

International Association of Survey Statisticians (IASS)

The Survey Statistician

President's Letter, January 2017

Dear IASS colleagues,

My mentor, Leslie Kish, once used the following play on words to communicate his thoughts on the role that our profession plays in society, "To err is human, to forgive divine; but to include errors in your design is statistical". Leslie's use of "..errors in design.." should not be interpreted as espousing sloppiness in our statistical work. Instead it refers to the fact that in statistical practice we acknowledge that the world that we to aim to study through survey research includes many sources of uncertainty. In a world where increased uncertainty—both statistical and not—poses new challenges in our day to day work, a mission of our association and its collective international membership must continue to be to promote and teach the scientific practice of survey research and to ensure that our designs, methods and inferences are both statistically efficient for their intended purpose and remain objective, transparent and relevant to the needs of our respective and mutual societies.

The 2017 World Statistics Congress (2017 WSC) will be held this July 16-21, 2017 in Marrakech, Morocco. IASS will be well-represented in the Scientific Program. 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 WSC. Many other session proposals from the IASS member community will be organized as special topic sessions. I am fortunate to be able to organize the IASS President's Invited Lecture IPS and have invited my long term colleague, Colm O'Muircheartaigh to deliver this special lecture. Colm has titled his talk, "Next Generation Data: Surveys in a Transformed Environment". I hope that many of you will be able to attend Colm's talk in person but if you cannot, look forward to reading his presentation paper in a future issue of *The Survey Statistician*. More information on the Scientific Program for the 2017 WSC can be found at the official web site, <http://www.isi2017.org/>

At the 2017 WSC, 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. If you are planning to compete for the Cochran-Hansen Prize, papers must be submitted to the committee chair, Monica Pratesi, monica.pratesi@unipi.it, before February 15, 2017.

For 2017, IASS is providing modest financial support to approximately 4 to 5 regional and international meetings that are specifically focused on survey statistics and survey methodology. The Report of the IASS Scientific Secretary included in this issue of *TSS* provides more specific information on the 2017 conferences and meetings that the officers have selected to receive IASS support. If you are planning to attend one of the sponsored meetings, be sure to note that as an IASS member you will generally be eligible for a discount on your registration fees. 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) or to me (sheering@umich.edu).

Beginning in February, IASS members will have the opportunity to vote for the officers who will comprise the 2017-2019 IASS Executive. Under the revised IASS statutes approved by the General Assembly in 2013, the election will be for the office of President-elect (for 2019) and four Vice-Presidents. The five individuals who are elected to office will join President-elect, Peter Lynn, to lead our association for 2017-2019. Peter will designate one of the elected VPs as the Scientific Secretary of the IASS and another VP to have the duties of Financial Officer. I wish to extend my thanks to Jairo Arrow (Chair) and the other members of the IASS 2017-2019 nominating committee (Marcel Vieira, Dalisay Maligalig, Imbi Traat, and Allyson Seyb) for their efforts and for assembling a highly qualified and diverse slate of candidates who have agreed to stand for election. If you are interested, the full report of the 2017-2019 Nominating Committee is available on the home page of the official IASS website, <http://isi-iass.org/home/>.

Before closing, I would like to repeat a suggestion that I included in my July 2016 letter. 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.

I hope that you will take the time to 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.

Yours in the science and practice of survey research,

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