

NZSA President's Report to the 2016 AGM (Martin Hazelton)

Introduction

Welcome to the 2016 AGM. This event marks the end of my second (and final) year as President. One of my intentions in this role has been to develop a stronger role for NZSA in the professional development of early career statisticians. I have not made as much progress on this as I would have liked, but the foundations are now in place (as I outline in the mentoring and workshop items below). I hope that my successor can bring these to fruition.

Mentoring Scheme Working Party

In September 2015 I established a working party, comprising Vanessa Cave, Kylie Maxwell and Peter Smith to consider ways in which NZSA could provide mentoring for early career statisticians, particularly those who find themselves in a solitary position (or as part of a small group) working in some larger organization. A report from this working party is appended.

Continuing Professional Development Workshops

Earlier this year I established a working party to look at the role of NZSA in running continuing professional development workshops. My sincere thanks go to Ian Westbrooke, Nokuthaba Sibanda and Richard Penny for their excellent work on this matter. The Working Party submitted a report to the NZSA Executive Committee in August. It can be downloaded from http://www.stats.org.nz/site/uploads/Continuing-Professional-Development_Oct-2016.pdf. In brief, the report recommends that NZSA coordinate provision of CPD workshops, with a particular emphasis on topics that will be useful and of interest to early career statisticians. From a financial perspective, the plan is that NZSA would underwrite each CPD workshop but that in general the scheme would be self-financing.

Corporate Membership

Richard Penny submitted a discussion document on Corporate Membership to the NZSA Executive. It is appended to this report. He noted (i) that NZSA has had only two corporate members since 2011; and (ii) the purpose and benefits of corporate membership are currently unclear. The discussion document outlines three possible ways forward: (i) status quo; (ii) disestablishment of corporate membership; and (iii) enhancement of corporate membership. The latter two would require a change to the constitution, which might be implemented at the 2017 AGM. For the present I recommend that the matter be debated over the coming 12 months.

RSNZ Interaction

NZSA now interacts with RSNZ primarily through the Constituent Organization's Forums. Pete Smith attended the 2015 Forum on behalf of NZSA.

Thanks

My thanks go to everyone on the NZSA Executive Committee. A number of people who deserve a particular mention are as follows. Howard Edwards has again done a superb job as Treasurer. The NZSA accounts are in good order, and the finances from the 2014 and 2015 conferences are complete. Howard has also smoothly managed the increased reporting requirements imposed by the Charities Commission. My next mention is John Haywood, who managed the role of Secretary despite another busy year. Priya Parmar and Sarah

Marshall have done an excellent job in organizing the 2016 NZSA conference. Vanessa Cave and Catherine Lloyd-West have kept the NZSA website ticking over. Alasdair Noble and Mike Camden continue to ensure that the NZSA Education Committee is active and effective. Marie Fitch has energetically taken over the reins as newsletter editor, and produced an excellent newsletter. James Curran has continued to run the Awards Committee with his customary good sense and efficiency. And like last year, my final thanks go to Harold Henderson, who can always be relied upon to offer excellent advice in addition to his work as membership secretary.

Martin Hazelton

21 November 2016

Report on possible mentoring of early career statisticians via the NZSA

Working group: Vanessa Cave, Kylie Maxwell, Peter Smith

Findings: Following discussions and informal consultation, two potential mechanisms were considered: on-line resources vs. nominated mentors. The on-line approach may be best suited to peer-to-peer support.

It is unclear which approach is preferred but perhaps they are complementary rather than conflicting.

Proposal: In the first instance a trial of a traditional mentoring scheme is proposed. This would involve:

- (1) Outlining the scope and purpose of the mentoring scheme.
- (2) Advertising this to members via the NZSA so they are aware of what they may be volunteering for.
- (3) Calling for volunteers to be mentors.
- (4) Establishing a list of mentors with affiliations, locations, etc. (info. useful to help allocate). Held by the organizer.
- (5) Publicising the mentor scheme via NZSA.
- (6) Allocating people to mentors (in the first instance, Peter Smith will do this).

Report to NZSA Executive

Corporate membership

Corporate membership is defined in the constitution of the NZSA and has been there for at least 30 years. Within the constitution the corporate membership can elect one member of the NZSA executive. Presently we have two corporate members, SAS (complimentary from their major sponsorship) and Statistics New Zealand. I am the current corporate rep on NZSA exec and am providing this discussion document on options for the future of corporate membership.

For the past few decades the number of corporate members has fluctuated between 2 and 4 and since 2011 it has been 2. As far as I can see, other than the ability to elect a member to the NZSA executive, corporate members receive no benefits from being a corporate, except perhaps a warm feeling at supporting the work of the NZSA. I also note that to the best of my knowledge the NZSA has never actively sought corporate members.

For the consideration of the NZSA executive I outline three possible options as to the future of corporate membership

1. Retain as present

This is the simplest solution. However it does mean that two members elect one executive member, whereas the 400 or so regular members elect proportionally much less. Also as the NZSA does not actively seek corporate members it seem weird to continue with this.

I do not recommend this option.

2. Get rid of corporate membership

The next simplest solution. All that would be required is a constitutional change. At present having the corporate membership is almost unknown and it seems to be a continuation of long-standing structure rather than anything currently practical or useful. The effects of this change on the NZSA are likely to be minimal as corporate members have no interaction with NZSA over and above what they would have if they were not corporate members. There seems to be no relationship between corporate membership and obtaining sponsorship.

I think this is the most realistic option given the current status of the NZSA. However in my view it would not be good for the long-term goal of making the NZSA the primary professional organisation for all practicing statisticians in New Zealand.

3. Retain corporate membership but expand it

This would be the hardest option but it is the one that is more likely to align with NZSA's goal of "... the encouragement of theoretical and **applied** statistics in New Zealand" (*emphasis mine*). This would require a major review of what benefits we could provide to corporate members and what benefits the NZSA should seek from corporate members. This would require some work liaising with potential corporate members and then the NZSA working to meet some of those expectations.

In my view the analytics organisations are currently much better at interacting with corporates and getting corporate support. The question is, do we want this to remain this way? Personally I would not, but feel that it would be difficult to get a group of people to work on fixing this.