

TOWARDS THE SECTIONS

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY AND EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The old "Swiss Association for Statistics" started as an initiative of people working in academic and research institutions. Even though some statisticians from industry took part in it, it was rather homogeneous, and the organizational structure was kept to a minimum.

When official statisticians started to join the Association, it became suitable to create, in November 1998, a Section of "Official Statistics", which would respond to their specific interests.

In the last five years, we worked in a somewhat unusual structure: there was the one Section which encompassed somewhat less than half of the members, while the rest was represented only in the committee of the Society. Since the needs of some fractions of the membership are different enough, a first group took the initiative to form a Section "Statistics in Business and Industry". It then seemed desirable to form, in addition, a third Section, namely "Education and Research", gathering statisticians working in research and educational institutions.

With these three Sections, most of the members will probably be attracted to at least one of them. It will still be possible to be a member of the Society without adhering to any one of the sections.

In what follows we briefly describe the goals of these newly proposed Sections.

■ During the conference dinner of last year's "Swiss Statistics Meeting" a group of statisticians working in business and industry discussed about the possible creation of a new Section entitled "Statistics in Business and Industry". A result of this fruitful and ongoing discussion was the creation of its drafted bylaws. In particular, the proposed goals of the Section "Statistics in Business and Industry" will be:

- Represent the interests of statisticians working in business and industry.
- Provide a platform for the coordination and the development of statistical training programs with applications in business and industry.
- Organise conferences in coordination with the other activities of the SSS and its other Sections. For example, the organisation of specific sessions within the annual "Swiss Statistics Meeting".
- Promote the contact among statisticians working in business and industry on the national as well as on the international level.
- Promote the contact with other organizations with similar objectives.

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■ The proposal for a Section “Education and Research” has been put together lately by Prof. Maria-Pia Victoria-Feser from Geneva, PD Dr. Riccardo Gatto from Berne, and Prof. Theo Gasser and Dr. Werner Stahel from Zurich. The goals of the Section, according to the drafted bylaws, will be:

- Creating and maintaining a network of mathematical and applied statisticians working in educational and research institutions in Switzerland.
- Organising conferences in mathematical and applied statistics, in coordination with the other activities of the SSS and its other sections. In particular, the section will organise specific sessions within the “Swiss Statistics Meeting”.
- Acting as a partner for Federal agencies and other Swiss and foreign institutions and professional societies.
- Providing a national platform for the coordination and the development of higher education programs in mathematical and applied statistics.

Even though most academic people are and should be primarily interested in research, the Section “Education and Research” puts education first. Research contacts on the academic level are usually directed to specialized groups spread over the globe. Education is suitably organized on a more regional level. The current discussions about plans for a Master degree in statistics provide an excellent example of this fact.

While the goals for both Sections are rather ambitious, the organizational structure should be kept to a minimum. The creation assemblies of both Sections will take place in Berne at the “Spring Meeting” of the SSS on May 9; see separate announcement.

We hope that most of the members of the Swiss Statistical Society will support the creation of these new sections.

The Sections will only flourish if members participate actively and by showing and communicating their needs and interest. Please come to Berne on May 9 and help creating productive new Sections!

In case you have any remarks and/or questions, or if you would like to participate actively within these new Sections, please do not hesitate contacting

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