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Draft Minutes of Committee Meeting

Statistical Methodology and Statistical Computer Software in Transportation Research,
A5011

Hall B3, Marriott Wardman Hotel
Washington, D.C.
January 14, 2002
1:30 pm to 4:30 pm

The Chairman, Michael Griffith, called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

Introductions

The chair opened the meeting by welcoming committee members and friends, which was followed by self-introductions of attendees. The chairman noted the strong attendance from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. A list of current committee members with address and appointment term was sent around for validation.

Minutes of 2001 Annual Meeting

Minutes from the 2001 annual meeting of the Committee were distributed and approved by a unanimous vote.

1. Review of the Mid-Year Meeting Minutes

Mike Griffith presented a brief overview of the issues discussed at the mid-year meeting.

2. 2002 Paper Reviews

Mohammad Qureshi coordinated the 2002 TRB paper review process. 14 papers were received (all electronic), of those 11 were accepted for presentation. One paper has already been recommended for publication, and six more are in the re-review process. The electronic review process went much smoother this year; only one problem was noted with an incorrect email address. Other comments on the review process were minimal. One person suggested that there be some instructions on how to handle the re-reviews. Questions were raised as to whether changes should be made to the original comments that are in the electronic system, or whether a yes/no response would be sufficient. Another problem concerns inability of authors to respond to comments via the web site. In summary, Mohammad and Mike

mentioned that there are still several re-reviews that need to be completed by January 24, 2002 in order to make the deadline for publication submittals.

3. Conference Sessions

Monday Jan. 14th, 7:30 p.m. - 9:15 p.m - Session 250: Statistical Developments for Transportation, Marriott

Tuesday January 15th, 9:00 a.m. – noon - Session 333 (Poster session): Statistical Methods and Highway Safety, Marriott

Wednesday January 16th, 8:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. - Session 501: Vision for Statistical Methods in Transportation, Marriott

Wednesday January 16th, 10:15 a.m. - noon - Session 539: Safety in Numbers: Critically Assessing Results of Safety Studies, Marriott

Mike mentioned that the Vision for Statistics should be an interesting session for many. The session was planned and coordinated by Cliff Spiegelman to showcase successful growth of statistics programs. The focus would be on building, maintaining and growing statistical groups, and networking with other professionals. Ways to recognize work (who and how), open holes in the profession, and statistical education for transportation professionals were considered as further topics of discussion. A summary of the session would be entered into the Journal of Transportation Statistics as an archival record.

4. 2003 Annual TRB Meeting

Paper Reviews

Mohammad Qureshi volunteered to lead the paper review process for next year.

Conference Session Ideas

- Utilizing Markov Chain Monte Carlo Methods in Transportation (co-sponsor with the Artificial Intelligence Committee – Gary Spring) – Gary Davis
- Statistical Computer Software (may fit into MCMC) – Dave Hunt
- Statistical Aspects of Risk Reduction/Assessment in Transportation – Cliff Spiegelman. Bill McCauley of Canada will organize the session; David Banks chairs the Risk Analysis Committee for ASA and will help with the US perspective. (*Special Paper Session*)
- Vendor and non-Vendor Software Training Workshops on Sunday – Bob Scopatz. Mike mentioned that TRB would probably not allow Vendor specific training to take place...it might also be too expensive.
- Planning and Modeling Techniques (co-sponsored by planning committee) – Kouros Mohammadian

- Spatial Statistics for Analyzing Transportation Safety Problems – Jennifer Ogle (coordinate with Craig Roberts and Safety Data Committee)
- Multinomial Logic/Nested Logic (co-sponsor with A1C04 Travel Behavior and Values Committee) – Simon Washington

These ideas need to be coordinated with Rick Pain around July 1 – August 1, 2002.

Human Factors Workshop

Mehdi suggested a sampling workshop for next year with a target audience of university researchers (not government). This suggestion follows multiple papers from presenters where sampling techniques were found to be sloppy. The session would cover the basic points on sampling. Simon Washington, Promod Chandhok, and Delbert Stewart would work with Mehdi to finalize the outline and content for the workshop. Mehdi already has an outline put together (see appended). Real-world examples would be used, and the session would highlight the differences between good/bad samples. TRB meets in March to determine workshop agenda for next year. Deadline for entry is March 15, 2002.

Mohammad suggested that since no official records are kept of the session proceedings, that we place all presentations and course materials on the web site. Other comments followed suggesting that we do this with all of our sessions.

5. Rick Pain, TRB Update

This year over 7,000 attendees pre-registered, they expect over 8,000 by the end of the conference period. Due to travel restrictions this year, many foreign colleagues were not able to attend the meeting.

Post September 11, security has suddenly become a very important topic. This year there were 30 sessions created in October-November to address some of the issues. TRB would like to request that any sessions, conferences, papers, etc. related to security be brought to their attention.

This year 204 people attended 9 different Human Factors Workshops. There is usually a limit of 25-30 people per session as they are intended to be interactive.

On July 19, 2002, TRB is moving to their new building. Email will be the same, phone numbers will most likely change – they may be difficult to reach in the week or so following this move.

On the issue of paper reviews, the majority of the reviews were positive. There were still some bad reviews, and TRB will be working to fix these over the next year. The staff at TRB has designed a completely new functional specification for a new system based on the needs of reviewers and authors. This system may be up next year, but most likely the following year. Simon commented that he would like to see all of the paper reviews that he

has been asked to complete be placed on one web site. Currently, they are broken up on different sites by committee.

On recent visits to state DOT's, Rick has received information regarding this committee. The states are interested in "How do you take data and make it into useful information?" There is a notion that they not only want good solid statistics, but also turning the output into meaningful information.

The problem statements that we submitted to TRB for 2001 were well received, but did not get selected. Rick suggested that we tailor the statements to sound like something that the states can use afterward. He suggested that we tweak the previous statements and resubmit by February 1, 2002.

Workshop materials can be placed on the pre-print CD, but they need to be received by TRB on or before November 15, 2002.

6. Research Problem Statements

Mike Griffith agreed with Rick Pain's suggestion of resubmitting the previous problem statements. Mike volunteered to go back and review the statements and try to resubmit by the due date.

7. Mid-Year Meeting 2002

Options were presented for the mid-year meeting location including Joint Statistical Meeting in NYC, NATMEC in Orlando, Data Committees in TBD, and Traffic Records Forum in Orlando. The committee voted and agreed to meet at the ASA meetings in NYC. Mike suggested that we try to sponsor a session at the meeting (no decision made), and find a presenter for our meeting.

8. Expertise Matrix

Shaw Pin revised the expertise matrix for this year's paper reviews. During the meeting, we went through the exercise of filling them in and returning them to Mike and Mohammad. The expertise matrix is used to simplify the distribution of papers for review.

9. Committee Rotation

Mike mentioned that one-third of the committee would need to be rotated off this year. He plans to look at member involvement and tenure to make these cuts. If friends of the committee or others are interested in becoming members, they were asked to submit resumes to Mike.

10. Communication

Bob Scopatz has been working on a new plan for committee communications. The newsletter was an unmitigated failure. The committee could not seem to get it generated on a frequent basis, and the timing was always off in terms of soliciting papers submissions from other application-oriented committees.

Bob noted two problems with communication, content and dissemination. As for content, getting articles proves to be an extremely difficult job. New ideas for content include: summary of sessions, committee news items, what's new in federal-state-other agencies, abstracts of research papers or publications, upcoming events, software reviews, and book reviews. Dissemination should continue through the web site. Email was thought to be a complimentary form of distribution. If we keep the process informal, we can send the news update anytime. If we formalize the newsletter, it must be reviewed under the constraints of TRB and we lose any timing control for the release. The news update will only be sent in print form if absolutely necessary. Bob would like to see the new updates to go out 6 times/year on the web.

Also, Rick Pain had suggested at the mid-year meeting that we utilize the TR News Editorial Section, and the Committee Chair Newsletter to transmit important information to a larger audience.

Mohammad suggested that we utilize the TRB Web Board system as a mechanism for threaded/live discussions. The Web Board allows public/private areas and moderated groups. Mohammad volunteered to check into this option in more detail. Demonstrations were provided by TRB staff at Suite 8205 in the Marriott Wardman during the 2002 TRB conference.

11. BTS Update – David Banks

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics has been providing grants for the last couple of years. In 2000, 5 grants were issued, and in 2001, 6 grants were issued. The deadline for submitting grant applications for 2002 is January 25, 2002. To date, 4 projects have been completed. It was suggested that the project managers submit papers to our committee for the following year.

12. Reauthorization of TEA-21 – Ed Milton

There will be a substantial increase in funds for improving state data systems. In specific, the following databases are of great importance: crash, roadway, EMS, drivers license, and vehicle registration files. Standards will be set and must be reached, although no stipulations how the state goes about reaching these standards. The effective date would be October 1, 2003. There will also be 3-5 grants of \$1 million each to update/improve citation tracking systems. Again there would be standards, but they don't care how the state reaches these.

13. Adjourn

The Committee adjourned at 3:50 p.m.