

# Strategic Planning Process Implemented

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With the generous support of an ASA member initiative grant, the Section on Statistical Education embarked on a strategic planning process just before and during JSM 2008. Planning for this meeting began in the early spring, when the executive committee for the section identified six section members to serve on the strategic planning committee. These people represented as many constituencies as possible: statisticians in university departments other than statistics; liberal arts colleges; statistics educators who are not tenure-track faculty, but faculty with administrative duties tied to education (e.g., being in charge of large lecture courses with many TAs); and graduate-level statistics departments more generally. The sixth member and leader of the group was past section chair Jessica Utts, who was a member of the ASA strategic planning committee and able to bring

the perspective of the ASA as a whole to the effort.

The bulk of the strategic planning work was accomplished by the strategic planning committee. Its members met for a little more than eight hours on the Saturday before JSM with a facilitator who set the agenda for the day, taking the committee through the following areas: vision and mission, ASA strategic plan, mission statement for the section, identifying strategic objectives, and where we go from here. While the committee discussed all these areas and accomplished an amazing amount of work in that one day, one lesson the section would pass on is to schedule more time. Perhaps a day and a half would be sufficient, as the committee felt rushed at the end of the eight-hour day (even though it was stretched to eight and a half hours).

The first task set by the facilitator was to discuss the vision and mission of the section.

By this, he meant identifying the section's customers/end users, roles, and responsibilities. He also asked the committee to take a close look at the section charter so it could be kept in mind during the discussion.

Next, the committee considered the ASA strategic plan. For each of the eight subsections of the plan, committee members identified what the section already does, what it should do, and what it could do.

The next step was to write a mission statement for the section and determine its strategic objectives. In particular, the committee spent a lot of time brainstorming (without comment) for strategic objectives. All the ideas (a few dozen) were then listed and clarified.

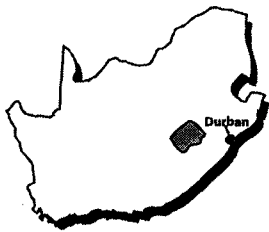
Finally, the members of the committee voted. The aim, as recommended by the facilitator, was an end result of five to seven strategic objectives.

That Saturday evening, the strategic planning committee shared the process and outcomes (the mission statement and list of strategic objectives) with the executive committee of the section. This larger group discussed and debated the two outcomes, particularly the list of objectives. Four objectives were nearly unanimously included. Five others were thought to merit continued discussion. That discussion led to a mission statement and a final list of seven strategic objectives—all in line with, and in response to, the larger ASA strategic plan.

The final steps were to share the outcomes at the annual section business meeting during JSM and then send an email to the entire membership with the mission statement and strategic objectives. This email went out in the middle of September, giving members until the middle of October to comment. The executive committee is now considering those comments and plans to hold a vote on the two documents by mid-December.

Anyone interested in details about this process is welcome to contact Utts at [jutts@uci.edu](mailto:jutts@uci.edu). ■

## NSF Sponsors Travel Grants to ISI Meeting



The ASA has received funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to support travel to Durban, South Africa, for the August 16–22, 2009, meeting of the International Statistical Institute (ISI). The grant will provide partial transportation assistance to individuals presenting papers or who have an official function at the meeting. Women, minorities, and newer faculty who completed PhD requirements in 1996 or later are encouraged to apply.

Meeting attendees must be members of ISI or one of its sections or an official representative of an invited organization. The ISI sections include the International Association of Survey Statisticians, the International Association of Statistical Computing, the International Association of Official Statistics, the Bernoulli Society for Mathematical Statistics and Probability, and the International Association for Statistical Education.

For a copy of the ISI travel grant application—due February 20, 2009—visit [www.amstat.org/research\\_grants/2009TravelGrantApplicationISI.doc](http://www.amstat.org/research_grants/2009TravelGrantApplicationISI.doc).

For additional information, email [isitravel@amstat.org](mailto:isitravel@amstat.org).