

PSA's Mission and Vision (Strategic Planning: An Imperative)

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1. PSA'S MISSION AND VISION

In 1952, a handful of statisticians, academicians, business leaders and bankers organized the Philippine Statistical Association (PSA) which will be 45 years come 1997. It is now imperative that PSA adopt some elements of "Strategic Planning" to guide its future directions for the benefit of its members that have increased to 763 by end of June 1996 and distributed/located in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. What is the future role of the Statistical Profession? How will PSA improve "Statistical Literacy" in the academe, government, business sector, disciplines and associations, media and others? What will be its relation to the International Statistical Community? This is PSA's **mission** that will enhance its **vision of "Statisticians in Action."** There is therefore a need for "Strategic Planning" for a more effective planning, efficient implementation and as a valuable tool for determining future PSA's programs and projects.

2. THE STATISTICAL PROFESSION

The Statistician is a unique and versatile profession. New directions and initiatives must be developed by PSA to elevate the identity, visibility, prestige and importance of the profession. PSA as the cream of the profession enjoys a unique position in its development in a holistic manner. PSA provides numerous opportunities toward the vertical and horizontal integration of the profession and in the rationalization of statistics by serving as link within the profession and with the other disciplines. It must serve as medium in the improvement of the educational processes in statistics and as a training vehicle to the other sciences, agriculture, business, industry and engineering. It must serve as a forum for the establishment of career structures for applied and theoretical statisticians. PSA must continue to provide noticeable impacts upon governmental activities, statistical or otherwise. Questions and conflicts in the use of concepts, definitions, methodology and harmonization and convergence to international standards in key indicators for measuring the levels and pace of the developmental efforts are resolved through the intervention of PSA. This will include the gaps in the data series of producers (statistical system) and identified by the users of these data. The respondents must be an integral part in this dialogue. Above all, the Statisticians must be visible and aggressive as a partner in the decision-making at all levels of management hierarchy.

3. STATISTICS AND SCIENTIFIC METHOD

The **science** of statistics, as distinct from the raw materials (data) with which it is

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intimately associated, is an all-embracing branch of the scientific method. Its broadest interpretation is almost the scientific method itself. We find Statisticians at work in every field or facet of the social, economic, political and cultural life of the people where quantitative evidence is available. The development of Statistics as a science and the recognition of the Statistician as a profession are relatively new vintages in the Philippines. The Statistical Laboratory, Central Experiment Station, College of Agriculture (now U.P. Los Baños) was organized by the author in early 1952. At this early stage, there were some efforts toward integration of statistics through continuous consultations (before, during and after) between the Statistician and applied research workers in the other disciplines. Research outlines and completed outputs from these applied fields were required to seek the approval of the Statistician on the design and analysis of experiments and surveys and related statistical techniques before the research is formally approved by the Management. In June 1952 or about 45 years ago, the Philippine Statistical Association (PSA) was born, the U.P. Statistical Center (UPSC) was started in cooperation with the United Nations Development Assistance, and the Office of the Statistical Coordination and Standards (OSCAS), National Economic Council (now NEDA) was established, ushering a decentralized Statistical System with a central coordinating agency in OSCAS. The PSA had a direct hand in the establishment of the UPSC and OSCAS/NEC, breathing a new life in the statistical development in the country through the twin moves on: (a) training of professional statisticians, and (b) the effective and efficient running of a decentralized Statistical System. Presently, The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB), works very closely with PSA. The Secretary General (a professional statistician), NSCB is the Editor-in-Chief of the Philippine Statistician, the official journal of the PSA.

4. THEORY AND APPLICATIONS

There is concern about the gaps between theoretical statisticians from the academe and the practical statisticians or official and government statisticians. Since 1952, PSA was instrumental in bridging these gaps for better integration of theory and application. Theory must improve the quality and efficiency of applied work while applications must be the testing ground for statistical theory and methods and must provide the motivation for further research and advances. Workers on the practical side of statistics view with disdain the superior attitude of the theoretician while on the other hand the academician feels that the practical work done in government, business and industry is simplistic, devoid of theory and improperly applied. There is a need to narrow this gap and PSA must continue to serve as medium for this interaction through its Philippine Statistician and Newsletter, Annual Conferences, Seminars and Workshops on topics of current interest, Statistical Week, Statistical Month and its participation at the NSCB's National Convention on Statistics, Inter-Agency Technical Committees on Statistical Concerns, and Statistics Acts.

The experiences and conditions in each country are quite different. Thus, PSA will have to handle the areas of concern for integration, vertical and horizontal, in more specific terms. The transfer of statistical technology in terms of contents may be similar in some respects but the procedures that will be developed and applied must be endemic to local conditions and based on more specific statistical and related difficulties as observed in the Philippines. PSA should give more credence to Filipino statistical agencies but must also have a better understanding of the social, economic, political and cultural matrix which must be considered in the solution of technical problems in the statistical field.

5. BASIC GUIDELINES

The Statistician must maintain and preserve the guidelines of the profession, namely: **independence, objectivity and integrity**. PSA, through its membership, must generate a new standard of morality into the governmental and private management hierarchies in the use of untrammelled, objective and unbiased information to include "Opinion Surveys". The credibility of government and the business sectors will then be enhanced by these new ethics. In accordance with its Constitution and By-Laws, PSA should serve as broker (consulting firm) and offer its services towards solutions of many gaps in the Statistical System. PSA could distribute the projects to its members through the principles of equity and transparency.

6. MAJOR ISSUES

Here are some major issues. There is no one agency or institution that is in a better position than PSA to look into the future of the statistical profession. PSA can serve as prime mover or catalyzer with the help of others. Professional statisticians know that the future of the science of statistics is indeed very bright in an era of an information explosion, technology revolution, and where the urgent need for quantitative literacy and analysis, and the amount and volume of data by computers are increasing at fantastic rates. Nevertheless, is the future success of the profession assured or guaranteed? Not so, for there are many constraints and impediments for its success. Look and observe. One will notice that other disciplines, societies and organizations have in fact seized many opportunities that should have been in the realm of statistics and its profession. What have the statisticians and PSA done about this violation of professional ethics?

Economists, mathematicians, engineers, sociologists, agronomists, foresters and many others who are not adequately trained do teach a number of statistical courses in colleges and universities. But they are not knowledgeable in the theory of statistics and its experimental realm of real data experiences. Why did the profession hand over or default the area of statistical quality and productivity movements, the applications of statistical techniques in marketing and business and the massive area of data sets and many other fields of endeavor that fundamentally require strong foundations in the science of statistics to the engineers and related groups? (The members of PSA are requested to make additional listings of defaults that could be used as inputs to the future work of a proposed PSA Strategic Planning Group/Committee or the PSA Foundation.)

7. OTHER GAPS / ISSUES

Another basic issue is the observed gap between non-academic job openings and opportunities and academic training. Is this why a B.S. Statistics graduate accepts a clerical job? These gaps are noticeable in the BAS, BLES, NSO and others. Are the statistical departments and centers in the academe not in tune with this issue? Or are these centers of statistical learning just content with producing and graduating students for jobs and positions in the academe, the number of which is also limited? What is the role of the academe in bridging the gaps and cracks where the other disciplines, the non-statistical, have taken over? What are the strategies for providing funds, fellowships and scholarships, and job opportunities to attract graduate students to share in the leadership to guarantee the future of the statistical profession? The statisticians should be the "Servers" not the "Clients" of statistical knowledge and techniques. The future of the statistical profession is, therefore, in their own hands! ()

What is the image projected by the statistician as a profession? Is it basically negative? It becomes a joke when people, public and private sectors, talk about how to "lie using statistics!" Government and industry look upon statisticians as mere adjunct in the hierarchy of key management, are assigned or shifted from one section or department based on the whims and fancy of higher management. Where is the science of statistics assigned in the Philippine National Research Council? Mathematics or the Social Sciences? Take your pick! Statistics has lost its identity! The Statistical Laboratory at U.P. Los Baños was created in 1952 about the same time as PSA was organized. Now it has lost its identity within the Institute of Mathematical Sciences and Physics! More examples can be cited. If the statisticians will not assert its leadership, then the profession will be left to provide the gaps or cracks in government and industry. To improve the effectiveness of statisticians, PSA must learn how to bridge these gaps. This is an important issue that the PSA Strategic Planning Group or the PSA Foundation may study so that the statisticians will take the initiative to improve its condition and provide for the full opportunities ahead. If not, and as indicated, others will take over. In fact, some of them have already done so. It is not too late! PSA members may provide comments/suggestions for the initiative movement as inputs for the "Strategic Planning."

8. NEW INITIATIVES

PSA is the cream of the Statistical Profession. A study of its taxonomy will imply that the Statistician is not only competent in the theory (science) and application (art) of Statistics but in view of the constant dialogue outside the profession, the Statistician has become also knowledgeable about the workings of the other sciences. Because of the nature of his/her calling, the Statistician is considered unique and versatile. His/her theoretical foundation and intimate knowledge of the weaknesses and strengths of data bases that are generated by the Statistical System will allow the Statistician to be an excellent judge of the level and equity, pace and direction of impacts and benefits of components of the developmental efforts, at the micro and macro levels. This unique position of the Statistician should allow him/her to expand the vision of the Profession into new areas, directions or initiatives, as follows:

- (i) provides decisions on assumptions, targets and paths of developmental efforts (plan/proposal) of both public and private sectors,
- (ii) assists and influences to a considerable degree, decision and policy making at all levels of the management hierarchy with the use of objective and unbiased information,
- (iii) asserts leadership in the studies of levels and implications of poverty, and,
- (iv) serves as advocate of making information user-friendly and user-oriented and provides monitoring and evaluation systems for user-expectation of quality of data (precision, accuracy, relevance, consistency, least cost, and timeliness).

9. NEW VITALITY

The vitality of the Statisticians and PSA lies in their ability to provide efficient and effective programs, projects and services to the members and their clients. PSA needs to review, through the proposed Strategic Planning Group or the PSA Foundation its activities related to its Constitution and By-Laws, meetings, seminar/ workshops, its chapters and sections, finance, location and relation with the Philippine Social Science Council (PSSC) and others, decentralization of activities from Metro Manila to its chapters in the provinces, printing press to the electronic press, semi-permanent Editor-in-Chief of the Philippine

Statistician with remuneration, dropping old projects and developing new but self-supporting ones and others. Here, some inputs are wanted from the memberships of PSA and it must now endeavor to make maximum use of a much broader and larger number of its experts in PSA's projects rather than for only a selected few. This approach will broaden statistical thinking and knowledge, data collection approaches and analyses that are crucial in understanding the weaknesses and strengths of the scientific opportunities in other diverse fields. This effort will surely generate and enhance the stature, visibility and effectiveness of the Statistician and his statistical techniques.

10. ATTAINMENT OF MISSION / VISION: PSA IN THE YEAR 2000

Guided by the principles of **independence**, **objectivity**, and **integrity**, the Statistician, through PSA, should be in a good position to render a real picture of the state of the Philippine society and its economy. This participation will give true meaning to these new initiatives- its *mission*. With these moves, PSA will be able to enhance the identity, visibility, prestige and importance of the Statistical Profession as a pillar and partner in development and nation building for a free, democratic and better informed Filipino. Now is the opportune time to seek out new collaborations, identify their problems and to extend to them a deeper understanding, a broader view of their needs and all accesses to statistical knowledge and know-how. This is the PSA of the future! These initiatives are the **mission** of PSA in year 2000 in order to attain its **vision** of "Statisticians in Action".

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