

# Region and Group News *Continued from p. 15*

lack of understanding of the importance of biometrics by students; and few institutions willing to teach experimental design.

## Opportunities

Collaborations between institutions and private companies; opportunity to establish a School of Biometrics in Southern Africa; beyond conventional towards biotechnology methodologies; staff and student exchange programs; employment inside and outside South Africa; can train for the rest of Africa; and stimulate interest in Bioinformatics.

## Threats

Money available for other areas of statistics; salary and training; availability of easy to use software leading to a notion of no need of biometricians; no local demand particularly from the drug industry; retaining staff and qualified students; and economic instability.

The participants empowered the organizers to compile a working document on the teaching of biometrics in South Africa, to be discussed by the respective institutional heads. The workshop ended on a friendly note with each member asked to reflect on the SWOT analysis and to share the results with other members in his or her institution upon return.

*Peter M. Njuho*

## SUSAN Network

### The 7<sup>th</sup> SUSAN Conference in Uganda (December 3 – 6, 2001)

SUSAN (Sub-Saharan African Network) of the International Biometric Society is a network comprised of IBS groups in sub-Saharan Africa. The network exists to promote advancement of the life sciences through the development, application, and dissemination of effective mathematical and statistical methods.

As part of its tradition, the network held its 7<sup>th</sup> biannual conference on December 2-8, 2001 at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. The conference enabled scientists in Africa to share their experiences of applications of biometry through presentations of research findings, to learn new methods, and to interact with other professionals. The theme of the conference was "Biometry for the Development in Life Sciences."

The conference, which was well attended, included papers presented by four keynote

speakers. The topics for these papers were: Assessing Health Risks from Pesticides Residues in Foods—Rob Kempton; Mathematical Modeling of Biological Processes—L. S. Luboobi; Statistical Modeling for Assessing and Monitoring Environmental Compliance—Sagary Nokoe; Training in Biometry: Challenges and Opportunities—Harvey M Dicks.

Mr. Karl Stielau from the University of Cape Town conducted a half-day course on adaptive sampling.

The network recognized the following issues as part of the way forward.

Each IBS group of SUSAN needs to be giving a progress report. There is a need for training workshops to equip biometricians with new developments in the field of biometry in order to face new challenges.

Members should make use of the SUSAN web page to share ideas. Biometrics training resources should be placed on the SUSAN web page to allow ease of access. There is a need to establish a biometrics resource center for sharing of resources and facilities within the network. The policy makers should be invited to future SUSAN conferences as a way of sensitizing them.

Since its formation, SUSAN has continued to grow in numbers and activities. To date, the network has 240 members (South Africa – 45, Zimbabwe – 20, Namibia – 8, Kenya – 44, Uganda – 15, Ethiopia – 18, Nigeria – 86, and Malawi – 4). Three scientists represented Ghana, although it has not formed a group yet. SUSAN members resolved to remain as a network rather than a region for the time being. The IBS Group Namibia will host the 8<sup>th</sup> SUSAN Conference.

SUSAN members elected new office bearers (Coordinator – Peter M. Njuho and Assistant Coordinator – Henry Mwambi). Other members of SUSAN are IBS Group Secretaries. The members recognized the contribution made by Dr. Dapo Odulaja as the first SUSAN Coordinator and wished him well in his new job with the International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna, Austria.

*Peter M. Njuho*

## Spanish Region

The Spanish Region, together with Guadalupe Gómez (Universitat

Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain) and Steve Lagakos (Harvard School of Public Health, USA), is co-organizing a three-day workshop "Research and Training in Failure Time Methods in the New Millennium," which will take place in Barcelona on June 12-14, 2002. The workshop will consist of invited methodological sessions, a round-table on how to train future generations of biostatisticians, a short course on optimization methods for statistics, and a poster session. Confirmed invited speakers include among others: P.K. Andersen, D. Commenges, E. Goetghebeurs, N. Jewell, J. Kalbfleisch, N. Keiding, J. Klein, J. Lawless, S.F. Nielsen, B. Turnbull, L.J. Wei. The total number of participants will be limited. For further information, contact <lupe.gomez@upc.es>.

The Spanish Region is already organizing the IX<sup>th</sup> Spanish Biometric Conference. It will take place in A Coruña on May 28-30, 2003.

The invited sessions are not yet completely defined but will include sessions on environmental sciences, legal and forensic medicine, bioinformatics, fishing resources, and psychometry. For more details see the conference website <<http://www.udc.es/dep/mate/biometria2003>>, or the home page of the Spanish Region: <<http://www.iata.csic.es/ibsresp/>>.

*M. Luz Calle*

## WNAR

The 2002 annual meeting of the Western North American Region of the International Biometric Society will be held June 23 through 26 at the University of California at Los Angeles. The meeting is to be held jointly with the Institute of Mathematical Statistics.

WNAR encourages students to submit their papers for presentation at the annual meeting. Awards are presented to the top three student papers. In addition, all students presenting their research papers can apply for travel funds. Additional information concerning the meeting is available through the WNAR website at <<http://www.wnar.org/>>.

*Marc Evans*