

# International Statistical Education Newsletter

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## EDITORIAL

*At the university level, there is an increasing tendency for professionals who are users of Statistics in other disciplines to develop programs aimed at teaching statistical concepts within the framework of their own discipline. Service courses offered by Statistics departments continue to be utilized, but the extent of such utilization - and determining the optimum thereof - remains a subject for lively debate. Has the proliferation of statistical software been the main factor in the development of independent programs? How are the programs working out? And how is the Statistics curriculum responding to this movement? These are only some of the questions that need to be answered as the debate goes on, and the readers of ISEN are warmly invited to send in their contributions to the discussion. Articles (of suitable ISEN size) that describe special programs and experience in implementing them are especially welcome. So are articles expressing "Viewpoints". Readers may also wish to make shorter contributions, which could be in the form of a "Comment" or a "Letter to the Editor".*

## NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The 5th International Conference on the New Quality Philosophy in Statistical Education will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S.A., from 22 to 25 August in conjunction with the 1988 Joint Statistical Meetings of the American Statistical Association and Biometric Society. This satellite conference is sponsored by the International Society of Statistical Science in Economics. For information, contact Professor V. Shyrkov, IS-SSE, 333-68 Enterprise Drive, Rohnert Park, CA 94928, U.S.A.

COMPSTAT '88, the 8th Symposium on Computational Statistics, will be held in Copenhagen, from 29 August to 2 September. For information, contact Niels E. Raun, UNI-C Vermundsgade 5, DK 2100 Copenhagen, Denmark. Computer mail: COMPSTAT @ DKCCRE01, BITNET.

The 44th Annual Conference on Applied Statistics will be held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, U.S.A., from 5 to 9 December. Details of the program will appear in the July-August issue of *Amstat News*. For further information, contact Walter R. Young, American Cyanamid Co., Pearl River, NY 10965, U.S.A.

The Proceedings of the Second International Tampere Conference in Statistics, which was held in Tampere, Finland, from 1 to 4 June, 1987, can be ordered from the Department of Mathematical Sciences/Statistics, University of Tampere, P.O. Box 607, SF-33101 Tampere, Finland. Price per hard cover volume of 720 pages is FIM 200 or USD 50.

The Second Conference of the International Federation of Classification Societies (IFCS) will be held in Charlottesville, Virginia, U.S.A., from 27 to 30 June, 1989. The conference is devoted to the presentation of theoretical, methodological, and applied papers on classification, pattern recognition, and related methods of statistics and data analysis in the broad sense. More information about this conference will appear in the next issue of *ISEN*.

### Call for Information

The ISI Task Force on teaching Statistics at School level (TOTSAS) is concerned with collecting and disseminating information about the teaching of statistics at school level and to stimulate such teaching throughout the world TOTSAS plans to put together and publish a collection of syllabi of statistics courses that have been successfully implemented in various countries. It is hoped that such a collection may serve as a starting point for efforts to introduce statistics instruction in countries that have little or no past experience.

The chairman of TOTSAS would appreciate receiving copies of successful syllabi for possible inclusion in the collection. Please send any information to:

Gottfried E. Noether  
Chairman of TOTSAS  
Department of Statistics, U-120  
University of Connecticut  
Storrs, CT 06268, U.S.A.

We recently received an announcement of the death in Canada of Stefan Rinco, Professor of Statistics and Chairman of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. A member of the Bernoulli Society, Professor Rinco was an active participant at recent sessions of the I.S.I., including those held in Buenos Aires, Madrid and Amsterdam. He died in October 1987, after a relatively brief illness, at the age of 47.

NOTES FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I postponed from the previous issue of ISEN a brief account of education activities at the ISI meeting in Tokyo last September.

Committee meetings hardly provide the most exciting material for Newsletter readers, particularly where the main work of the Committee is done by small groups of people in the intervals between Committee meetings. In our case much of this work is shared by the task forces, on Meetings, on Teaching Statistics at School Level (TOTSAS), and on Statistics in University and Technical Education. At least I should set out the updated membership of our committee and the names of the current Task Force Chairmen. Please contact them directly if you have concerns which might be relevant to their work.

The Tokyo Meeting certainly gave the impression that education issues are of growing interest to the ISI in general. An open meeting called by Professor Gani to allow participants to express ideas and exchange views was well attended, though additional to the main programme. The Programme Committee for the Paris ISI meeting in 1989 has included a session on statistical education within the main Programme - the first time, at least in recent years, that I can recall a session of this kind figuring on the main programme.

The Committee received progress reports on forthcoming International Meetings for which it is responsible. Rapidly looming now is the Round Table Conference on Training Teachers to Teach Statistics, which will be held in Budapest from 23rd to 27th July. The Round Table Conferences are held every fourth year on specific topics of professional importance. They are not intended as open meetings but as small working sessions attended by invitation with a view to publishing the proceedings as an up-to-date account of the topic in question.

Immediately following the Round Table Conference, which is being organized by Anne Hawkins, comes the main ICME meeting, also in Budapest, for which Gottfried Noether, chairman of TOTSAS, is coordinating a series of four seminars on statistical themes. Then in 1989 we have the Paris ISI meeting, and looming on the horizon, the 3rd ICOTS meeting which will be held in New Zealand in August 1990. Any queries or suggestions concerning future conferences to be sponsored by the Education Committee should be sent to Kerstin Vanman as chairman of the Task Force on Conferences.

Apart from budget matters (i.e. trying to cut down our ambitions to the modest scale of the annual education grant from UNESCO) the Committee also discussed several projects which it has attempted to initiate over the last few years. These illustrate only too well one of the fundamental dilemmas of the ISI. Neither the skeleton staff at the Permanent Office, nor the unpaid members of the various committees and Task Forces, have the combination of time, professional experience and contacts to successfully find sponsorship for substantial ventures into the education arena.

Even the Pocket Computer project, which involved collaboration with Sharpe of Japan to produce a statistical calculator to ISI specification, and got up to and passed the stage of having a machine produced to these specifications (it is now available commercially) has had to be shelved for lack of funds to cover the development of a suitable manual, and trialling of both machine and manual in various situations.

Likewise a more ambitious project for developing a series of educational videos on different aspects of statistical work is languishing through lack of sponsorship despite encouraging first round discussions. So among other things this note is a plea for statistical millionaires, or even statistical nephews with millionaire uncles, to drop their modesty and come forward to the Education Committee with backing of a quarter of a million dollars or so, this being a crude estimate of the cost of producing a series of videos to top class professional standards.

ISI Education Committee and its Task ForcesEducation Committee

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