SRAM Recent Publications and Papers

Public Opinion Quarterly is the scholarly journal published by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR). POQ has recently increased its impact factor. To celebrate its success, the journal has granted free access to five of the POQ’s most often-cited articles. Professor Jolene Smyth is the first author of one of those articles. Her article “Open-Ended Questions in Web Surveys. Can Increasing the Size of Answer Boxes and Providing Extra Verbal Instructions Improve Response Quality?”, co-written with Don A. Dillman, Leah Melani Christian and Mallory McBride (Volume 73, Issue 2, Summer 2009), can be found here.

Also included in the five free articles is the article “The Impact of Nonresponse Rates on Nonresponse Bias: A Meta-Analysis” written by Robert M. Groves and SRAM alumni Emilia Peytcheva (2003). That article (Volume 72, Issue 2, Summer 2008) can be found here.

Professor Kristen Olson is co-author (with James Wagner at the University of Michigan) on the paper, “Where do Interviewers go when they do what they do? An analysis of interviewer travel in two field surveys.” The paper was presented at the Joint Statistical Meetings of the American Statistical Association in Miami, FL this past August.

SRAM Faculty Notes

In early October, Professor Jolene Smyth, traveled to the Johnson Foundation at Wingspread in Racine, WI to attend a workshop titled “Coupled Observation of the Water Environment: A National Survey Program.” The workshop brought together an interdisciplinary team of leading natural and social scientists and researchers from around the nation to explore the idea of creating a set of national surveys of households, utilities, environmental organizations and governance organizations to measure attitudes, opinions, and behaviors about the nation’s water resources.

A central requirement of the surveys is that they be designed in such a way that they could be linked to natural science data about water flow rates and water quality so that researchers could examine how human attitudes and behaviors affect the nation’s water supply and also how water issues impact human attitudes and behaviors. The participants were tasked with outlining the feasibility and challenges of such a survey program and the scientific merit and broader impacts it would have.

Professor Kristen Olson is Co-Principal Investigator on a recently obtained grant “Redesign Options for the Consumer Expenditure Survey,” a grant awarded by the National Academy of sciences in the amount of $47,890. Professor Olson presented their report at the National Academy of Sciences October 26-27 in Washington, DC.

Professor Olson recently taught a JPSM short course, “Practical Tools for Nonresponse Bias Studies” in Washington, DC. She was also conference co-chair for the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research (MAPOR) annual conference in Chicago held November 18-19.

Professor Allan McCutcheon recently travelled to Amsterdam, The Netherlands to attend the 64th Annual Conference of the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR). The title of this year’s conference was “Public Opinion and the Internet.” Professor McCutcheon presented the paper (co-written with SRAM PhD student Tarek Albaghal), “The Predictors of Latent Support for Extremist Ideology in Pakistan” in the session Extremism & Xenophobia. The conference itself was a huge success with 174 participants, the largest WAPOR conference in recent memory. Renae Reis was a coordinator of the event.

SRAM Student Information

This year the MAPOR Fellows debuted a second student paper competition category focusing on survey research methodology thanks to generous funding from Paul Lavrakas and Allan McCutcheon. SRAM MS student Brian Wells was presented the award for his paper entitled “Accounting for Nonresponse in the Nebraska Behavioral Health Consumer Survey.” Brian wrote the paper in conjunction with his assistantship at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health last year. His paper illustrated how nonresponse adjustments can potentially improve estimates in their annual consumer survey. Professor Kristen Olson served as his faculty mentor on the paper. “It was a shock and an honor to win this award. I know there were a lot of good student presentations this year, but I am proud to represent the
University of Nebraska, and the SRAM program, with winning the award.” Congratulations to Brian (pictured below).

Brian was just one of several SRAM students who presented papers at the MAPOR conference. The following is a list of the presented papers (presenter is in bold):

- Sensitive Topics: Race, Gender, Mode Effects, and a Link between Nonresponse Bias and Measurement Error
  - Nuttiudee (Fay) Charoenruk

- Comparing Opinions of “Clashing” Civilizations Between Western and Islamic Worlds
  - Lauren A. Walton, Brian M. Wells, Allan L. McCutcheon

- Observed Differences in the Placement and Wording of Neutral Response Options in Web Surveys: An Experiment
  - Lauren A. Walton, Curtiss L. Cobb III and Charles DiSogra (Knowledge Networks)

- Arab Spring: The roots of the popular uprisings
  - Meryem Ay and Tarek Albaghal

- Piggyback Surveys: An Insider’s View of Operations Issues on a Complex Survey Design
  - Mathew Stange, Brad Edwards, and Laura Branden (Westat)

- The Leadership Approval Paradox: Understanding Confidence in Institutions in Oppressive Nations
  - Jenny Marlar

SRAM MS student Matt Hastings was invited to speak on a panel and provide two workshops at the 2011 fall meeting of the National Association of State Directors for Career and Technical Education consortium (NASDCTEC). As part of the talks, Matt discussed using data to drive decisions about CTE programs. The meeting, held in Baltimore, provides members with professional development opportunities and covers timely issues that impact CTE. The objective is to provide members and other advocates with the knowledge and tools to best serve their roles as leaders in the CTE community. You can find out more about the CTE on their website.

SRAM Alumni Information

Ipek Bilgen is one of the most recent SRAM PhD recipients. Ipek received her degree in August. She is pictured (at left) with her advisor Professor Bob Belli. Ipek has recently begun work at NORC in Chicago as a Survey Methodologist. Her work is diverse, doing frame building and sampling for the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health Across the U.S. (REACH U.S.) project, research report/paper regarding recall Error in flu vaccination reports in National Immunization Survey, as well as questionnaire development for the Patient Blood Management section of the National Blood Collection and Utilization survey on behalf of the American Association of Blood Banks.

Information on our December graduates is coming in the next newsletter.

SRAM PhD graduate (2009) Ana Villar was invited to the Translation Expert Task Group Meeting of the European Social Survey 27-28 October 2011, GESIS, Mannheim, Germany.

Staff Note

Renae Reis, Gallup Research Center Coordinator and Executive Coordinator of WAPOR, was recently inducted into Phi Beta Delta, Alpha Phi Chapter, at UNL. Phi Beta Delta is an honor society for international scholars dedicated to recognizing scholarly achievement in international education. Renae has been the coordinator for the SRAM exchange program with the post-graduate program in Quantitative Analysis in the Social Sciences (QASS) at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL) in Leuven, Belgium since it began in the 1999/2000 academic year. As the Executive Coordinator for WAPOR she has many responsibilities including coordination of the membership, managing the WAPOR website, editing the newsletter and planning annual conferences around the world. The most recent was this past fall in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. WAPOR’s upcoming annual conference is June 14-16, 2012 in Hong Kong.

Calendar Notes

January 9: Late registration begins
January 9: Spring 2012 classes begin
January 16: Martin Luther King Day
Student and Staff holiday, UNL offices closed