

Conference Season and the International Roles of the ISI Family

It's a busy conference season for the ISI family in this, non-WSC year.

With 13 plenary speakers and 39 invited sessions, the 40th Conference on Stochastic Processes and their Applications, one of the Bernoulli Society's key conferences, was held in Gothenburg, Sweden, 11-15 June, <http://spa2018.org/>. The ISBIS 2018 conference, the International Symposium on Statistics in Business and Industry, was held in Athens, 4-6 July; a report is already available at

http://www.isbis-isi.org/doc/PostConference_Report_ISBIS2018.pdf.



IASC held its 2nd Data Science, Statistics & Visualisation Conference (DSSV) in TU Wien, Austria, 9-11 July, <http://iasc-isi.org/dssv2018/>. IASE held its 10th International Conference on Teaching Statistics (ICOTS10) in Kyoto, Japan, 8-13 July, <http://icots.info/10/>. TIES held the 28th Conference of the International Environmetrics Society in Guanajuato, Mexico, 16-21 July, <http://ties2018.eventos.cimat.mx/>. The 16th conference of IAOS will be held jointly with OECD in Paris, 19-21 September, <http://www.iaos-isi.org/index.php/conferences>, preceded by a special meeting on “NSO’s Professional Independence: Threats and Responses”.

ISI Vice-President Fabrizio Ruggeri represented ISI at ISBIS 2018, giving a short speech at the opening ceremony on ISI’s mission. Fabrizio also attended the DSSV conference, where, during the ISBIS session, he expressed appreciation on ISI’s behalf for IASC’s efforts in data science, including creating this conference, and in involving ISBIS and the Bernoulli Society through invited sessions by these two associations. I was a keynote speaker at ICOTS10, and also chaired the 2018 ISI General Assembly (GA); see report at <https://www.isi-web.org/images/news/2018-08GAR.pdf>. This was the first time a GA in a non-WSC year has been held in conjunction with an ISI Association conference, and my recommendation is that this initiative be continued to provide opportunities for connecting with Associations and more discussion than is possible at General Assemblies at WSC’s.

One of the many highlights of ICOTS10 was the number of participants from developing countries able to attend with partial funding from ISI’s World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building (WBTFSCB) Program, from IASE itself, or from the Tokyo Memorial Fund. All funded participants were awarded \$1,250 each and were able to find the rest of what they needed from other sources. There were 21 funded participants from 11 different countries, and IASE held a reception for them. It was wonderful to meet them during the conference and hear their stories and aspirations.

ISI was well-represented at the 29th International Biometrics Conference (IBC), Barcelona, 8-13 July, <http://2018.biometricconference.org/> . Starting in 2017, building on their MoU, ISI and IBS launched a collaborative initiative of selecting two young statisticians each year for joint support to the WSC's in odd years, and the IBC's in even years. Selection is by a joint committee, organised and chaired by the two liaison officers: currently Kaye Basford as ISI liaison to IBS, and Jane Hutton as IBS liaison to ISI. For WSC's, the selection is from young IBS members, and for IBC's, from young ISI members. In each case, the awardees give presentations in special sessions, and become young ambassadors to the other society, building connections based on their conference participation. ISI's young ambassadors to IBC 2018 were Samuel Oluwafemi Oyamakin (Nigeria) and Tamanna Howlader (Bangladesh), both receiving praise for their professional presentations at IBC. Samuel has written a report with pictures, and Tamanna, as a member of ISI's Young Statisticians' Committee, is already planning future joint activities. Samuel and Tamanna have also been put in touch with IBS's young ambassadors to WSC2017, Fernando Aguade (Argentina) and Annette Okoth (Kenya). Annette is now a country representative on ISI's Committee for Women in Statistics. As part of the MoU between ISI and IBS, ISI also had a special invited session at IBC 2018, organised by ISI Vice-President Peter Guttorp and chaired by Kaye Basford, with speakers Kristie Ebi, University of Washington, and Guy Midgley, Stellenbosch University.

ISI was also very well-represented at the Joint Statistical Meetings 2018, Vancouver, Canada, 28 July – 2 August, <http://ww2.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2018/> , attended by President-Elect John Bailer, Vice-Presidents Stephen Penneck and Peter Guttorp, and with an ISI table personned by Director Ada van Krimpen. John Bailer attended the COPSS (Committee of Presidents of Statistical Societies) meeting to which ISI sends a report, and which involves the leadership from a number of statistical societies and groups including: ASA, SSC, IMS, IBS, IBS/ENAR, IBS/WNAR, RSS, ICOSA, KISS, SSA, IISA, ISBA. Peter commented that the JSM not only reinforces the breadth of areas of research and applications of statistics, but also that the future is bright with the next generation taking over. Having such a large gathering (over 6,000) of course has pros and cons: lots of conflicting sessions but opportunities of new interactions.

John commented that all statistical societies are dealing with data science and the implication of data science / computational skills for teaching and research in statistics. This was also a major theme in ICOTS10, and naturally in DSSV. It was heartening to hear from many at ICOTS10 of recognition and burgeoning developments of the central and significant roles of statistics in data science and of data science in statistics. Just one example is the International Data Science in Schools Project (IDSSP), <http://www.idssp.org/> , an international cooperative venture, involving computer scientists, statisticians, school teachers, curriculum experts and educators from Australia, Canada, England, Germany, New Zealand and the United States. Just over 50% of the IDSSP curriculum team are ISI/Association members.

The keynotes at ICOTS10 (<http://icots.info/10/?keynotes>) demonstrated the richness and breadth of statistics; the importance of heeding core messages and lessons/missed opportunities from the recent past; the challenges of facts versus perceptions, of the immense clientele for statistics and reconciling human nature and the nature of statistics;

and the opportunities for using technology in the renewal of core messages as well as development of new.

And overall, what is demonstrated again through the many conferences and involvement of the ISI family globally is the critical importance of our professional networking across the whole world. John commented from COPSS that all statistical societies are dealing with values and codes of conduct. One longtime ISI member recently commented on the challenges for the ISI family in the interesting geopolitical world that is evolving. I would say geosocialpolitical world. It is indeed a challenge for the ISI family possibly more than for any other statistical society. We must continue to strongly and unanimously advocate our professional values and professional inclusivity.

Helen MacGillivray
ISI President