

Radical Statistics Annual General Meeting

24 February, 2012 St Pancras Church Hall, London

Minutes

Attendance: Robin Rice, Geoffrey Rendle, Alison Macfarlane, Rachel Cohen, Jane Galbraith, Ludi Simpson, Kevin Balanda, David Lamb, Russell Ecob, Alan Marshall, Tony Greenfield, Alex Fenton, Robert Moore, Robert Grant, David Manley, Jeff Evans, Eileen Magnello, Jay Ginn, Al Franco, Larry Brownstein, Janet Shapiro, Lee Williamson, Bob Saunders.

David Manley chairs. Alistair Cairns takes minutes.

1. 2011 AGM minutes accepted.

2. Troika Report: by David Manly [REDACTED] New promotional materials have been developed and are available for distribution. Jay Ginn suggests the green promo card has font that is a bit small. It has been re-done, subj. Geoffrey Rendle thanks the Troika.

AGM minutes will be available on website. They will no longer be printed fully in the journal. Any essential elements can be highlighted in the journal, including an offer of paper copies for anyone without computer access. They will also be available at next AGM for approval.

Eileen Magnello, David Manley and Ludi Simpson will be stepping down from Troika. Two new members have put themselves forward to serve, Alan Franco, and David Lamb. Initially Larry Brownstein was to continue and Rachel Cohen was to serve but later Larry reconsidered and he and Rachel will serve solely as editors.

Ludi & David offer to be consulted should their input or advice be desired. Gender imbalance is noted, but mainly appreciation is noted to incoming volunteers.

David Manley will provide minutes from last couple of years, to assist with transition.

3. Treasurers Report: by Janet Shapiro (report attached). A gain in income is reported. Geoffrey Rendle audited and approved the report. There was an overpayment from one member, who has to be repaid, but the books are still in positive for 2011, as indicated.

Geoffrey Rendle will become third signatory on the account to expedite bill-paying. Jeff Evans will audit books next year(s).

4. Editors Report: by Janet Shapiro. (report attached). Since 2004, Janet has been an editor and intends to stand down. She is warmly thanked. Jay Ginn requests information on timeframe for gathering (2012) conference speakers articles for a journal. Further, if conference talks were broken into the two areas – health and wealth – that could handily provide two journal issues.

Alison Macfarlane raises discussion on pros and cons of academic and peer review process. Rachel Cohen suggests there could be a group of area experts which could be relied on to preserve rigor, rather than strict peer review. Approved.

Rachel Cohen is nominated and accepted. Larry Brownstein & Alastair Greig will continue.

Rachel Cohen to solicit members with areas of expertise.

Jay Ginn to contact speakers, in consultation with the Editors, to solicit papers from conference talks.

The journal could benefit from a book review section. Alistair Cairns to post to Announce list. Larry Brownstein offers to review books in the meantime.

5. Web Editor Report: by Robin Rice (report attached).

Website remains fairly static, but the visibility is probably higher due the blog posts and social media presence, both of which are new areas for RadStats.

A new website should be simpler and improved. Robin is thanked.

Robin Rice to lead with assistance from Larry Brownstein & Alastair Greig.

6. Email list report: by Alison Macfarlane. 424 subscribers are on the open list. Lively discussions continue. Anyone can explore and contribute.

Israel and Palestine statistics discussion was a problematic issue, but mainly satisfactory over the year. Alison is thanked.

7. Membership Report: by Alistair Cairns (report attached). There have been an encouraging number of new members in 2010. Alistair thanked.

8. 2013 Conference. John Bibby has offered to lead hosting the 2013 Conference & AGM. He has ideas on a theme, based on inequality. Venue to be confirmed but location will be York. Approved.

Discussion on Friday versus Saturday event takes place. There are fairly even opinions on both, for the obvious reasons.

JB to communicate with Troika and anyone with opinions.

Decision is to try alternative between, with London being on a Friday and other years having a Saturday conference and AGM.

2012 organisers thanked, Jay particularly.

8. Subgroup activity Report: by Ludi Simpson. There is a working subgroup: 'Population Group'. It is fairly inactive at the moment, but contact Ludi if you are interested in rejuvenating.

9. Essay Competition: by Lee Williamson and Alan Marshall. (report attached) Lee Williamson points out there is a considerable amount of work and both are reluctant to continue.

Collaboration with other organisations could be considered. John Bibby to approach GetStats. Lee suggests consideration should be given to providing funds for some of the more burdensome work, such as publicity. Lee willing to consider continuing if assistance can be provided (on a paid basis), Alan will step down. Lee & Alan thanked.

12. AOB.

Meeting adjourned.

Radical Statistics Group Accounts 2010-2011
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
for the year ending 31 December 2011

	2011	2010	2009	2008
GENERAL INCOME				
subscriptions	£4,812.00	£4,212.00	£4,315.00	£2,989.00
Conference Fees	£1,350.00	£3,134.03	£815.00	£458.00
Conference takings 2012	£50.00			
Publications				£81.50
library subs	£275.00	£110.00	£435.00	£295.00
donation*		£15.00	£94.00	£375.00
				£4,819.36
other				
subtotal	£6,487.00	£7,471.03	£5,659.00	£9,017.86
Interest deposit account (56)	£3.33	£6.85		
Interest Deposit account	£4.55	£3.33		
TOTAL INTEREST RECEIVED	£7.88	£10.18	£12.65	£76.39
TOTAL INCOME	£6,494.88	£7,481.21	£5,671.65	£9,094.25
EXPENDITURE				
Conference costs	£297.68	£878.89	£122.65	£100.00
Radstats Newsletter	£2,484.50	£2,663.37	£2,167.47	£3,057.62
Administrative costs	£1,149.12	£849.21	£810.00	£793.35
Administrative expenses	£285.42			
Miscellaneous	£102.35	£30.00	£309.29	
Central publications				
Bank charges	£31.98	£83.86	£17.14	£24.83
Other (leaflet)		£55.00	£100.00	£99.70
Essay	£100.00			£1,021.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£4,451.05	£4,560.33	£3,526.55	£5,096.50
NET INCOME	£2,043.83	£2,920.88	£2,145.10	£3,997.75
NET WORTH				
As at 31st December 2011				
	2011	2010	2009	2008
BANK BALANCES				
Current Account	£9,260.65	£7,224.70	£4,314.00	£2,181.55
14 Day Deposit	£3,558.64	£3,555.31	£3,551.98	£3,543.61
14 Day Deposit (Health)	£4,860.04	£4,855.49	£4,848.64	£4,844.36
TOTAL	£17,679.33	£15,635.50	£12,714.62	£10,569.52
INCREASE IN NET WORTH				
bank balances at 1st Jan 2011	£15,635.50	£12,714.62	£10,569.52	£6,571.77
bank balances at 31st Dec 2011	£17,679.33	£15,635.50	£12,714.62	£10,569.52
Net Income for Year	£2,043.83	£2,920.88	£2,145.10	£3,997.75

Treasurer's Comments

In general the accounts are healthy with some provisos.

In 2011, a decision of the Troika of the Radical Statistics Group was made to recognise our obligation to make proper payment to the administrator. Subsequently the hourly rate has been raised from £10 to £14.64. As Treasurer I wish to thank Alistair for the work he is doing for the group; his claims are always clearly laid out and make my work easier.

Note that part of administrative claims is for expenses such as postage, that is becoming more costly. For this reason administrative expenses and labour costs are listed separately in this year's accounts.

From this year's net income we must deduct £450; this was an over-payment in subscriptions, an error made by a member's own bank. Our net gain would appear as £1593.83 if that payment had gone through more quickly. It would also indicate that subscriptions appear to remain approximately constant. This £450 repayment will appear in the account for 2012.

Our intention is to publish three newsletters each year, but the average produced is lower than three. The cost of producing and distributing the newsletter is the largest cost as the conference & AGM sometimes makes a net gain. In 2011, the accounts met the costs of more than two newsletters. This indicates that after four years of positive net gain, we can afford to step up the number of publications and or consider funding other mid-year events.

Also the deposit accounts together stand at £8,410.80. I propose that the AGM consider whether this money could be used to fund the publication of a booklet or some other useful project.

The account we have at present incurs bank charges. I was assured by telephone that another account will be set up for us that incurs no charges and allows internet banking. When the new account is in place a further signatory will be arranged to give us three, two being needed to sign a payment, to satisfy the decision of the 2011 AGM.

Janet Shapiro
February 9th 2012

Radstats Web and Social Media Report (Feb 2012)

Robin Rice, Web Editor

As the title of the report shows, it's been a strong year on the social media front, which may have helped to attract several new conference-goers and members for 2012 (along with the strong programme and more traditional dissemination methods such as listservs and word of mouth).

Website

Main stats for the period 14 Feb 2011 – 14 Feb 2012:

Server Activity Totals

Total Sessions Served	202,702
Total Hits	726,003
Total Page Hits	271,607
Total Non Page Hits (e.g. PDFs)	454,396
Total Transferred	43.15 GB

These numbers are a little down from the previous year. One reason may be fewer new journal issues to attract attention to the site within the period. (Issue 105, the second issue of 2011, is still to be put on the site.)

Blog

Twenty one posts were written since the last conference. No new bloggers were added to the account and new blog categories were added. There are now 36 followers of the blog. Ludi Simpson and the Web Editor are the only two current blog posters. (The Web Editor usually posts organisational news.) New bloggers are needed, please contact the Web Editor if you can help.



Views of the blog surpassed 1,000 for the month of February 2011, with the 'scoop' by Simon Tanner, posted by Ludi Simpson on the day of the 2011 Radstats conference under the Reduced Statistics category, of the 'Details revealed: UK government social research and statistics cuts' post, which attracted Guardian readers as well.

Facebook

As last year's report explains, the social media accounts (Facebook & Twitter) were set up in January 2011. The number of 'lifetime' likes received have been 125. 64% of those who liked Radstats over recent months are male and 35% female. One third of these are in the 25-34 age range, according to their Facebook profiles. The number of likes and comments on our Facebook posts over the past year is 68. The number of views of Radstats' 88 posts over the past year thanks to the 'viral' nature of FB is 30,764! (For example, if a friend of Radstats 'likes' a post, it shows up on their wall and all of their friends see it.) Alastair Greig has kept up the Facebook presence singlehandedly (the Radstats administrator also has access to the account).

Twitter

There have been 265 tweets or 'retweets' from the @radicalstats twitter account since the start. As of 22nd February we have 397 international followers, including organisations, and seem to get more with every tweet. We are 'following' 68 others who have similar interests. The tweet stream is fed into the blog page through a 'widget', as are the latest posts to the public email account. Robin Rice maintains the twitter account, and Alastair Greig also has access. A second person to help keep up with the twitter account, perhaps from the troika, would be welcome.

Website migration

A shortcut to the migration plan explained last year has been found, now that Fasthosts offers Wordpress hosting. We do not need to move to a new host, we can simply set up the Wordpress software within our current account under a sub-directory, then move files and make the switch once all is set up. So no additional funding is required, nor a domain name switch. This should be completed by summertime. The older blog posts will remain on the radstats.wordpress.com domain as artefacts, but a link will be given to the new website, which will contain both the blog and the web pages. A look and feel quite similar to the current blog is expected to be used. This will not entail any extra costs from a designer as it is a default theme.

Membership Report for 2011 AGM

Alistair Cairns, Administrator

As of February 2012, membership within Radical Statistics consists of:

	2012	2011	2010
Unwaged			*
Low waged/Student	42	32	30
Standard	187	180	187
Institutional	28	26	25
Overseas	6	6	7
Gratis **	7	7	8
Total	270	251	257

** Following 2009 AGM, unwaged category was combined with low/student.*

*** Five copies are sent to the Legal Deposits Libraries and two to the cover's graphic artist.*

Editors, authors & essay competition winners each receive two copies (one additional if already members).

37 new members joined in 2011.

27 " 2010.

14 " 2009.

Short report on Essay Competition

Alan Marshall and Lee Williamson

22nd February 2012

Summary

The essay competition was a success. There were 13 entries (all within the student category). The judges felt that the winning essay was of excellent quality and the second prize essay was also considered a strong piece of work. A further five entrants were deemed to have written good essays and as a result were awarded a year's subscription to Radical Statistics.

Nick Wattie won first prize of a £60 book token for his essay on the relative age effects on school achievement. Chi-lin Tsai was awarded the second prize of a £40 book token for her essay on whether the trade unions and the Labour Party would benefit from an amicable divorce. Both essays will appear in Radical Statistics journal subject to corrections being made.

Strategy

We advertised the competition through an email list comprising appropriate personal contacts. The email lists of agencies such as the British Society of Population Studies and the Royal Geographical Society Population Geography Research Group were also used. These strategies proved most fruitful in terms of entries received. We also distributed posters to appropriate university departments and at conferences.

Another strategy involved using the UCAS website to search for appropriate course names and then looking at the university website for relevant modules and cold emailing these tutors. This plan was abandoned due to the fact it was very time consuming and most of the people/departments who teach social statistics were more or less covered by Alan and Lee's personal contacts and email lists.

We selected a short list of essays which were passed to the judges

The judges included Clare Boag (National Records of Scotland (NRS) (previously General Register Office for Scotland (GROS)) Dr Paul Norman (lecturer in geography) and Professor Jay Ginn. All came to decide on the winners and the order independently. We thank the judges for their time and expertise in judging the competition.

Issues/challenges

The quality was variable. Whilst the winning, second prize and five of the other essays were good or excellent and addressed the challenge set in the competition the remainder were not suitable to RadStats and the competition aims. Lee comments, that the quality of essays was similar to previous years.

There are a number of similar competitions which seem to be better known than the RadStats Essay Competition. While effort went into trying to broaden the entrant base, the entries received were largely from institutions with connections/contacts with the competition organisers.

The open competition received no entries

We had intended to target schools but abandoned this because of time constraints.

Recommendations

In order to attract entries to the open competition, Alan recommends changing the rules to allow entrants to adapt published journal articles into a shorter punchy essay form. Alan would also allow entries based on journal articles that originally involved more than one author. Organisers could contact potential entrants directly on reading suitable papers and encourage them to enter the competition.

Lee notes the need to attract non-academics but wonders how to reach such an audience and encourage them to write something?

At the AGM last year there was a comment that the prize money was quite low. We would not recommend increasing the prize money. We feel the prizes of £60 and £40 are reasonable given the essay aims. We note that the number and quality of entries this year were similar to previous years despite higher sums of prize money on offer in previous years.

We found personal contacts to be most successful in terms of generating entrants. We would recommend such an approach in future years.

One of the judges recommended that in future all essays should be converted to Word or rtf to ensure judges can read them online.

Lee wonders whether it might be worthwhile to pay someone (possibly 1 PhD student) for up to 10 days (spread over a few months) to do the marketing (emailing and posting out leaflets) and to advertise in other publications/newsletters.