistician available?" Before I could answer, Dr. Janssen, then our division director, put it perfectly: "That's not what's most important. What is most important is that she is the best possible team leader who happens to be a very competent statistician." The subsequent years and experiences we have shared together have proven the truth of his statement and the wisdom of our decision! Please don't leave until I retire!!*

Lillian Lin, in her comments upon receiving the award said the following:

*I commend the sponsors for supporting this award as mentoring is not taught in graduate school yet we all need mentoring. As a statistician, I didn't want to be redundant. My additional thought is that mentoring is not only about offering ideas on achieving goals but also helping someone understand their own growth edge. Most statisticians are eager to develop their technical skills. It's harder for us to understand the importance of other abilities such as listening, negotiation, role definition, accurate but palatable explanation of subtle ideas to non-statisticians, bridging cultural or interdisciplinary differences, or eliciting the scientific or political context of our technical contributions. These areas have presented and continue to present the greatest challenges for me as a statistician and as a mentor. The irony is that I find I have grown in my ability to meet these challenges as I have sought to mentor these abilities in others.*

The Award Ceremony was conducted by Emerson Elliott, Katherine Wallman, Andy Orlin, Stephanie Shipp, and Beth Kilss. **Emerson Elliott**, former U.S. Commissioner of Education Statistics and former chair and current member of the award selection committee chaired the ceremony. **Kathy Wallman**, the

Chief Statistician at the Office of Management and Budget in the Executive Office of the President, and Chair of the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy, introduced the awardees and members of the audience. She also talked about the Griffith Award during its early life – the original steering committee and the original Award Selection Committee. **Andy Orlin**, Jeanne E. Griffith's spouse, talked about Jeanne and the motivation behind setting up the award. He decided that there was no better way to remember Jeanne than establish a Mentoring Award Program to continue to nurture, educate, and create quality leadership capabilities of junior staff in the Federal Statistical Agencies, that section of the Federal government that she was so proud to have worked in. Stephanie Shipp, senior researcher at the Science & Technology Policy Institute and this year's chair of the Award Selection Committee, described the transition of the award process to the Government Statistics Section (see below). **Beth Kilss**, Award Selection Committee member and IRS retiree, presented Kevin Cecco's award and read his citation. Emerson Elliott did the same for Lillian Lin. The ceremony concluded with a celebration of the awardees and Kathy Wallman's birthday.

### **Transition to the Government Statistics Section**

In 2007, Andy Orlin and Emerson Elliott (two of the founders of the award) approached GSS about managing the award. When they met with the GSS Board there was no hesitation in taking on the leadership role – in fact there was much enthusiasm and delight in being asked to manage this prestigious award. Carol House was chair of the section at the time. Steve Porzio and Monica Clark at the American Statistical Association were instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition and for their support for this year's award ceremony

The GSS will not only be administering the award process itself, but it will have as a priority raising the visibility of the award by emphasizing and highlighting the importance of mentoring across the Federal government and particularly the Federal Statistical community. The GSS is working on further refining the award selection process.

The Jeanne Griffith committee is composed of 6 members who each serve a 6-year term. The selection committee members are Carol House, National Agricultural Statistics Service (through 2015), Emerson Elliott, National Center for Education Statistics (through 2014), Stephanie Shipp, Science and Technology Policy Institute (through 2013), Clyde Tucker, Bureau of Labor Statistics (through 2012), Dan Kasprzyk, Mathematica Policy Research (through 2011), and Beth Kilss, IRS, Statistics of Income, retired (through 2010). Andy Orlin serves as emeritus member, thus providing continuity and historical perspective.

### **Sponsoring the Award**

GSS is looking ahead to the long term and to expanding our sponsorship. COPAFS and the American Educational Research Association joined the GSS in providing financial support for the award. We would like to thank Ed Spar (COPAFS) and Felice Levine (AERA) for their generous support. Our other sponsors for 2009 are the ASA Social Statistics Section, the Washington Statistical Society, and the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy. We are seeking corporate sponsors in order to increase the amount of the honorarium, to give more awards, and to be able to continue to fund our expenses. We would like to continue to raise funds each year until a sufficient amount is raised to make the award be self-sustaining. [Please contact Stephanie Shipp at [sshipp@ida.org](mailto:sshipp@ida.org) if you would like to be a supporter.]

### **Nominations for the 2010 Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award**

Nominations for the 2010 Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award will be accepted beginning in January 2010. Look for an article in AmStat News towards the end of 2009 that will describe the nomination process for 2010. We will also advertise in the Government Statistical Society, Washington Statistical Society, and other newsletters and listservs.

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## **COPAFS CORNER: COPAFS FOCUSES ON STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES**

(This article summarizes the June 2009 COPAFS meeting; it also appeared in the August edition of AmStat News.)

*Submitted by Stephanie Shipp, ASA representative to COPAFS for 2008-2009, and Stephen Cohen, ASA representative to COPAFS for 2009-2010*

COPAFS is the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics and comprised of the membership of 60 organizations, including professional organizations, businesses, research institutes, and others interested in federal statistics. As a member of COPAFS, ASA has two representatives from the Government Statistics section who attend the quarterly COPAFS meetings and report back to the ASA membership. Highlights of the June 5, 2009 meeting held at the Bureau of Labor Statistics follow.

### **COPAFS Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Ed Spar reported that the confirmation of Bob Groves as Census Bureau Director is on hold. This is recent news, and Spar did not have information on who initiated the hold and for what reason.

Spar expressed caution, but noted that the 2010 budget numbers look quite good. If BEA gets the requested amount, they will reinstitute county employment data, and backfill to years for which data were not provided. And if NCHS gets its requested amount, they will be able to return the Health Interview Survey to full sample. Spar also reported that CNSTAT recently released a report on the National Crime Victimization Survey, noting that there seems to be congressional support for added funding, and that BJS is working on creative ways to improve the system. Spar had no observations on the Census budget, but commented that LEHD (the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics program) may be the most interesting thing going on at the Census Bureau. LEHD not only tracks employment at the local level, but produces synthetic data – an approach that many surveys may adopt in response to disclosure concerns. A presentation on LEHD is scheduled for the next COPAFS meeting.

The remaining 2009 COPAFS meetings will be on September 11 and December 4.

### **Upcoming Changes in American Community Survey Products Between 2007 and 2008.**

David Johnson, U.S. Census Bureau, noted that he is not with the ACS office, and that his giving an ACS presentation is evidence of how wide ACS involvement is at the Census Bureau. He explained that changes in ACS products are in response to recommendations and feedback from OMB, Census, and the inter-agency council, and with input from data users. The goal is to incorporate changes while minimizing disruptions to data consistency.

Scott Boggess, U.S. Census Bureau, said many of the ACS product changes were necessitated by changes in the questionnaire, and the additional questions on new topics, including marital history, health insurance coverage, and service-connected disability. But more than half of the changes relate to changes in the general disability questions, and none of the disability tables will be comparable to previous years – including the most basic count of persons with a disability. Many disability tables are being deleted, and replaced by new tables that will look like the originals, but will provide fundamentally different measures, such as percents calculated with different denominators. The Census Bureau is just now getting a look at data collected from the new questions, and will release relatively few tables until they become more familiar with the new data. Also, because of the differences introduced in 2008, there will be no disability data in the 2006-2008 3-year ACS data products, and the first 5-year data will be those reflecting data collected 2008-2012.

Changes to other ACS topics include employment, relationship, educational attainment, year of naturalization, and food stamp amounts. The ancestry tables will look the same, but the data will be different due to the correction of some errors in processing. For example, it has been discovered that the inclusion of Irish-Scotch with Scotch-Irish is incorrect. Some tables will reflect new industry codes, and there will be two new tables for multigenerational households. Boggess pointed out that there might also

be discontinuities in employment estimates due to changes in the questions to make them more comparable with those on the CPS. If the new questions provide data more consistent with the CPS, the Census Bureau will likely expand the number of ACS employment tables provided.

Despite all the changes, Boggess noted that the 2008 changes are actually small compared to previous years, but he said we can expect more changes next year with the expansion of the disability, health insurance, employment, and group quarters data product packages, as well as the addition of race-iterated data for disability, health insurance and marital history, and a new topic – field of degree.

### **Toward a Health Care Satellite Account.**

Ana Aizcorbe, Chief Economist, Bureau of Economic Analysis, noted that BEA does not gather data the way the Census Bureau does, but is engaged in an accounting or measurement of expenditures and other economic activities. BEA conducts research on their measures-- health care is an area of recent focus. The goal is to improve measures of health care in the national accounts. Aizcorbe explained some of the challenges associated with this goal.

The problem is how to best measure the services provided by the health care sector, and the extent to which health care expenditures are increasing or decreasing. To illustrate the challenge, and the different ways of looking at health care expenditures, Aizcorbe used the example of depression. The typical BLS approach would be to measure expenditures for specific services or treatments, while health economists tend to focus on expenditures by disease. In the case of depression, treatment once was limited primarily to the costly option of “talking therapy,” but when drug therapy became an option, people tended to substitute that less expensive option. Thus, from the perspective of spending by treatment, the cost of treating depression has increased (e.g., the cost of talk therapy has increased), but from the “treatment of disease” perspective, the cost has decreased because of the substitution of the less expensive treatment.

The point is that one has to consider if the treatments available for specific diseases have changed recently, and also if the total number of people being treated has changed (with lower cost options, more people might seek treatment). BEA is trying to identify diseases where this difference (spending by treatment vs. spending by disease) is important. The work is still preliminary, and is further complicated by the tendency for some diseases to occur in groups. Still some of the early data indicate that treatment-based measures suggest higher increases in health care costs than do the disease-based measures. Findings so far – based on an extensive list of diseases – suggest that treatment of disease based measures usually show lower growth in health care costs.

### **Population Estimates Testing and Evaluation Research.**

Victoria Velkoff, U.S. Census Bureau, described the Census Bureau’s plans for evaluating their population estimates against the results of the 2010 census (a program they call Estimates Evaluation E2). The objective is to evaluate not only the methods they currently use, but a number of alternative methods. Currently, the Census Bureau uses the administrative records method (ADREC) for county estimates, and the housing unit method (HU) for subcounty estimates, and Velkoff recalled the HUBERT (Housing Unit Based Estimates Research Team) project undertaken in response to recommendations that they consider HU methods for the county estimates. The HUBERT results found that the ADREC method has produced more accurate estimates than HU methods in most counties. However, some HU method proponents are concerned that ADREC showed no advantage with respect to bias, so the Bureau is taking a further look at HU methods. The objective is to document the ultimate decision – to either stay with the ADREC method or switch to HU or other methods following the 2010 census.

Phase one of the evaluation is to develop estimation principles and select accuracy measures. Phase two is to select alternative methods to test, develop official estimates and alternative estimates, and then carry out the evaluation. The timeline calls for the completion of phase one in April 2009 (already done), the determination of alternative methods by July 2009, the production of evaluation estimates by December 2010, the completion of evaluations by October 2011, and decisions on post-2010 methodology by spring 2012. Evaluations will cover total population as well as demographic

characteristics, and the Census Bureau will look to external researchers to help evaluate specific methods, such as ratio correlation.

Jason Devine, U.S. Census Bureau, described the underlying principles of the estimates – things not subject to change. Among these are that the population estimates will reflect the census concept of usual residence, the most recent census counts will serve as the estimates base, and because of the use in funds distribution, priority is given to a lack of bias. The estimates must be produced within deadlines by Census Bureau staff, estimates within a vintage must sum to others of that vintage, and each vintage must include a time series from the last census.

Methodological principles call for soundness (solid reasoning), accountability (understandable by many parties), availability of data (for all areas of US), availability of resources, robustness (insensitive to small departures from assumptions), comparability, adaptability, parsimony, and reasonableness (in terms of accuracy, demographic appropriateness, and external comparisons). Accuracy will be defined as the degree of closeness to the 2010 census values, and Devine listed four properties of “good” estimates, drawn from a 1970s review of the Census estimates program by the Committee on National Statistics. These include low average numeric error, low average percent error, few extreme percent errors, and the absence of bias for subgroups.

Devine also identified five selected measures of accuracy – chosen after a review of 19 different measures.

1. Average numeric error (root mean square error).
2. Average percent error (MAPE).
3. Extreme percent error (N greater than an established threshold).
4. Bias (MALPE).
5. Accuracy of share of total population. (absolute error of shares).

These measures for 2000 county population estimates were as follows for ADREC and HU methods.

	<b>ADREC</b>	<b>HU</b>
Root mean square	10,341	13,464
MAPE	3.2	5.9
Extreme percent error (10%)	109	502
MALPE	1.5	1.4
Accuracy of shares	6,574,332	12,173,807

Devine concluded by identifying key points for the upcoming evaluations. These include a focus on the most promising alternatives, the use of production requirements and underlying principles to guide decisions, providing the most comprehensive evaluation possible with limited resources, and providing datasets that will allow others to assess the accuracy of the estimates.

### **Developing Criteria for Delineating Urban Areas.**

Michael Ratcliffe, U.S. Census Bureau, stressed that today’s presentation does not describe proposed criteria, but ideas to generate feedback for use in preparing proposed criteria for the definition of Urban Areas. He noted that the Census Bureau has officially defined urban areas since 1910, they define urban areas after each census, and that the areas are defined for statistical purposes, not programmatic purposes. The criteria are reviewed and revised before each census, but a common theme over the decades has been to identify the built-up, densely settled urban landscape. The population threshold of 2,500 is an enduring part of the changing definitions.

Adopted in 1950, the density-based Urbanized Area (UA) concept allowed for the inclusion of more than just incorporated areas, and even non-contiguous areas. The UA concept was largely unchanged over the following decades, and the delineation of areas required a labor-intensive, interactive paper map-based process that involved some amount of subjectivity – for example, in deciding whether a nearby densely settled area was part of a UA. The inclusion of nearby areas often requires the use of “jumps” or “hops” over unsettled or less dense areas. Although whimsical sounding, these are technical terms, with jumps generally limited to a single jump (in a given direction) of no more than 1.5 miles, but hops permitting multiple spans of up to 2.5 miles.

For 1990, the Census Bureau for the first time published UA criteria in a Federal Register notice, and used interactive delineation software. The process was more automated, but still required subjectivity – as in the application of “hops” which were first used in 1990. For 2000, the UA concept was supplemented with urban clusters (UCs) – the same concept, but applied to smaller areas. UAs have populations of 50,000 or more, and UCs have populations of 2,500 up to 50,000.

Ratcliffe described how the use of automated software has shifted the focus from which areas to include in UAs to questions of where to split large urban areas. If fully automated, the process would do things like split urban areas in the middle of a downtown business district, or identify a single continuous UA from Wilmington, DE to Springfield, MA – and by rule, call it “New York.”

Issues for 2010 include the identification of nonresidential urban land uses on the fringe of UAs, establishing objective methods for splitting large urban agglomerations, the comprehensive identification of undevelopable territory (such as wetlands and steep slopes), and the delineation of UAs in Puerto Rico and the Island Areas. Looking beyond 2010, a challenge will be how to incorporate annual data from the ACS (intercensal UA and UC updates?), and the possible definition of “suburban” and “exurban” areas.

Chris Henrie, U.S. Census Bureau, reinforced two big major points – the continued use of the 2,500 population threshold, and the fact that the threshold no longer relates to incorporated areas. Henrie then filled in with helpful details on the application of jumps and hops, the exemption of areas such as parks, and other issues in the inclusion/exclusion of discontinuous areas. He also described options being explored including the greater use of census tracts (allowing for greater use of commuting data), and the use of data on impervious (paved) land surfaces and steep slopes. They are also reconsidering the importance of the concept of the central place to the realistic delineation of urban areas. Above all, Henrie stressed that the Census Bureau remains committed to an objective, equitable and consistent nationwide delineation of urban areas.

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