

# Letter from the President

## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SURVEY STATISTICIANS (IASS)

January 2016

Dear IASS colleagues,

This is the first opportunity in my new role as IASS President to write to you on the status of our Association as well as ongoing activities and new initiatives that we are collectively undertaking in support of our international community of survey statisticians, methodologists and practitioners. In the interest of keeping your attention, I won't go into depth on all the ongoing activities and established resources of the IASS. Much of this is covered elsewhere in this issue of *The Survey Statistician* including the Report of our Scientific Secretary (Denise Silva) and the reports of the Country Representatives. I will highlight a few important "business" items and as well as key activities and initiatives that I believe are important to the maintenance and growth of our association.

Before turning to current business, I would like to say thank you to Danny Pfeffermann, 2013-2015 IASS President, for his leadership over the past two years and commitment to strengthening the global mission and reach of our association. The knowledge, experience and charisma that Danny brought to this role will be impossible to replicate but I can commit to carry forward the initiatives begun by Danny and Ray Chambers before him in the areas of communication, membership development, service to members and international statistical capacity building. I would also like to acknowledge the service of the IASS members who completed either their four year term as elected members of the IASS Council in 2015 (Christine Bycroft, Ka-Lin Chan, Olivier Dupriez, Natalie Shlomo, Marcel Viera, and Avaro Villabos) or a two year term as an officer of the IASS (Mick Couper, Jairo Arrow and Geoff Lee). Although their term in office has ended, many of these individuals remain active in service to IASS as editors, committee chairs and webmasters.

Since the origin of IASS in the 1970s, a major focus of our efforts in promoting education, networking and intellectual exchange within the international survey community has centered on the biennial World Statistics Congress (WSC) meetings. The 2017 World Statistics Congress will be held July 16-21, 2017 in Marrakech, Morocco and the IASS will again contribute in a major way to the Short Course Program, Paper Sessions and other elements of the Scientific Program at these meetings. Hopefully you have all received the call for Invited Paper Session (IPS) proposals either directly from the ISI Permanent Office or through the e-mail communication from our Scientific Secretary, Denise Silva. (A schedule of key dates for the WSC 2017 is included in the January issue of *The Survey Statistician*.) More information about the meetings and regular updates as the meeting dates draw closer can be found at the official web site, <http://www.isi2017.org/>. Marcel Viera ([marcel.viera@ice.ufjf.br](mailto:marcel.viera@ice.ufjf.br)) is serving as the IASS representative to the WSC 2017 Scientific Program Committee (SPC). I am sure that Marcel would be happy to answer any questions that IASS members have concerning session proposals or the scientific program in general.

Although the start of the WSC 2017 is over 18 months away, planning activities will soon begin for the Short Course Program. ISI President, Pedro Silva (one of our own!), is currently in the process of forming the WSC 2017 Short Course Committee and shortly after that a call for course proposals will be issued. We will see that all members receive notification of this call through the IASS mail group that is securely maintained by the ISI permanent office. The IASS and its membership has a strong track record of organizing and teaching short courses in conjunction with the WSC meetings and I trust that many of you will again submit proposals and volunteer to teach a course on important topics in survey statistics and methodology.

Prior to the WSC 2017, the IASS 2017 Cochran-Hansen Prize (<http://isi-iass.org/home/cochran-hansen-prize/>) will again be awarded to a young statistician from a developing or transition country. This award is based on a paper competition that will be refereed by a committee of IASS members appointed by the IASS officers. To be eligible for the competition, young statisticians will need to complete and submit their paper to the committee early in 2017. If you are an academic advisor, professional supervisor or mentor to a young statistician that you believe should submit their written work to this competition, I encourage you start planning the submission now. The Cochran-Hansen Prize not only enables the recipient to participate in the WSC and present their paper in a special session but also provides the young statistician with international recognition early in what we all hope will be a promising career in survey research.

The past two decades have produced a dramatic increase in the numbers of conferences, symposia, workshops and training activities devoted to survey methodology and survey statistics. Outside the biennial meetings of the World Statistics Congress, the IASS has rarely played the primary role as organizer of a major conference devoted to survey methodology and statistics. In lieu of mounting an effort to organize its own major conference, IASS has chosen each year to provide modest financial support to approximately 4 to 5 regional and international meetings that are specifically focused on survey statistics and survey methodology. Thanks to a policy instituted by Danny Pfeffermann when he was IASS President, whenever IASS contributes support to one of these meetings, IASS members can expect a discount on conference registration fees and organizers also agree to make IASS promotional material available to conference attendees. If you are organizing a conference and would like to submit a request for IASS financial support please feel free to submit the proposal to the Scientific Secretary ([denise.silva@ibge.gov.br](mailto:denise.silva@ibge.gov.br)) or to me ([sheering@umich.edu](mailto:sheering@umich.edu)). The Report of the IASS Scientific Secretary included in this issue of TSS identifies the 2016 conferences and meetings that the officers have selected to receive IASS support. In addition, this issue also includes announcements for many more national, regional and international conferences that are primarily focused on survey methods or will include major sessions of relevance to those of us who work in the survey field.

I will mention that the IASS Committee that is charged with drafting a Strategic Plan has not gone dormant for the Northern hemisphere winter but our work has been delayed several months against the schedule that we published this past summer. You should expect to see a draft of the Strategic Plan for your review and comment during April of 2016.

I could go on at length about the many activities and initiatives of our Association or philosophize on the opportunities and challenges facing our profession but I have already broken my promise to keep this short and will stop now.

In closing, I wish you an enlightened, productive and healthy start to 2016.

Yours in the science and practice of survey research,

Steve Heeringa  
IASS President