Roles and strategies on professional ethics

Role of the EC and Council concerning ethical issues

Policies and strategies concerning the Declaration on Professional Ethics are discussed and decided by the ISI Executive Committee (EC) and Council. Decisions on actions concerning ethical issues are taken by the EC, mainly following advice from the Advisory Board on Ethics (ABE).

The ISI strategy on professional ethics

Following recommendations by the ABE and discussions in Council, the EC approved the following strategy for ISI actions on professional ethics. The most appropriate strategies would be taken depending on the circumstances.

1. The ISI can write letters of support to the statisticians that have been affected. This can be reassuring during what must be a difficult time for them.
2. We can write to the authorities in the country expressing our concern. This is unlikely to have much direct influence but might provide a useful source for quotation. On the other hand, it can result in some quite aggressive responses.
3. We can approach the relevant international agency urging their involvement. They are likely to have more influence than the ISI.
4. We can ensure that media are aware of the situation. This may put some pressure on governments. If market sensitive statistics are affected, this may result in market reactions that may be to the disadvantage of the countries concerned. Countries may be less likely to dismiss statisticians in such circumstances if they think there is a price to pay.
5. We can publish statements on the ISI website which would then be available for quoting by the media and others.
6. We can work with other professional associations to provide a collective response. The impact of that could be far greater than acting alone. For example, in the Argentinian case the ISI did work with the American Statistical Association (ASA) in crafting a response.