

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SURVEY STATISTICIANS (IASS)

July 2016

Dear IASS colleagues,

Summer has arrived in the northern hemisphere and the Copa America and Euro 2016 are history (congratulations Chile and Portugal). In Brazil, our colleagues in Rio who helped to host the 2015 World Statistics Congress are awaiting the start of the 2016 “Summer” Olympics. Here in Ann Arbor, we are wrapping up our 69<sup>th</sup> Summer Institute in Survey Research Techniques. Regardless of where you are in the world, I hope that you will have the time to relax and read this issue of *The Survey Statistician* including the Report of our Scientific Secretary (Denise Silva), the reports of the Country Representatives and all the other regular content and special articles that the editors, Natalie Shlomo and Eric Rancourt, have worked very hard to assemble.

The 2017 World Statistics Congress will be held July 16-21, 2017 in Marrakech, Morocco and I expect the IASS and its members will be well-represented as participants in the Scientific Program and as instructors in the ISI Short Course Program. 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) and over the past ten months has worked tirelessly in this role on behalf of the IASS. The SPC has finalized its selections for the Invited Paper Sessions (IPS) and as in the past IASS members who attend the 2017 WSC can expect many invited paper sessions on topics of relevance to survey statisticians, methodologists and practitioners. The submission period for WSC 2017 Special Topic Sessions (STS) is currently open but final session proposals must be submitted to the Scientific Program Committee by August 15. If you plan to submit an abstract for a Contributed Paper Session (CPS), the submission window will open September 15, 2016 and close February 15, 2017. More information on the Scientific Program for the 2017 WSC and regular updates as the meeting dates draw closer can be found at the official web site, <http://www.isi2017.org/>

In late January, ISI President, Pedro Silva, formed the WSC 2017 Short Course Committee. Ralf Muennich ([muennich@uni-trier.de](mailto:muennich@uni-trier.de)) generously agreed to serve as the IASS representative to the ISI Committee that will review and rate short course proposals and make the final selection of program offerings. The short courses will be offered immediately prior to the WSC 2017 (July 13-15, 2017). The call for short course proposals was distributed by the ISI permanent office on June 2, 2016. The deadline for the submission of proposals is August 4. Since the mid-1970s, IASS members have been instrumental in the development and instruction of the biennial short course programs. I encourage all of you to consider this opportunity to assist in our training mission through offering a one or two day course on a topic in survey design, methodology or statistics. For details on how and where to submit a short course proposal, please see the ISI announcement or feel free to e-mail Ralf or the Scientific Secretary, Denise Silva ([denisebritz@gmail.com](mailto:denisebritz@gmail.com)).

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. IASS Vice-President, Monica Pratesi, has

agreed to Chair the 2017 Cochran-Hansen Prize. If you are considering competing for the C-H Prize or 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. Additional details on the C-H prize competition will be circulated early this fall. If you are planning to compete for the Cochran-Hansen Prize, please anticipate that papers will need to be submitted to the committee between December 1, 2016 and February 15, 2017.

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 large part, we are fortunate each year to have access to a large and diverse set of conferences, symposia, workshops and training activities devoted to survey methodology and survey statistics. The 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. In addition, in early January of this year, the IASS officers submitted an application to the ISI World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building and IASS and as a result was awarded a grant to support travel and expenses for three young statisticians from developing countries to attend the 9<sup>th</sup> French Colloquium on Survey Sampling, <http://isi-iass.org/home/events/9th-french-colloquium-on-survey-sampling/>. The Report of the IASS Scientific Secretary included in this issue of TSS provides more specific information on this special initiative and the 2016 conferences and meetings that the officers have selected to receive IASS support. 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 ([denisebritz@gmail.com](mailto:denisebritz@gmail.com)) or to me ([sheering@umich.edu](mailto:sheering@umich.edu)).

I will close this letter with an apology and a suggestion to our members.

The apology is for not making the progress that I promised (January 2016) toward completing a draft of a Strategic Plan for our Association. The IASS Strategic Planning committee will return to this important initiative early this fall and we will keep you informed as we reach milestones in revising the draft document and are able to share it with you for comment.

The suggestion relates to one key element of our strategic planning—engaging young survey statisticians and methodologists and encouraging them to join the global network that IASS membership should and does provide. There are a number of approaches that IASS can take toward rejuvenation of its membership. One approach that I know can be effective is for senior, established members of the IASS network to sponsor the membership of students and more junior statisticians, encouraging them to apply for IASS membership and paying their initial year's membership dues. Leslie Kish, my mentor when I came to this profession in 1975, insisted that I join IASS as a student. Not all of us can be as persuasive as Leslie was.

But if each of us committed annually to introduce a student or junior colleague in our work place to the IASS (and in cases of financial need paying their membership fee) we would quickly begin to bring much-needed “youth” to our international association. As always, I would appreciate hearing your personal thoughts on this suggestion or, more generally, on ideas that you may have to promote our membership and improve our ability to meet the collective aims of our organization.

Yours in the science and practice of survey research,

**Steve Heeringa**  
IASS President