



# WSS NEWS

April 2007

WASHINGTON  
STATISTICAL  
SOCIETY

## HERRIOT AWARD SEMINAR

Nathaniel Schenker of NCHS, winner of the 2006 Roger Herriot Award for innovations in Federal Statistics, will present a seminar at a special session of WSS to be held on Monday, April 16, 2007 from 12:30 – 2:00 PM in the BLS Conference Center. A presentation ceremony will precede the talk, and a reception will be held following the session.

## NEW NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2007 WRAY JACKSON SMITH SCHOLARSHIP APRIL 15, 2007 DEADLINE

Nominations are now being sought for the 2007 Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship. The award is intended to reward promising young statisticians for their diligence and encourage them to consider a future in government statistics. The 2006 recipient of the scholarship will be chosen by a committee of representatives of GSS and SSS. Applicants are not required to be members of GSS, SSS or ASA. Dr. Smith was strongly supportive of these organizations during his career and actively mentored younger statisticians. The scholarship of \$1,000.00 can be used for activities like the following:

- Attendance at a conference, short course, or long course
- Travel to a conference
- Purchase of government data
- Costs associated with research

Please note the Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship Eligibility Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent
- Participation in the advancement of government statistics, whether as a government employee, researcher under government contract or using government statistics, or student involved with government statistics

To apply, you will need to complete and submit the following:

- The original copy of an application (available in MS Word format:  
<http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/wjsapp07.doc> and Adobe pdf format:  
<http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/wjsapp07.pdf>)
- Original transcripts, performance reviews, or alternate proof of superior job
- Project proposal
- Two reference letters

For more information, contact Juanita Tamayo Lott, 2007 Chair of the Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship Committee, 301.763.3127 or [juanita.t.lott@census.gov](mailto:juanita.t.lott@census.gov). The other committee members are Michael P. Cohen and Bob Kominski. All necessary materials must be submitted by April 15, 2007. Electronic submissions are permissible.

All materials should be mailed before April 15, 2007, to:

Juanita Tamayo Lott  
Human Resources Division  
U.s. Census Bureau  
Washington, D.C. 20233-1400

## **WSS and Other Seminars**

(All events are open to any interested persons)

### April

- 10 Tues. Introduction to Data Mining Methodology for Statisticians
- 16 Mon. Bridging: Roger Herriot's Time to the Present
- 23 Mon. American Community Survey Weighting and Estimation: ACS Family Equalization

### May

- 15 Tues. Confidence Interval Coverage in Model-Based Estimation
- 22 Tues. Characterization, Modeling and Management of Inferential Risk, Data Quality Risk and Operational Risk in Survey Procedures

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

## **Announcement**

### **2007 CDC & ATSDR Symposium on Statistical Methods**

Analyzing and Mapping Health Inequities to Impact Policies for Eliminating Disparities  
Eleventh Biennial CDC & ATSDR Symposium on Statistical Methods - April 17-18, 2007  
Statisticians, social and behavioral scientists, epidemiologists, economists, policy analysts, and others are invited to participate in the Eleventh Biennial Symposium on Statistical Methods, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (CDC & ATSDR), the American Statistical Association (ASA) and the Biostatistics Department at Emory University Rollins School of Public Health. The Symposium will be held in Atlanta, GA. The theme for the 2007 Symposium is "Analyzing and Mapping Health Inequities to Impact Policies for Eliminating Disparities." Two short courses (Bayesian Small Area Estimation and Statistical Analysis Using GIS Data Measuring Disparities) will be offered on April 16, 2007 in conjunction with the Symposium. Additional information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/od/ads/sag/index.htm>.

## **Program Announcement**

- Title:** Introduction to Data Mining Methodology for Statisticians
- Chair:** Meena Khare, NCHS
- Speakers:** Dr. Dan Steinberg, Salford Systems
- Date/Time:** Tuesday, April 10, 2007/ 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center, room 10. 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](mailto: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. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** Methodology Program, WSS
- Abstract:** This presentation will introduce data mining methodology and address some of the common questions from statisticians about data mining. It will include a discussion of typical questions from statisticians about data mining. Sample questions include what is common to data mining and statistical analysis, what is the role of the statistician in the analysis and interpretation of results from data mining, how results are validated, how data mining came to be, datasets appropriate for data mining, and why have computer scientists led so much of the data mining development. Data mining is considered to be the application of modern, highly automated nonparametric analytical methods to recognize enduring patterns in data. Several of the major tools of data mining will be discussed, including decision trees (CART), artificial neural networks, multivariate adaptive regression splines (MARS), rule induction, RandomForests, Multiple additive regression trees (TreeNet/MART Stochastic Gradient Boosting) and several others. Finally, case study examples will be provided for a variety of data mining methods..

### **Note from the WSS NEWS Editor**

Items for publication in the May issue of the WSS NEWS should be submitted no later than March 27, 2007. E-mail items to Michael Feil at [michael.feil@usda.gov](mailto:michael.feil@usda.gov).

## Program Announcement

- Title:** Bridging: Roger Herriot's Time to the Present
- Speaker :** Nathaniel Schenker, National Center for Health Statistics
- Chair:** Dwight Brock, Westat
- Presentation of the award by Daniel Weinberg, Census Bureau, Chair of the Herriot Award Committee**
- Date/Time:** Monday, April 16, 2007 / 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Note: there will be a reception immediately following the session.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center. 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](mailto: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. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** Roger Herriot Award Committee (with representatives from the ASA Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections and WSS)
- Abstract:** In the 1980s, the Census Bureau and outside collaborators bridged the transition from the industry and occupation coding system for the 1970 census to that for the 1980 census by creating multiple imputations of 1980-system codes for 1970 census public-use samples. The imputation models were fitted using a relatively small "double-coded" (both 1970 and 1980 systems) sample from the 1970 census. This project had roots in the Population Division at the Bureau. Roger Herriot, as Chief of the Division, was very supportive of the project and contributed ideas to it, and the project was described in William Butz's 1995 ASA Proceedings article in memory of Herriot (<http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/outofbox.htm>) as one of Herriot's major innovations at the Bureau. This talk will discuss the industry and occupation code project and statistical lessons learned from it. Two recent bridging projects at the National Center for Health Statistics, one addressing the transition from single-race to multiple-race reporting in Federal data collections and one adjusting for differences between self-reported and clinical data in surveys, will be discussed as well. The talk will highlight similarities and differences among the three bridging projects and will point out some outstanding methodological issues.

## Program Announcement

- Title:** American Community Survey Weighting and Estimation: ACS Family Equalization
- Speakers:** Alfredo Navaro and Mark E. Asiala, Bureau of the Census
- Chair:** Michael Cohen, National Academy of Sciences
- Discussant:** Graham Kalton, Westat
- Date/Time:** Monday, April 23, 2007/12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center. 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](mailto: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 Social and Demographic Statistics Section
- Abstract:** Historically the American Community Survey (ACS) has produced inconsistent estimates of households and householders and inconsistent estimates of husbands and wives in married couple households even though logically these estimates should be equal. In the 2005 ACS, the size of these inconsistencies at the national level was approximately 3.7 million more householders than households and approximately 1.8 million more spouses than married-couple households. Likewise, for unmarried-partner households there are approximately 176,000 more unmarried-partners than unmarried-partner households. The cause of these data inconsistencies were rooted in the current person weighting methodology which was independent of the housing unit weighting and did not consider relationship to the householder. This paper describes the current weighting methodology and changes introduced to reduce these data inconsistencies while having a minimal impact on other estimates and on the variances of the estimates. A three-dimensional raking methodology is used where the marginal control totals are derived from the survey itself rather than an independent source for the first two dimensions related to equalizing spouses and householders. Changes in the estimation of housing unit characteristics are also discussed. Empirical results from the implementation of this new methodology are presented based on the 2004 and 2005 ACS data.

## **Program Announcement**

- Title:** Confidence Interval Coverage in Model-Based Estimation
- Chair:** Yan Liu, IRS
- Speakers:** Jinhee Yang and Archana Joshee, Ernst & Young, Quantitative Economics and Statistics
- Discussant:** Kimberly Henry, IRS
- Date/Time:** Tuesday, May 15, 2007/12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center. 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](mailto: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. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** Methodology Program, WSS
- Abstract:** When there is a strongly related auxiliary variable, model-based estimation can yield more precise estimates from smaller samples. Assumptions are made to build the models, produce estimates, and calculate confidence intervals. The first talk explores confidence interval coverage with deep stratification under scenarios when the assumptions are not quite correct, such as failing to assume correct scedasticity, recognize curvature, or incorporate an intercept. In these settings confidence interval coverage can be poor, robust, or ultra conservative. The second talk explores confidence interval coverage and Satterthwaite's approximation to the degrees of freedom when two or more model based estimates are summed in complex sample designs.

## Program Announcement

- Title:** Characterization, Modeling and Management of Inferential Risk, Data Quality Risk and Operational Risk in Survey Procedures
- Chair:** Meena Khare, SRSDS/ORM/NCHS/CDC
- Speaker:** Dr. John Eltinge, Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Discussant:** Dr. Fritz Scheuren, NORC, University of Chicago
- Date/Time:** Tuesday, May 22, 2007/12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center. 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](mailto: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. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** Methodology Program, WSS
- Abstract:** This paper explores some conceptual and methodological issues that are important in the design, operation and analysis of large-scale government surveys. We view the design of survey procedures (including initial planning, sample design, data collection, inference and dissemination) as a mixture of optimization and risk management efforts in the presence of constraints and incomplete information. This in turn suggests several potentially rich areas for research in mathematical and applied statistics.

Five topics receive principal attention, beginning with some relatively well-defined technical issues and then expanding to several broader topics related to data quality and risk management. First, a review of the goals, constraints and risk profiles of survey practice suggests a spectrum of potential approaches to survey work, ranging from rigorously predetermined survey procedures at one extreme to highly exploratory analyses of previously collected data at the other extreme. Classical randomization-based procedures are arguably compatible with a mandate for predetermined methodology. Nonetheless, these procedures have limitations arising from efficiency issues, the presence of nonsampling error, and prospective inferential interest beyond the finite population that was sampled. These limitations lead to review of a second class of approaches to the analysis of survey data, based on models for survey variables, auxiliary variables and nonsampling error processes. Third, we use the framework of risk management to explore six dimensions of survey data quality suggested in Brackstone (1999): accuracy (incorporating all of the components of error considered in standard models for total survey error), timeliness, relevance, interpretability, accessibility and coherence. Fourth, we expand our discussion of risk management by considering operational risk, i.e., the risk that one or more steps in a survey procedure may not be carried out as specified. Finally, we note that work with large-scale surveys will involve a mixture of statistical science and statistical technology, and we suggest that the literature on adoption and diffusion of technology can offer important insights into the distribution of expectations, utility functions and behaviors of large survey organizations, data analysts and other data users.

## Students' Corner

In order to provide an informal information resource to both undergraduate and graduate students who major in statistics in the Washington area, I, as this year's student representative to the WSS board, decided to write a short (hopefully monthly) column in the WSS newsletter, starting from this April issue.

I am sure that one of the major concerns/interests that every student has is finding an exciting, intellectually challenging, rewarding job (assuming no one wants to or can afford to stay as a student permanently). So, in this very first column, I would like to introduce you to a couple of very useful web pages for job searches. The first one, as I assume many students already know, is the WSS website's employment page (<http://www.scs.gmu.edu/~wss/employ.html>). You will find a list of up-to-date job openings that are located in the Washington area. I like this list, because all the postings are local and I do not have to worry about the geographic locations of the jobs.

The second one is ASA's JobWeb (<http://jobs.amstat.org/search.cfm> or you can access this page through the WSS employment page). If you are a member of ASA, you can post your resume on this website. Even if you are not a member, you can use the very nifty job search engine. This search engine allows you to look for job openings by areas of expertise (e.g., "biometrics/biostatistics", "mathematical statistics", "sampling/sampling design", etc.) or geographical locations. If you did not know about this, check it out yourself. I highly recommend this job search engine!

That's all I have for this month. If you have any feedback on this column or ideas of topics for future issues, please send an email to me at [hikawa@gwu.edu](mailto:hikawa@gwu.edu).

Hiro Hikawa  
The George Washington University

## Announcement

### **PROBABILITY AND STATISTICS DAY AT UMBC on APRIL 28 2007**

The Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) will host a one day conference on Probability and Statistics on Saturday, April 28, 2007. This will be a full day event with Keynote addresses by two outstanding statisticians. Plenary sessions, technical sessions, and oral and poster presentations by graduate students are also planned. Three best student oral and poster presenters will be recognized and awarded certificates and cash prizes. Graduate Students presenting talks or posters can attend this event free of charge. There are opportunities for contributing a paper in the technical sessions. The following website, <http://www.umbc.edu/circ/hosting/ProbStatDay2007>, gives more information about the conference with links to registration etc. Please note that the registration deadline is April 13, 2007.

### **SHORT COURSES PRESENTED BY THE JOINT PROGRAM IN SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

JPSM HOME PAGE: [www.jpsm.org](http://www.jpsm.org) Click on "Short Courses"

SPONSOR AFFILIATE LIST:

<https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/sponsorlist.cfm>

COURSE LISTS, INFORMATION, REGISTRATION, PAYMENT AND CANCELLATION:

<https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/>

May 15-16, 2007 (Open for Registration)

Analysis and Presentation of Economic Data

Katharine G. Abraham and Deborah P. Klein

Registration Deadline: May 1, 2007

Information:

<https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/materials/2007-0515.html>

May 22-23, 2007 (Open for Registration)

Applied Structural Equation Modeling

Patrick Sturgis

Registration Deadline: May 8, 2007

Information:

<https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/materials/2007-0522.html>

Primary Funding for JPSM is from the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy

## 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](mailto:apeterson@insightpolicyresearch.com) or (703) 373-6645.

### **CLINICAL TRIAL BIOSTATISTICIANS M.S. and Ph.D. Level Positions**

With an opportunity for substantial leadership responsibility in studies of international public health import.

The Biostatistics Center of The George Washington University, founded in 1972, is a leader in the statistical coordination of clinical trials conducted by the National Institutes of Health. We enjoy over \$45 million per year of NIH research funding for major studies in cardiovascular disease, diabetes, maternal/fetal medicine, osteoporosis, urology, and the genetic basis for various diseases. The center has a staff of over 100 with 27 biostatisticians/epidemiologists, including 10 faculty. We are recruiting M.S. and Ph.D. level staff to participate in these and future studies. Please visit our web site (below).

**Master's Level Research Positions:** These positions require a Master's in Biostatistics or Statistics and 1-5 years experience in analysis, supervision of data management and study design for biomedical applications. Good written and oral communication skills, and detailed knowledge of SAS required. Send CV to address below.

**Assistant to Full Research Professorial Positions** are available immediately to serve as Co-Investigator or Principal Investigator (Project Director) and to provide statistical direction of the design, conduct and analysis of studies and the conduct of methodologic research to meet the projects needs. We are seeking individuals who want to join a highly competent team of academic biostatisticians and epidemiologists; who desire to contribute to the design and analysis of major medical studies, seek substantive scientific and statistical responsibility, enjoy interacting with medical investigators; take pride contributing to the publication of major papers in leading medical journals, and desire to make an impact on the public health. Our faculty also participate in graduate programs in biostatistics, epidemiology and statistics which afford opportunities for teaching at the graduate level. The research projects also provide an environment rich in methodological problems, with opportunities for collaboration with research active Center faculty and graduate students.

**Minimum Position Requirements:** Doctorate in Biostatistics, Statistics or Epidemiology, or alternatively an M.D. or Ph.D. in Biological Science, Physical Science or Computer Science with a Masters in Biostatistics or Statistics, 1-5 years' experience with clinical trials, especially study design and statistical analysis of study results using SAS, excellent oral and written English communication skills, and supervisory experience.

**Application Procedures:** Applicants must send a Curriculum Vitae and three letters of reference; a letter to include a synopsis of their role in collaborative medical research that has led to medical scientific presentation or publication and a statement of career purpose indicating their career goals and how this position can help you achieve those goals; and applicants for Assistant Research Professor positions must send an Official Transcript of graduate coursework leading to the doctoral degree to: Sarah Fowler, Research Professor and Director, The George Washington University Biostatistics Center, 6110 Executive Blvd., Suite 750, Rockville, MD 20852.

[HTTP://WWW.BSC.GWU.EDU](http://www.bsc.gwu.edu)

Review of applications is ongoing until the positions are filled. Rank/position title and salary commensurate with experience and qualifications. Tuition benefits for employees (including Ph.D. in Statistics, Biostatistics and Epidemiology) and for spouse and dependent children.

All research and regular faculty at the rank of Assistant Professor in Biostatistics or Statistics may apply for the Samuel W. Greenhouse Biostatistics Research Enhancement Award. For a period of 1 year, the award will provide 20% effort for methodological research and a discretionary fund to support professional activities, travel to professional meetings, supplies and equipment. Applicants for the research faculty position may also apply for the Greenhouse Award while their faculty application is being considered. For complete information including Award Application Materials Requirements, please visit our website at: [www.bsc.gwu.edu](http://www.bsc.gwu.edu).

The George Washington University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer

### **Survey Sampling Statistician**

#### **WESTAT: AN EMPLOYEE-OWNED RESEARCH CORPORATION**

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 1,800 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/7001)

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 is 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](mailto:resume@westat.com) • FAX: (888) 201-1452

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