



WSS NEWS

WASHINGTON
STATISTICAL
SOCIETY

September 2005

Congratulations

The initiation of electronic voting was a huge success. A record 357 voters (more than double the best turnout in recent years) cast their ballots and elected:

President-elect
Jill Montaquila

Methodology Program Chair
Don Malec

Representative at Large
Nancy Bates
Larry Cox

Secretary
Tom Broene

Congratulations are also in order for the WSS members who were recently elected Fellows of the American Statistical Association:

Alan H. Dorfman, Bureau of Labor Statistics
Jeffrey S. Passel, Pew Hispanic Center
Susan Schechter, Office of Management and Budget
Iris M. Shimizu, National Center for Health Statistics

WSS and Other Seminars (All events are open to any interested persons)	
September 22 Thurs.	The Dynamics of Nonmetro Wage Income Distribution: A Model-Based Approach
28 Wed.	Panel on Privacy and Public Perception of Risks
October 20 Thurs.	Julius Shiskin Award Presentation Methodological Problems with the Consumer Price Index

Also available on the Web at the following URL: <http://www.science.gmu.edu/~wss>

Announcements

Dues Reduction Redux

For the second year in a row, the WSS Board of Directors has voted to lower the Society's annual dues. Effective January 1, 2006 (that is, for membership years beginning on or after that date), the annual dues will be \$7 for full (ASA) members and \$9 for associate members. The new figures reflect a \$3 reduction below current dues. The reductions this year and last were made possible by the transition to nearly full electronic delivery of the newsletter.

Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology 2005 Research Conference November 14-16, 2005

The 2005 Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) Research Conference will be held November 14-16, 2005 at the Sheraton Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia. The Conference provides a forum for experts from around the world to discuss and exchange current research and methodological topics relevant to Federal government statistical programs. Each day of the conference will offer papers on a wide range of topics including the use of advanced technologies for survey design and data collection, processing and dissemination, data mining, data warehousing and metadata, treatment of missing data, improving coverage and response rates, confidentiality and disclosure issues, record linkage, sample design and estimation, cognitive research and usability testing, and data quality. Technical demonstrations on a variety of applications will run concurrently on the second day of the conference. Applications include systems for data warehousing, data analysis, clerical review, and data dissemination. Sessions feature papers and demonstrations by government, private sector, and academic researchers from six countries. In the opening plenary session Miron Straf of the National Academies of Science will discuss "A National Statistical System in a Rapidly Changing World." All paper sessions will include an open discussion and some sessions will include a formal discussion.

Conference Fee: Registration is \$150. For a copy of the advance program and registration information please refer to <http://www.fcsm.gov/events/#upcoming>.

Third International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-III)

June 18-21, 2007
Hyatt Regency Montréal
Montréal, Québec, Canada

Cosponsored by: American Statistical Association (ASA), ASA Section on Survey Research Methods, ASA Section on Government Statistics, International Association of Survey Statisticians, and Statistical Society of Canada. We invite you to submit proposals for invited paper sessions for presentations to the third International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-III) by December 1, 2005. The ICES-III Program Committee will review the proposals and notify session organizers by the end of February, 2006 if their proposal has been accepted or not. The deadline for contributed papers (including topic contributed sessions) will be June 15, 2006.

Details on how to submit the proposal can be found at:
<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2007/index.cfm>

All Conference activities will be held at the Hyatt Regency Montréal. The Hyatt Regency Montréal web site is <http://montreal.hyatt.com/>. (Hotel reservations will be open on March 1, 2007.)

Attendees from outside Canada, and this could include United States passport holders, must ensure they have the proper travel documents - e.g., passport, visa - to enter and leave Canada.

Program Announcement

- Title:** **The Dynamics of Nonmetro Wage Income Distribution: A Model-Based Approach**
- Speaker:** Jack Angle, Economic Research Service, USDA
- Discussant:** John Hisnanick, U.S. Census Bureau
- Chair:** Karen Pence, Federal Reserve Board
- Date/time:** Thursday, September 22, 2005 / 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Room 10. To be placed on the seminar attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after `wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Take the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** WSS Economics Section
- Abstract:** The dispersion of nonmetro wage incomes has increased in the last four decades. The conventional wisdom in the labor economics literature is that this fact and the fact that the relative frequency of large nonmetro wage incomes has increased together indicate a trend toward greater wage income inequality caused by the "hollowing out" of the wage income distribution into groups of wage rich and wage poor workers with few in between. In fact, all percentiles of wage incomes increase by roughly the same proportion when mean nonmetro wage income increases, which it did in the last four decades. The main exception is small wage income percentiles which increase by a somewhat larger proportion. This transformation necessarily increases the dispersion of nonmetro wage incomes and greatly increases the relative frequency of very large incomes. This transformation is a stretching of the distribution over larger wage incomes, not the emergence of a hollowed out distribution. This transformation has happened without a substantial increase in the Gini concentration ratio of wage incomes. In the perspective of the conventional wisdom of the labor economics literature, a tax subsidy strategy for rural economic development will only exacerbate inequality and do very little for low wage workers. The new model-based findings reported in this talk imply that while direct subsidy to low wage workers may certainly help those particular nonmetro low wage workers, the way to raise small nonmetro wage income percentiles is to raise the nonmetro mean of wage income, and a tax subsidy strategy might be optimal for that goal.

Note from the WSS NEWS Editor

Items for publication in the November issue of the WSS NEWS should be submitted no later than September 27, 2005. E-mail items to Michael Feil at michael.feil@usda.gov.

Program Announcement

Title: **Panel on Privacy and Public Perception of Risks**

Speakers: Ari Schwartz, Associate Director, Center for Democracy and Technology
David Banks, Professor in Statistics, Duke University
Brian Dautch, Director of Government Affairs for the Council on Marketing and Opinion Research
Gerald Gates, Chief, Privacy Office for the US Census Bureau
Herb Lin, Senior Scientist, Senior Staff Officer for the Computer Science and Telecommunications Board, National Research Council of the National Academies

Chair: Alvan O. Zarate, National Center for Health Statistics

Date/Time: Wednesday, September 28, 2005/ 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. Light refreshments will follow the seminar.

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center Room 9. To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.

Sponsor: DC-AAPOR and WSS Public Policy Section

Abstract: This panel will discuss a variety of views on key privacy issues facing the research community today. **David Banks** talk about data confidentiality in transportation applications, and the cost-benefit issues that arise. He will also touch on data mining issues, especially in the context of counterterrorism. **Gerald Gates**, will highlight work done by the American Statistical Association to describe the nature of data mining as a statistical tool and ethical issues that may arise. This work was prompted by media characterization of statisticians, who assist data mining, as unconcerned with privacy threats. Through a series of Frequently Asked Questions, the association responds to concerns about the appropriate use of data mining, the rights of persons whose data are mined, the role of the statistician in the data mining process and methods to ensure privacy when mining data. **Ari Schwartz** will discuss his work on increasing privacy protection and increasing individual's access to government information via the internet. **Brian Dautch** will speak about privacy legislation that has been introduced or passed by the 109th Congress. Many of these bills impact people's individual privacy rights, and some of them were even *driven* by people's increasing privacy demands and expectations. **Herb Lin** will pull together some common themes from the panelist discussion and touch on some of his research on privacy and technology for the Computer Science and Telecommunications Board, National Research Council of the National Academies.

Program Announcement

WSS Seminar and Julius Shiskin Award Presentation

- Title:** **Methodological Problems with the Consumer Price Index**
- Speaker:** W. Erwin Diewert, Department of Economics, University of British Columbia
- Chair:** Rich Allen, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA
- Date/Time:** Thursday, October 20, 2005/ 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Rooms 7 and 8. To be placed on the seminar attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after `wss`) by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Take the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** Economics Section and Shiskin Award Committee
- Abstract:** The paper outlines the approach statistical agencies used in constructing a Consumer Price Index prior to the appearance of the new international CPI Manual and explains why there was a need for new approaches. The paper explains the main theoretical approaches to index number theory and how they converge on just a few index number formulae that are “best” for each approach. Fortunately, these “best” formulae all closely approximate each other and hence there is no need for national statistical agencies to choose between the competing theoretical approaches in order to define a “target” index concept for their CPI. The paper concludes with a list of 6 main problems associated with constructing a CPI.
- Shiskin Award:** Following the seminar presentation, the Julius Shiskin Award of 2005 will be presented to Professor Diewert, for path-breaking economic theoretical innovations, notably in index number theory, adapted to improve national economic statistics around the world. He has contributed original theoretical work in a wide range of fields, from measurement of capital services to analyses of productivity to applications of duality theory and flexible functional forms. Professor Diewert is a leading economic and statistical theorist who is dedicated to improving economic statistics throughout the world. The Julius Shiskin Award was intended to honor original and important contributions in the development of economic statistics and in their use in interpreting economic events, and is jointly sponsored by the Washington Statistical Society and the National Association of Business Economists.

Please join the Washington Statistical Society on October 20, 2005, at 3:30 p.m. to honor W. Erwin Diewert as we present the award to him and celebrate in a reception following the award.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2005

As the outgoing President of the WSS, it is both a duty and my privilege to present the following report summarizing the year's activities. I want to thank the many WSS members who contributed to our accomplishments.

John L. Czajka

Program

The major focus of the WSS continues to be its program of seminars, short courses, quantitative literacy activities, and special events. For the year the WSS program sections organized 37 sessions. Methodology had 21. Economics had 5. Agriculture and Natural Resources had 3. Social and Demographic had 2, as did Defense and National Security. Data Collection Methods, Quality Assurance, Statistical Computing, and Public Policy had 1 each. Several of the methodology sessions were devoted to issues in human rights. Because of the quality of these sessions and their strong attendance, the WSS will establish a program section on human rights.

The short course committee hosted two courses. The first was entitled "Sample Survey Methods: Recent Developments and Applications," and was presented by Sharon Lohr. The second was a reprise of a 2004 short course on "Privacy, Confidentiality and the Protection of Health Data: A Statistical Perspective on the HIPAA Privacy Rule," and it was presented by Jacob Bournazian, Steve Cohen, Al Zarate, Donna Eden, Phil Steel, and Neil Russell.

During 2004-2005 WSS members and other professionals in the Washington Metropolitan Area participated in a number of quantitative literacy-oriented activities. Of note were events such as the Girl Scout-sponsored Eco Expo, planning for national engineers week, science fair judging, and annually sponsored competitions such as the Curtis Jacobs prize for statistics projects and the poster competition. During the year more than 20 adults were been involved.

Lastly, as it did two years ago, the WSS once again cosponsored the biennial CDC/ATSDR Symposium on Statistical Methods. This, the 10th Symposium, was held in the Washington area for the first time and had as its topic, "Statistics and Public Health Policy." The two-day Symposium was preceded by a one-day short course, "Nonsampling Error in Survey," presented by William Kalsbeek. The WSS handled registration and other arrangements for the two events, which drew more than 160 attendees.

Newsletter

Our most far-reaching accomplishment this year was the conversion of the monthly newsletter from about half-and-half hard copy and electronic copy delivery to almost fully electronic delivery. This transition will be completed over the summer, when the WSS will update its electronic delivery list to include nearly all of its current membership and eliminate former members who have not responded to requests to renew. In addition, we will establish and implement procedures for updating the mailing list each month to add new members and identify current members who have failed to renew. Welcoming letters will be sent to the new members, and reminders will be sent to the old members whose dues have not yet been received. Until now, the WSS has used hard copy delivery as the default mode for new members, relying on the ASA's monthly mailing labels as the vehicle for adding new members and removing former members who have not requested electronic delivery.

WSS and ASA

As President, I was invited to make a presentation to the ASA Board of Directors at its mid-March meeting. I discussed the WSS program, its participation in numerous awards, and its initiatives in fuller electronic distribution of the newsletter and the implementation of electronic voting. In addition, as part of a series in the Amstat News featuring the six ASA districts and their chapters, the April issue included an article on the WSS, which is the sole chapter in District 2. Glenn White and Carolee Bush joined me in preparing the article.

Awards

The WSS continued to participate in several awards, several of which were announced at the annual dinner. The WSS President's Award was given to Courtney Reiser, Linda Atkinson, and Michael L. Cohen. David Marker received the Past President's Certificate. The Julius Shiskin award for economic statistics was presented to Dr. W. Erwin Diewart of the University of British Columbia. The Roger Herriot award winner will be announced at the Joint Statistical Meetings. The Curtis Jacobs Award was given to Mike Hulse, a student at Oakton High School. The WSS poster competition for elementary and secondary school students had winners in three grade groups. WSS outstanding graduate students were named by four local universities. They are Carol Chang, George Mason University; Fenhua He, The George Washington University; Souhila Kada, American University; and Courtney Kennedy, the University of Maryland. The third annual Gertrude M. Cox Statistics Award, sponsored by RTI International, was presented to Dr. Thomas R. Belin of UCLA. Lastly, the 14th annual Morris Hansen lecture, made possible by a grant from Westat, was presented by Dr. Jennifer Madans of the National Center for Health Statistics.

Elections

The election results for terms of office beginning July 1 appear on page 1 of this newsletter. I want to thank and commend Past-President David Marker for the strong slate that he assembled. In addition to these elected positions, Andrew White was appointed to succeed Carolee Bush as Vice Chair for District 2 on the ASA Council of Chapters Governing Board. Andy's three-year term will begin January 1, 2006.

Treasurer's Report

The WSS Treasurer, John Finamore, reports that at the end of June the WSS held \$34,047 in total assets. Most of these funds were donated or otherwise acquired to support specific awards or activities, including the Hansen lecture, Gertrude Cox Award, Shiskin Award, and the CDC Symposium. The remaining, general funds totaled \$9,369.

Dues

Finally, the WSS board's decision to reduce the annual dues by \$3, following a \$2 reduction last year, was reported earlier in this newsletter.

Employment

As a service to local statisticians, WSS News provides notification of employment opportunities and description of those seeking employment here in the Washington, DC, area. Readers are encouraged to take advantage of this feature of the newsletter. The deadline for inserting notices is five (5) weeks before the publication date. Those interested should email or call Anne Peterson, at apeterson@insightpolicyresearch.com or (703) 387-3032.

WESTAT

Westat is an employee-owned corporation headquartered in the suburbs of Washington, DC (Rockville, Maryland). We provide statistical consulting and survey research to the agencies of the U.S. Government and to a broad range of business and institutional clients. With a strong technical and managerial staff and a long record of quality research, Westat has become one of the leading survey research and statistical consulting organizations in the United States.

Our company was founded in 1961 by three statisticians. The current staff of more than 1,700 includes over 60 statisticians, as well as research, technical, and administrative staff. In addition, our professional staff is supported by data collection and processing personnel situated locally and in field sites around the country. The work atmosphere is open, progressive, and highly conducive to professional growth.

Our statistical efforts continue to expand in areas such as the environment, energy, health, education, and human resources. Westat statisticians are actively involved in teaching graduate-level courses in statistical methods and survey methodology in collaborative arrangements with area colleges and universities. We are currently recruiting for the following statistical position:

Survey Sampling Statistician (Job Code WSS/DRM/5001)

Three or more years of relevant experience in sample design and selection, frames development, weighting, imputation, and variance estimation. Must have a master's or doctoral degree in statistics and have excellent writing skills. Coursework in sample survey design highly desirable.

Westat offers excellent growth opportunities and an outstanding benefits package including life and health insurance, an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), a 401(k) plan, flexible spending accounts, professional development, and tuition assistance. For immediate consideration, please send your cover letter, indicating the Westat Job Code, and resume by one of the following methods to: **[Job Code is REQUIRED to apply]** Westat, Attn: Resume System, 1650 Research Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850-3195; Email: resume@westat.com; FAX: (888) 201-1452. We are

an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Senior (GS-15) Research and Administration Position, Office of Survey Methods Research, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

For this position, we are seeking an individual with an outstanding record in the following areas.

1. Knowledge of one or more of the following areas of the theory and application of mathematical statistics: survey sampling, linear models, Bayesian statistics, statistical graphics, disclosure limitation, statistical computing, time series, small area estimation and use of administrative record data.

2. Skill in conducting research in one or more of the following: survey sampling, linear models, Bayesian statistics, statistical graphics, disclosure limitation, statistical computing, time series, small area estimation and use of administrative record data.

3. Skill in overseeing administrative work important for a statistical research office (i.e. budgeting, procurement and inter-organizational agreements; recruiting and training of research mathematical statisticians, as well as possibly supervision of statistical personnel; and coordination of statistical work involving multiple organizations (e.g., several offices, governmental agencies, private-sector organizations or academic institutions).

4. Skill in communicating orally for the purpose of providing consultation to BLS employees, presenting at scientific organizations, etc.

5. Skill in writing for the purpose of refereeing technical articles, preparing reports on completed projects, etc.

6. Ability to plan and carry out projects evaluating procedures for technical soundness and operational feasibility.

Details of this position, including duties, salary and application procedures, are provided at:

<http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/getjob.asp>

In keeping with standard U.S. government regulations, U.S. citizenship is required for this position. Prior federal service is not required.

For further information, contact:

John L. Eltinge
Associate Commissioner for Survey Methods Research
Office of Survey Methods Research, PSB 1950
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
2 Massachusetts Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20212

Telephone: (202) 691-7404; E-mail: Eltinge.John@bls.gov; Fax: (202) 691-7426

Positions in Cancer Statistics

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has available several regular and sabbatical positions within the Surveillance Research Program (SRP) of the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences. This is located within the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). SRP manages the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program, a comprehensive population-based reporting system and extends the utility of this database through linkages with other key data sets. SRP also provides leadership in developing statistical methodologies appropriate for analyzing trends and for evaluating the impact of cancer control interventions as well as geographic, socioeconomic, behavioral, genetic, and health care delivery factors on the cancer burden. Positions are available in the following areas:

Statistical genetics – to develop a collaborative program of studies, grants, and statistical research to enhance our understanding of the relationship between genetic markers and cancer rates.

Meta-analysis – to design, analyze, and do statistical research on the synthesis of cancer-related studies on topics across the cancer control spectrum (i.e. prevention through end-of-life care).

Statistical Computing -- to develop new and efficient algorithms for complex calculations used in statistical modeling and simulation.

Geographic Information Systems/Data Visualization – to apply visualization techniques to geospatial data to expand our insight into cancer statistics, particularly geographic patterns of cancer incidence, mortality and survival.

Doctoral degree required for all positions, with experience related to the analysis and interpretation of health statistics. Each position includes responsibility for initiating and managing collaborative analyses with scientists from NCI and other institutes, agencies and academic centers. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills are essential. Salary commensurate with experience. Located in Rockville, MD, near Washington, DC. Excellent benefits. U.S. citizenship or permanent residency is required for federal positions. DHHS and NIH are equal opportunity employers. Please send a cover letter briefly summarizing your experience and interests along with your CV, preferably by e-mail, **by Sept 30**, to:

Judith Swan, MHS
Surveillance Research Program, DCCPS
6116 Executive Blvd., MSC 8315
Bethesda, MD 20892-8315
Phone: (301) 435-4958
Fax: (301) 480-4077
js60y@nih.gov

<http://surveillance.cancer.gov/>
<http://surveillance.cancer.gov/csb/>
<http://srab.cancer.gov/>

Department Chair Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics University of Maryland School of Public Health

The newly formed University of Maryland School of Public Health seeks an individual with experience, leadership, and vision, to be the first chairman of its new Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics. The Department will evolve out of an existing Division of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics which currently has 14 full-time faculty members. The Department will be situated in a School with strong research programs in the areas of international health, gerontology, women's health, outcomes research, food-borne pathogens, environmental epidemiology, and mathematical modeling.

The successful applicant will be hired at the rank of Full Professor and should have a track record of excellent methodologic and collaborative research, teaching, leadership, and service to the research community.

This is a rare opportunity to help shape a new Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics in a new School of Public Health.

Qualified applicants should submit their curriculum vitae and names of 3 references to Dr. Glenn Morris, Jr., MD, MPH & TM, Professor and interim Dean of the University of Maryland School of Public Health, % Diane Lindt, Coordinator, 660 W. Redwood St., Howard Hall 109, Baltimore, Maryland 21201 or email at: dlindt@epi.umaryland.edu. The University of Maryland, Baltimore is an AA/EEO/ADA employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.



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