



# American College of Epidemiology

Summer Newsletter

June 2009

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## Calendar of Events

SER Annual Meeting  
June 23-26  
Anaheim, CA

ACE Annual Meeting  
September 12-15  
Silver Spring, Maryland  
[Details](#)

## 2009 ELECTION RESULTS

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### President

Faith Davis

### Board Member

Christine Arcari

### Fellow Board Member

Christine Branche  
Donna Arnett  
Allen Wilcox

## Fellows Corner

Newly Appointed  
Fellows - Summer '09

## President's Letter

**Roberta Ness**



As spring turns to summer, the College has reached many of the goals it set out for this year. In my first newsletter to you, I promised several foci relating to policy and all of these have been achieved. The College sponsored an important Policy workshop on best practices for moving evidence into policy. The project brought together experts from government, academia, industry, and advocacy to discuss case studies from which lessons can be learned and principles obtained. Cases included such things as tobacco policy and veterans health and compensation. The output of this meeting will be published in the *Annals of Epidemiology* and highlighted at the September ACE Annual Meeting.

The College signed on to a [letter](#) to the new Secretary for HHS, Kathleen Sebelius in support of a recent Institute of Medicine report on the impact of the HIPAA Privacy Rule on research. A link to the letter is provided for anyone who wants to send it individually to support the report. The more letters the better.

Planning for the annual meeting is almost complete (see the [news item](#) from Diana Bensyl). It will be an enormously exciting program entitled, "Novel Methods at the Intersection of Epidemiology and Policy-Making." True to its name, the meeting will feature controversial topics in science policy, as well as useful information on novel methods that can be used to impact policy. Harnessing a lot of star power with keynote speakers such as: **Jim Marks** from Robert Wood Johnson; **David Michaels**, author of the bestselling book: *Doubt is their Product*; **Joel Schwartz** from Harvard, **Larry Altman** from the New York Times; **Joseph Rodricks** from Environ Corporation; and a roundtable attended by one democratic and one republican science advisor, this meeting, set in the nation's capitol, should be hugely educational and great fun. I sure hope you'll join us!

Most of the work within the College happens within committees and this year, the committees remain, as always, very active. The

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Michele Forman  
Camara Jones  
Jean Lawrence  
Melissa Perry  
Debra Schaumberg  
Patrick Tarwater  
Mary White

Communications Committee is planning website updates. Admissions has expedited its processes. Membership is engaged in several activities to enlarge membership such as the Member-get-a-Member campaign. Minority Affairs is putting together yet another dynamite workshop for this September. The list goes on. I thank all of the Committee Chairs and their wonderful members for the hard work they do each year on behalf of the College. I also thank a terrific Board for their unending commitment and their willingness to sometimes make tough choices so that the College can remain sound and effective.

The year has gone very quickly. With the end of my presidency only a few months away, I leave you with my most important adieu: "See you in September."

## Top Stories

### ACE Annual Meeting

#### Diana Bensyl, 2009 Program Chair

An exciting meeting is planned for the 27th Annual Meeting at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Washington DC-Silver Spring in Silver Spring, Maryland, September 12-15, 2009. The meeting theme, "Novel Methods at the Intersection of Epidemiology and Policy-Making" will focus on discussing insightful ways epidemiologic research is influencing public policy nationally and internationally and how these approaches have potential to inform public policy decision. The meeting will also include how innovative approaches to epidemiology may provide more powerful tools to impact policy.



The prelude to the meeting begins with the Minority Affairs Committee (MAC) workshop on Saturday, September 12 (see separate article). There are four additional continuing educational workshops offered on Sunday, September 13. These include "Epidemiology and Risk Assessment," with a focus on the use of epidemiology in the risk assessment process and how limitations and uncertainties are addressed; "Meta-Analysis;" a free NIH workshop on "Grant Review;" and a free workshop for Students: "Straight from the Horses' Mouths: Mentors, Mentees, and Recruiters Tell All about Careers for Epidemiologists in Government, Industry, Academia, and Consulting." Non-students can attend this last workshop for only \$50!

George Washington University, our host, has planned a host reception on Sunday evening. The event is sponsored by the School of Public Health and Health Services. This reception provides a chance to meet and greet other ACE Members and Associate Members, and to learn more about GWU. Alan Greenberg, Chair, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, will give a few

comments to start the event. At the end of the evening, all interested Associate Members will meet for a chance to get to know each other.

The official Opening and Welcome will be Monday morning and led by Josef Reum, Interim Dean, Associate Dean for Administration and Finance at GWU, and Diana Bensyl, the ACE 2009 Program Chair. The Opening Forum, which follows next, begins with an inspiring presentation and call to action from James Marks from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This presentation is followed by David Michaels from GWU who will introduce us to his recent book, *Doubt is Their Product: How Industry's Assault on Science Threatens Your Health*. Joel Schwartz from Harvard University and Larry Altman from the New York Times will round out the second half of the opening session.

For the ACE roundtable luncheons, we have taken advantage of having our meeting in the nation's capitol and included a roundtable on "The Role of Epidemiology in Legislative Activity." Alternatively, attendees may choose to participate at other roundtables including one on "International Health Policy - the Pan American Health Organization Experience," and another on "Theory Meets Practice - Practice-Based Research Networks (PBRNs) and Opportunities for Epidemiologists." Epidemiology Department Chairs will have their own luncheon meeting that includes a seminar on "Navigating Administrative Troubled Waters – Strategies for managing departments in difficult financial times."

The afternoon session will begin with a presentation by Joseph Rodricks, Environ Corporation and Thomas Burke, Johns Hopkins University, on "Epidemiology and Decisions Regarding Public Health Risks of Environmental Origin--Where Are We Headed and What Are the Impediments?" This will be followed by an expert panel moderated by Mark Schiffman and Deborah Winn from NIH to discuss how epidemiology has influenced policy surrounding the Human Papilloma Virus vaccine.

Monday evening will conclude with the ACE Poster Session and the Epidemiology Chairs Reception in the Lincoln Ballroom. Weather permitting, food, drinks and seating will be set up on a secluded patio off the Lincoln Ballroom. Come see the posters and enjoy the reception!

For those making it to the breakfast roundtables on Tuesday, September 15, ACE will set up tables for informal discussions on a range of topics such as novel sampling methods, defining "minority", collaborating with HMO-based researchers, job interview skills, and the Clinical and Translational Science Award Program.

Roundtables will be followed by the ACE Presidential Address given by Roberta Ness, Dean, M. David Low Chair in Public Health, The University of Texas School of Public Health, and the student prize paper presentation. The first plenary will focus on recent issues regarding policy and epidemiology surrounding the Veteran's Administration. David Goldsmith will begin this session with a talk on the "common" use of epidemiology evidence in causation assessment. This will be followed by Michael Stoto, Georgetown University, who will present: "Did military service cause my illness? New approaches to assessing causality for veterans' compensation policy." Finally, Lynn Goldman will discuss the determinations of disability for Gulf War veterans.

The final educational session will be the "Translation of Epidemiology to Policy: Report from the ACE Workshop," led by Jon Samet.

The meeting will end Tuesday afternoon, with the Awards Banquet. Awards will be given including the 2009 Lilienfeld Award, the Rothman Epidemiology Prize, the Epidemiology Student Prize, and the Annals of Epidemiology Prize Paper. In addition, ACE will give special recognition to Dr. James Harlan Steele for his life time achievement in epidemiology.

The ACE meeting includes a wide range of topics of interest to epidemiologists and is open to anyone interested in epidemiology. We hope to see you at the 2009 ACE Annual Meeting!

## Annual Meeting Workshop: Mentors/Mentees Talk about Choosing Career Paths

**John Acquavella**



Career opportunities in epidemiology have never been more varied. At the same time, the economic downturn has cast a pall over what was a booming job market. This may predispose soon-to-be-graduates or early career epidemiologists to consider a wider range of career paths than they would have otherwise. For this purpose, a free educational workshop will be offered at the Annual Meeting. While this workshop is intended primarily for students and early career epidemiologists, it may also be of interest for epidemiologists who have thought of switching career paths.

Sponsored by ACE's Mentoring Committee and endorsed by the SER-Student Caucus, this workshop will offer a unique opportunity to hear from leading epidemiologists (mentors) in the government, industry, academic and consulting sectors, as well as from early career epidemiologists (mentees) who have chosen those sectors. Attendees will also hear from recruiters to gain the employer perspective.

The workshop will be fast-moving with no long-winded speeches and lots of time for Q&A (both during and after the workshop). Further, the participating mentors, mentees, and recruiters were chosen based on their high likelihood of being brutally frank about the pros and cons of their employment sector. This workshop represents an evolution of previous workshops that were offered at various epidemiology society meetings to include the perspectives of mentees and recruiters. Watch the ACE website for more information.

# From the Board of Directors

## The Treasurer's Report

**Jim Collins**

In a typical year, the College brings in about \$300,000 and spends about \$250,000. Our major sources of revenue are membership dues (48%), annual meeting and workshops (37%), journal royalties (8%), and our investments (7%). Our major expenses are the annual meeting and the workshops (40%), supporting services (30%) and the journal (30%).



We have been able to increase the assets of the College each year since 2000 with the exception of 2005, the year of the cancelled meeting, and last year, 2008 (see figure). The year 2008 was a tough year for the College financially, as it was for the economy, in general. In 2008, we experienced a \$70,000 decrease in assets. The reasons for the reduction in 2008 were a combined decrease in revenue from our annual meeting, membership, and a reduction in the value of our stock holdings. Although it is early, the year 2009 is showing a slight increase in revenue over last year with no increase in expenses.

[\[more\]](#)

Figure 1. College Year-end Assets.



Membership revenue has remained fairly constant over the years ranging from between \$100,000 and \$140,000 thousand dollars. Although last year we saw revenue drop slightly in this category, 2009 is trending slightly higher than 2008. We have tried to keep dues relatively constant to help our members.

The Finance Committee has been deciding how best to invest our liquid assets and proposed guidelines that were approved by the Board. We keep about a quarter of our assets in a money market used for paying bills; for long term investments, we have about half of our liquid assets in short-term high rated bonds and a quarter in equities. The equities are large capital companies recommended to us by a financial planner. During the recent stock market downturn, we lost about 30% in our stock values. These have recovered slightly in recent weeks.

The sound financial position of the College has allowed us to keep dues low while offering more services to our members.

## Associate Member Report

**Jan Eberth, Associate Director**

A host of events and activities, designed with Associate Members in mind, have been planned for this year's Annual Meeting, including:

- Sunday afternoon workshop entitled, "Straight from the Horses' Mouths: Mentors, Mentees, and Recruiters Tell All about Careers for Epidemiologists in Government, Industry, Academia, and Consulting." Sunday night Associate Member Gathering at Red Rock Canyon Grill - Get some eats and drinks, meet your colleagues, and make new friends! Tuesday morning roundtable entitled, "Preparing for Interviews and Job Talks"

We hope to see many of you at the Annual Meeting and these events in particular. The preliminary agenda is available for viewing now on ACE's website.

ACE is also gearing up its recruitment efforts through multiple venues such as the ACE website and the popular social networking site, Facebook. Log on and join our new Facebook group today! To provide suggestions or request more information, please email [Jan.M.Eberth@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Jan.M.Eberth@uth.tmc.edu).

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## Committees

### Unlocking the Mysteries of the Nomination Process

**John Acquavella, Nominating Committee Chair**

It was election time for ACE. Hopefully, many of you voted for your favorites from among the outstanding slate of candidates for President and for the Board of Directors. Thanks to Martha Linet, Diana Bensyl, Vic Schoenbach, Robert McKeown for working tirelessly with me to select this year's nominees.

Your annual invitation to vote marks the culmination of a long process to select candidates to lead the College. The process is dictated by the by-laws with the intention of rotating the leadership widely among College fellows and members. The ACE by-laws direct that a Nominating Committee shall be appointed annually under the leadership of the "past past" president of ACE. The significance of this directive is that nominations are put in the hands of a former College leader who is no longer a member of the Board of Directors. The by-laws further dictate that committee members must be chosen from among fellows or members who are not on the Board of Directors. The intent was to ensure diversity among nominees in race, sex, career path, geography, and specialty. Each elected leader, in turn, would use his/her unique perspective to support the mission of the College and serve the membership.

There is no doubt that the nominations process has met the intentions of the founders. The ACE leadership has been diverse demographically, geographically, and in terms of career orientation. This has enabled the College to serve the interests of all its members.

## Minority Affairs Committee

### Jorge Ibarra, MAC Chair



The Minority Affairs Committee (MAC) invites all College members, colleagues, advocates, and friends to attend the MAC Workshop to be held on Saturday, September 12 in conjunction with the College's Annual Meeting. The goal of the workshop is to inform participants about the causes of the under-representation of racial and ethnic minorities in the

epidemiologic profession, and to discuss ways to reduce this inequity, particularly in the field of health disparities research. Specifically we will explore themes related to:

- The social context that hinders the entrance of members of racial/ethnic minorities into higher education in science and health related professions.
- Barriers to advancement of racial/ethnic minority epidemiologists in the profession.
- Examples of practices and achievements that attract minorities into the epidemiology profession
- Obstacles and solutions to increasing diversity in the epidemiology profession.
- Recommending next steps within the Epidemiology profession and among policy makers

To explore these important topics, the MAC Workshop Planning Group has invited Richard Riegelman from George Washington University, Douglas Hamilton from the CDC - IES, Camara Jones from the CDC - NCCDPHP, Ana Diez-Roux from the University of Michigan, and Jessie Satia from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, as speakers. Bill Jenkins from Morehouse College will be our Luncheon Key Note Speaker.

As we do each year, following the MAC Workshop, all ACE members are welcome to attend our Annual Face-to-Face meeting, where we'll set up the activities for the year 2010. Immediately after the Workshop, the MAC and the Associate Director, Jan Eberth, invite all meeting participants and friends to join us for a reception at 6:00 PM, which will mark the start of the ACE Job Fair. Come learn what's there in the job market for epidemiologist in industry, academic institutions, government, and NGO's!

## Commentary

Please begin making your travel plans to meet your ACE friends at the Annual Meeting! For the special \$159 ACE room rate please call the hotel directly at (301) 589-0800 and mention the ACE conference.

Carol Burns, Editors

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