

International Association of Survey Statisticians (IASS)

Letter from the President

July 2017

Dear IASS colleagues,

Greetings from Ann Arbor. My two-year term as IASS President has passed quickly and as we approach the World Statistics Congress (WSC) meetings in Marrakech, Morocco and the transition to a new IASS Executive I would like to take this opportunity to review the important activities and accomplishments of our Association and also reflect briefly on work that remains undone.

The 2017 WSC meeting (<http://payment.isi2017.org/>) that will take place July 16-21, in Marrakech, Morocco remains the premier opportunity for the IASS membership to gather, meet old (and new) friends face-to-face, network with international colleagues and share in the instructional and scientific program activities related to our professional interests in survey statistics and survey methodology. With the strong support of Marcel Vieira (IASS Representative) and other members of the Scientific Program Committee (SPC), a total of 15 IASS sponsored Invited Paper Sessions (IPS) have been scheduled for the 2017 World Statistics Congress (WSC). Many other session proposals from the IASS member community have been organized as special topic sessions. I want to acknowledge Ralf Muennich for his service on the ISI's 2017 Short Course Committee. IASS members submitted several successful proposals for short courses to be offered at the 2017 World Statistics Congress (<http://payment.isi2017.org/scientific-programme-2/shortcourses/>).

There are several special IASS meetings/sessions at the 2017 WSC that I would like to draw your attention to. The first of these is the IASS General Assembly meeting that is scheduled for 12:30-2:00 pm on Wednesday, July 19. All IASS members who are able to attend the 2017 WSC are encouraged to participate in this annual meeting. On the 19th, immediately following the General Assembly meeting (2:00-3:40pm), I will chair a special invited session that will include the IASS President's Invited Lecture and a presentation of the paper that earned the 2017 IASS Cochran-Hansen Prize. The President's Invited Lecture will be presented by my career-long colleague and friend, Colm O'Muircheartaigh. Colm will be presenting on the topic, *Next Generation Data: Surveys in a Transformed Environment*. The winner of the 2017 Cochran-Hansen prize is Girish Chandra (please see the report of the C-H Prize committee in this issue of *The Survey Statistician*). In the special Wednesday afternoon session, Girish will present a talk based on his paper titled, "*Ranked Set Sampling Approach for Estimating Response of Developmental Programs with Linear Impacts under Successive Phases*".

IASS is an official sponsor of the 2017 Small Area Estimation (SAE) satellite conference (<http://sae2017.ensai.fr/>) that is scheduled for July 10-12, 2017 (the week prior to the 2017 WSC) in Paris. In recent years the SAE satellite conferences have proved to be very popular with IASS members. Please take a moment to review the scientific program on the conference website and consider a visit to Paris to participate in this satellite meeting.

As in the cases of the 2017 SAE satellite conference, the IASS has rarely played the primary role as the organizer of a major conference, choosing instead to provide sponsorship and financial support to a diverse set of regional conferences, symposia, workshops and training activities devoted to survey methodology and survey statistics. The Report of the IASS Scientific Secretary included in this issue of TSS provides more specific information on the 2017-2018 conferences and meetings that the IASS Executive officers have selected to receive IASS sponsorship and support.

This past February and March, the ISI Permanent office oversaw the election of officers for 2017-2019. As I reported in an e-mail message in early April, the results are as follows. Denise do Nascimento Silva was chosen as President-Elect for 2019-2021. Cynthia Clark, Anders Holmberg, Risto Lehtonen, and Jean Opsomer were elected as 2017-2019 Vice-Presidents. Along with 2017-2019 President-Elect, Peter Lynn, and IASS Executive Director, Ada vanKrimpen (ex-officio), these newly elected officers will form the IASS Executive for 2017-2019. As President, Peter will designate one of the elected VPs as the Scientific Secretary of the IASS for 2017-2019 and another VP to have the duties of Financial Officer for this same period. I want to take this opportunity to again congratulate the candidates who were elected to office but also extend my thanks to all of the candidates who agreed to stand for election and to serve if chosen for office. A note of appreciation is also due to Jairo Arrow (chair) and the other members of the 2017 IASS Nominations Committee. As I reflect back on my time in official roles in the IASS leadership, I recognize that despite good intentions much work remains undone and many promising initiatives were not pursued as aggressively as they might have been. One such initiative that the 2015-2017 leadership will leave in the hands of the newly elected and very capable 2017-2019 IASS Executive is the refinement of the strategic plan for the future of our Association. We now have the benefit of the recently released ISI draft strategic plan, *ISI Strategy 2017 to 2019* that ISI President, Pedro Silva, shared with ISI members in early May. Many of the prime issues in the ISI plan are common to the future of our Association: How do we encourage communication and networking among the members of our association? What role should we play in statistical capacity building related to survey statistics and survey methodology?, Beyond our traditional strong contributions to the WSC Scientific and Short Course Programs how should IASS expertise and financial resources be used in such statistical capacity building efforts? and finally, How can IASS attract, retain and engage the young survey statisticians and methodologists that are the future of our discipline?

In response to the last of these questions, I would like to repeat a suggestion that I have offered in previous letters. I know from personal experience (both as a beneficiary and a benefactor) that it can be highly effective 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. As I have said before, 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. For myself and I assume many of you, joining the IASS early in our career and remaining a member through the years did not bring a long list of tangible "perks" or "goods". Its greatest benefit, one that could not be fully realized through memberships in national statistical societies or even regional networks, was that IASS membership brought us into the global network of survey statisticians and methodologists. I, for one, am forever grateful for that network and the way in which the shared knowledge and personal acquaintances have enriched my career. So thank you to each of you for being part of our international network.

IASS is an organization of volunteers. I will not attempt to list each by name but in closing, I would like to thank each of the IASS members who during the past two years has served in an IASS leadership role, as an association representative, as chair or a member of an IASS committee or in some other role. I would like to extend a special thanks to Natalie Shlomo and Eric Rancourt who

have worked behind the scenes to edit and produce *The Survey Statistician*. Also, I want to specifically recognize Olivier Dupriez for managing the IASS website. Thank you all for carrying the real burden of the work of our Association.

Yours in the science and practice of survey research,

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