

Is there time for research during the ASA Science Policy Fellowship?

The focus of the fellowship is on science policy and raising the profile of statistics in evidence-based policymaking. However, there is time for research activities and, as the ASA Science Policy Fellow, I presented at academic conferences, co-managed and authored the ASA's first survey of master's graduates, and am currently preparing several manuscripts for publication. More broadly, there are many professional development opportunities available through fellowship.

Why should people consider applying?

The ASA Science Policy Fellowship provides a close look at federal science policy with an emphasis on the role of statistics in evidence-based policymaking. Given this focus, I think statisticians with interests in statistical policy, policy analysis, program evaluation, applied research, and data policy should consider applying.

In the past, science policy fellows have been recent graduates from either a doctoral or master's degree program in statistics or a closely related discipline, but the position would also be a good fit for mid-career professionals interested in advocating for statistics and evidence-based policymaking in Congress, in the administration, and with stakeholder organizations.

How can interested readers apply?

I encourage all interested applicants with a doctorate or master's degree in statistics or related discipline to apply. Submit a letter of application not to exceed two pages, a short résumé, writing samples (nontechnical if available), and contact information for three professional references via email to ASA Director of Science Policy Steve Pierson at spierson@amstat.org. Applications are being considered on a rolling basis before the September 2020 start date. More information is available at ww2.amstat.org/policy/fellowship.cfm.

What's your favorite statistics quote?

Statisticians generally agree that models are typically imperfect and seek (at least in part) to explain and/or predict something about the real world. To quote George Box, "All models are wrong, but some are useful." Similarly, it could be argued that all policies are wrong, but some are useful. This is my favorite statistics quote because I interpret it to suggest that statistical reasoning can be applied to help conceptualize policies and make them more useful. ■

Task Force on Statistical Significance and Replicability Created

Karen Kafadar, 2019 ASA President

At the November 2019 ASA Board meeting, members of the board approved the following motion:

An ASA Task Force on Statistical Significance and Reproducibility will be created, with a charge to develop thoughtful principles and practices that the ASA can endorse and share with scientists and journal editors. The task force will be appointed by the ASA President with advice and participation from the ASA BOD. The task force will report to the ASA BOD by November 2020.

Co-chairs Linda Young and Xuming He will be working with ASA Staff member Elizabeth Henry to support the Task Group. With suggestions from board members, the following ASA members—from various research emphases, statistical approaches, and disciplines—were identified as task force members:

Linda Young, National Agricultural Statistics Service and University of Florida (Co-Chair)

Xuming He, University of Michigan (Co-Chair)

Yoav Benjamini, Tel Aviv University

Dick De Veaux, Williams College (ASA Vice President)

Bradley Efron, Stanford University

Scott Evans, The George Washington University (ASA Publications Representative)

Mark Glickman, Harvard University (ASA Section Representative)

Barry Graubard, National Cancer Institute

Xiao-Li Meng, Harvard University

Vijay Nair, Wells Fargo and University of Michigan

Nancy Reid, University of Toronto

Stephen Stigler, The University of Chicago

Stephen Vardeman, Iowa State University

Chris Winkle, University of Missouri

Tommy Wright, US Census Bureau

Based on the initial meeting, these members decided "replicability" was more in line with the critical issues than "reproducibility" (cf. National Academy of Sciences report, bit.ly/35YBLbu), hence the title of the task force is ASA Task Force on Statistical Significance and Replicability.

Young and He welcome input and are working with ASA Director of Awards, Committees, and Elections Elizabeth Henry on a mechanism for receiving comments from the community. ■