

ASAP Newsletter



The Philadelphia Chapter of the American Statistical Association

December 2009

<http://www.amstatphilly.org/>

UPCOMING EVENTS (2010)

Date	Event	Location
January 29	ASAP Mid-Winter Gathering	The Sedgeley Club (Boathouse Row)
April 6 - 8	Delaware Valley Science Fair	Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As the "year of change" comes to an end, we look at our own environment and see how things are changing and what to expect in the future. For the ASAP organization, we have managed to become less dependent on sponsor contributions, though they are always welcome, and more active in drawing support from our members. We have identified the need for increased education in basic statistical concepts in our talented youth as well as in advanced lab scientists. We have even struggled with ways we can identify ourselves as valuable contributors to these scientists as we have not well identified ourselves in the scientific world.

This last topic is one that will be covered during our upcoming Winter Gathering by our guest speaker, Dr. Ron Wasserstein, Executive Director of the ASA since 2007. Dr. Wasserstein has served on numerous ASA committees and councils, as a section and chapter officer and was a Member of the ASA Board of Directors from 2001-2003. His talk, titled "Live, from the ASA!", will cover the topics of voluntary accreditation, a new "Statistics Practice" conference, and partnership opportunities with other statistics organizations. He is an entertaining speaker, so the talk will be fun as well as educational.

Once again the Winter Gathering will be held at the beautiful Sedgely Boathouse on historic Boathouse Row in Philadelphia and will feature a fully catered gourmet meal. This is the traditional highlight gathering of the Chapter and allows interaction and networking among all the local members, spanning the pharmaceutical industry, academia, health care institutions and private practice. Mark your calendars for Friday, January 29, 2010 for this great event. More details on this event will be sent to all of you in the coming weeks, and registration will once again be on a secure site on the internet with the ease of using a credit card for payment.

Finally, as 2010 approaches, we will be looking for judges for the Delaware Valley Science Fair (<http://www.drexel.edu/dvsf/judging.htm>) which will be held at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks on April 6 - 8. Also, we ask for topics that you would like see presented at the upcoming Spring and Summer workshops held by our Chapter. In the past, the workshops have offered outstanding speakers covering topics like Bayesian Methods, Survival Analysis, and Multiple Comparisons in Epidemiologic studies. We hope more of you will be able to find time to attend these valuable, interactive learning opportunities as we offer them in great local venues and at minimal cost. Ask your colleagues who have attended any of these seminars and they will confirm they get more out of these seminars than any other organizational seminar they have attended.

Hope to see you in January!

Dennis Cosmatos, Dr.P.H.
ASAP Chapter President

ASAP MID-WINTER GATHERING

Friday, January 29, 2010 – The Sedgeley Club (Boathouse Row)

Speaker: Ron Wasserstein, PhD, Executive Director of ASA

Topic: Live, from the ASA!

Date: Friday, January 29, 2010

Time: 6:30 Appetizers
7:30 Dinner
8:30 Speaker Presentation

Location: The Sedgeley Club (Boathouse Row)
15 Boathouse Row
Philadelphia, PA 19130-1002

Cost: \$60/\$40/\$20 for couples/individuals/students

Registration: Details about registration will be posted on our website (www.amstatphilly.org) when they become available. Stay tuned.

Ron Wasserstein has been the Executive Director of the ASA since August 2007. His involvement in the ASA goes back over 20 years. He has served on numerous ASA committees and councils, as a section and a chapter officer, and was a member of the Board of Directors from 2001-2003. Prior to coming to the ASA, Ron was the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Washburn University, where he was a member of the faculty from 1984 to 2007. Ron received the BA in Mathematics from Washburn, and the MS and Ph.D. in Statistics from Kansas State University.

Title: Live, from the ASA!

Abstract: In 2009, the ASA considered several strategic activities to provide additional opportunities for its members. ASA Executive Director Ron Wasserstein will brief chapter members on three of these:

- New voluntary individual accreditation program
- “Statistics Practice Conference” that is under development
- New partnerships and opportunities in ASA publications (including a potential partnership with the Royal Statistical Society)

There will be plenty of time for questions and suggestions as well.

As background information, Ron provided the ASA statement on the voluntary accreditation program (see next page) which can also be found at <http://www.amstat.org/news/VoluntaryAccreditationofStatisticians.cfm>.

American Statistical Association to Begin a Program of Voluntary Individual Accreditation of Statisticians

After reviewing a report from a group of distinguished ASA members, including results of a sample survey of ASA members, the ASA Board of Directors has endorsed a recommendation to begin a program of voluntary individual accreditation of statisticians. In so doing, the ASA joins the Royal Statistical Society (RSS), the Statistical Society of Canada (SSC), and the Statistical Society of Australia, Inc. (SSAI), in offering such a service to members.

"An accreditation program is a significant way of meeting the challenge, identified in the ASA Strategic Plan, to reach out to underserved groups while continuing to serve our traditional constituencies," said ASA President Sally Morton. "After carefully studying such a program and after hearing from a large number of our members through a sample survey that such a program would be useful to them, the Board felt it was time for the ASA to provide this distinction to members who feel they will benefit from it."

Morton reiterated that such accreditation is voluntary; it is not the same as certification, which, in other professions, may be required before one can practice. "ASA accreditation is for those who feel it will help them professionally," she said. "As is demonstrated by similar programs offered by statistical societies in other countries, not everyone will need or want to be accredited."

The report was developed at the request of the Board by a committee headed by former ASA President Jon Kettenring. The other committee members were Mary Ellen Bock, Roger Hoerl, Nancy Kirkendall, Bob Mason, David Morganstein, Vijay Nair, Bob O'Neill, Len Oppenheimer, and Ron Wasserstein (ex-officio). Mason and Bock are also former ASA presidents. Wasserstein is the executive director of the ASA.

Kettenring's committee reviewed a proposal developed by another panel of ASA members, chaired by Mary Batcher, and including members familiar with accreditation offered in other countries. Kettenring's group conducted separate research on the subject, including a large randomized survey of 1000 ASA members, and interviews with leadership from the RSS, SSC, and SSAI.

Survey results indicated that 41 percent of members would apply for the accreditation program presented by the committee (standard error 2.4 percent). Twenty-nine percent said they would not apply, and 30 percent did not know or weren't sure if they would apply. A majority (53 percent) of members felt accreditation would be beneficial to ASA members, while 12 percent thought it would not be beneficial. The remaining 35 percent indicated they did not know or were not sure if it would be beneficial to ASA members.

Kettenring's report noted, and the Board affirmed, that such accreditation would be voluntary, and not everyone will need or want to be accredited. The general criteria for accreditation include an advanced degree in statistics or a related quantitative field with sufficient concentration in statistics, at least five years of experience in the practice of statistics, evidence that the applicant's work as an applied statistician is of high quality, effective communication skills, adherence to the ASA's "Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice," an ongoing record of professional growth, at least two supporting letters from persons of substantial stature and firsthand knowledge of the work and skills of the applicant, and ASA membership. Once granted, accreditation will be for five years, after which it may be renewed.

Applications for accredited status will be reviewed and accreditation decisions will be made by the Accreditation Committee, which will be broadly representative of the association and, over time, made up in majority by statisticians who themselves have been accredited.

Of course, there are many details to work out, including how to make the criteria for accreditation more specific, providing guidelines for applicants with regard to documentation of the various criteria, cost, and so on. An implementation committee is being formed, which will make recommendations to the Board regarding these details.

Board members praised the efforts of both the Kettenring and Batchner committees for their thorough and thoughtful work, which made this program possible. The Kettenring report can be viewed at http://www.amstat.org/news/pdfs/Kettenring_AccreditationReport.pdf.

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