Committee Membership

The Committee on Applied Demography (CAD) represents the interests of applied demographers to the PAA Board of Directors. The committee has four members, each serving four-year terms. Traditionally, two members have represented the business demography community and two have represented the state and local demography community. Current members (and their terms) include:

- Lou Pol, University of Nebraska-Omaha, 2001-2004.
- Martha McMurray, Minnesota State Demographic Center, 2002-2005.

Stan Smith’s term will end on December 31, 2003 and Lou Pol will become the chair for 2004. The CAD will be happy to provide the PAA President with suggestions regarding potential candidates to join the committee for 2004-2007.

Applied Demographers in the PAA

Applied demography is the subfield of demography that focuses on practical applications of demographic methods and materials for decision-making purposes. Its practitioners come from a variety of academic disciplines and professional backgrounds and are employed primarily by government agencies, universities, businesses, and non-profit organizations. Their work often includes data collection, demographic analysis, the interpretation and communication of demographic trends, strategic planning, and the development and evaluation of population estimates and projections.

There are several ways to measure the number of applied demographers in the PAA. One is based on the field of specialization listed on PAA records, one is based on the number of subscribers to the *Applied Demography* newsletter, and one is based on the number of PAA members who work in a non-academic setting. None of these measures is perfect, but they all give some indication of the presence of applied demographers in the PAA. As of December 31, 2002, the numbers were as follows:
Primary field of specialization:
   51 – Business demography
   68 – Data collection and processing
   106 – Estimates and projections
   43 – State and local demography

268 (9.3% of PAA’s total membership of 2896)

If we include people who listed one of these fields as the second area of specialization (but listed a non-applied field as the primary area), the number rises to 419 (14.5% of PAA membership). If we include people who listed one of these fields as the third area of specialization, the number rises to 571 (19.7%).

Subscribers to *Applied Demography* newsletter:
   377 (13.0% of PAA membership)

Major employment:
   1187 – Non-academic (41.0% of PAA membership)

   As noted by Gordon De Jong in the Spring, 2003 issue of *PAA Affairs*, 11.6% of PAA members are employed in nonprofit organizations, 14.3% in government agencies, 6.4% in international organizations, 4.5% in business and industry, and 4.2% in private consulting and other positions. Of course, since not everyone with non-academic employment is an applied demographer, the last measure (41.0%) overstates the number of applied demographers in the PAA. The first measure (9.3%) understates that number because it covers only the primary field of specialization and excludes fields in which some practitioners are applied demographers (e.g., ethnicity/race, residential mobility, urbanization/human ecology).

   We believe the most reasonable estimates are those based on newsletter subscriptions and the number of people listing an applied field as a primary or secondary area of specialization. These numbers imply that there are approximately 400 applied demographers in the PAA, or about one of every seven members of the association.

   It might also be noted that a substantial number of applied demographers have never joined the PAA or have allowed their memberships to lapse from time to time. Over the last several years, more than 700 people have signed up for the applied demography list server maintained by Shelley Lapkoff. This group is considerably larger than the number of applied demographers in the PAA and represents a potential source of new members.

   Subscriptions to the *Applied Demography* newsletter ($5 per year) generate revenues that go into a reserve fund. As of December 31, 2002, the balance in the fund was $12,242.
Recent Activities

The CAD has planned three major activities for the 2003 PAA meeting:

1) Annual business meeting (4-6 PM, Wednesday, April 30). We will discuss the applied demography sessions scheduled for this year’s PAA meeting, ideas for sessions at next year’s meeting (including organizers, presenters, chairs, and discussants), ways to make the PAA and CAD more useful to applied demographers, and a variety of other topics. This meeting is open to all interested persons.

2) Wine and cheese reception (6:30-8:00 PM, Thursday, May 1). This reception is sponsored by the Annie Casey Foundation and the Population Reference Bureau and will feature a panel discussing “Careers in Applied Demography.” Panelists include Shelley Lapkoff (Lapkoff and Gobalet Demographic Research), Peter Morrison (Peter Morrison), Martha McMurray (Minnesota State Demographic Center), Bill O’Hare (Annie Casey Foundation), and Signe Wetrogan (U.S. Census Bureau). The reception and panel serve several important purposes for the PAA membership as a whole: They enable graduate students and recent graduates to learn more about non-academic job opportunities and they facilitate informal networking and the exchange of ideas among current and would-be applied demographers.

3) Annual breakfast meeting (7:00-8:20 AM, Friday, May 2). Jay Siegel will be the featured speaker. This breakfast is open to everyone but requires the advance purchase of a ticket ($20).

At last year’s business meeting, the CAD developed a carefully formulated list of potential sessions for the 2003 PAA meeting:

- Communicating Demographic Results to Decision-Oriented Audiences.
- Estimating and Projecting Characteristics other than Age, Sex, and Race.
- Applying GIS and Other Information Technologies to Demographic Issues.
- Applications and Evaluations of the American Community Survey.
- How Demography Affects Decision Making.
- Dealing with Changing Racial Definitions.
- Confidentiality, Privacy, and the Availability of Data.

Several of these sessions were included in the 2003 meeting program. The CAD will submit a similar list to the 2004 program chair and is currently considering several other ideas for making the CAD (and the PAA) more useful to applied demographers. One is to conduct a survey of applied demographers to determine their training, professional interests, job activities, etc. We believe this information will be helpful for developing sessions and planning activities at the annual meeting. Another is to develop a CAD website, which will improve the flow of information among applied demographers nationally (and internationally).
Issues for the PAA Board

The CAD appreciates and applauds the Board’s efforts to reach out to the applied demography community by sending PAA representatives to the annual CAD business meeting and breakfast, nominating several applied demographers as candidates for PAA offices, appointing an applied demographer to the editorial board of *Demography*, and approving payment for several expenses related to the 2003 annual meeting. We believe these efforts will be beneficial to applied demographers and to the PAA as a whole. The CAD will continue to encourage applied demographers to join the PAA and to attend the annual meeting.

The CAD has two suggestions we would like the Board to consider:

1) Develop an “applied demography” track within the program at the annual PAA meeting. That is, have at least one session focusing on applied demography in each time slot on the program (and designate those sessions as belonging to the applied demography track). This would not necessarily require more applied demography sessions than usual; this year, for example, the goal could be achieved with just one or two additional sessions. Since there are typically 15-16 sessions per time slot, the number of applied demography sessions as a proportion of total sessions would still be relatively low compared to the number of applied demographers as a proportion of PAA members.

Developing an applied demography track would require a bit of coordination in setting up the program to ensure that enough applied demography sessions were included and that they were spread out rather than bunched up within a few time slots (this year’s program has relatively little bunching up). We believe this could be accomplished fairly easily. Each year, the CAD sends a carefully formulated list of sessions and potential organizers to the program chair. This could serve as a starting point for an applied demography track. Sessions suggested by other PAA members are also potential candidates for this track (there are several sessions on this year’s program that were not suggested by the CAD but would fit very well in an applied demography track). We suggest that the PAA program chair send a list of all potential PAA sessions to the chair of the CAD. The CAD chair could then identify sessions related to applied demography and confer with the program chair regarding which to include and how to place them in sequential time slots.

Establishing a clearly identified applied demography track is our recommended “low-cost” strategy for attracting more applied demographers as paid registrants to PAA meetings. In Boston, especially, it could well attract a meaningful number of additional registrants from the academic and business communities. The CAD would advertise the track in the *Applied Demography* newsletter and promote those sessions and other CAD activities through a variety of email lists. Applied demography sessions are almost always well attended (even on Saturday mornings) and there is a good chance that
developing an applied demography track would strengthen attendance at all future PAA meetings.

We request that the Board establish an applied demography track on a trial basis for next year’s PAA meeting. If it proves to be successful, the Board could decide whether to implement such a track on a permanent basis for future meetings.

2) Encourage submissions to *Demography* on topics related to applied demography. We believe that high-quality papers on applied topics are being written and that authors would be more inclined to submit them to *Demography* if they thought their papers would be reviewed and judged as applied demographic contributions. We believe that having more articles on applied topics would broaden the journal’s appeal (and subscriber base as well) without altering its primarily academic focus. Perhaps a section on “Applications and Case Studies,” similar to that found in *The Journal of the American Statistical Association*, could be added to occasional issues of the journal.

Accordingly, we request that the Board encourage current and future editors of *Demography* to give increased—and explicit—emphasis to maintaining a regular flow of articles on applied topics (including case studies) and to make that emphasis known to potential contributors. We also ask the Board to consider the idea of having at least one applied demographer on the editorial board of *Demography* at all times.

The CAD thanks the Board for considering these requests and for its attention to the interests of applied demographers in the PAA.

* We thank Stephanie Dudley for her prompt and courteous assistance in compiling some of the data summarized in this report.