

# **COPS Annual Meeting 2014**

## **Report from the RSS Academic Affairs Advisory Group**

### **AAAG membership**

Current membership of AAAG consists of Kevin McConway (RSS Vice-President for Academic Affairs), together with Deborah Ashby, Bill Browne, Michael Goldstein, Valerie Isham, Fiona Steele and Charles Taylor. At least one new member will be required for 2015 (onwards). Any RSS fellow who is interested in the work would be welcome.

The RSS's Policy and Research Manager, Olivia Varley-Winters, provides administrative and policy development support for AAAG.

### **AAAG (and related) activities in the past year**

- Advice to the RSS representatives on the Council for the Mathematical Sciences (CMS). Sir Adrian Smith has taken over as Chair of CMS, and (among other things) has pushed for more involvement in discussions about mathematical and statistical education, which are happening. Other matters considered by CMS include relationships with BIS on research funding and generally on policy, and with EPSRC (and, to some extent, other RCs) including on the EPSRC 'people pipeline' project and on EPSRC policy on Centres for Doctoral Training (and the relationship with other doctoral training funding), the SET for Britain event in Parliament (including poster competition which now has a section for mathematical sciences) and other parliamentary events, co-ordination (where possible) between the CMS member societies on research policy, the Alan Turing Institute (for the data sciences), the Turing Gateway to Mathematics (for knowledge transfer, in Cambridge, linked to the Isaac Newton Institute).
- Input into the EPSRC Statistics and Applied Probability Review Day in June.
- AAAG (and on some aspects, CMS) have discussed challenges for research funding, including EPSRC intentions to concentrate research increasingly in centres of excellence, and the lack of data on allocation of research funds (including QR funds) inside universities.
- Involvement in discussions about the rise of 'big data' and data science.
- AAAG has met 5 times since the last COPS meeting. Two outside speakers took part– Mark Gittoes, Head of Quantitative Analysis for Policy at HEFCE, and Gordon Marshall, Director of the Leverhulme Trust.
- We ran two sessions at the RSS 2013 Newcastle conference, one on research funding (with Research Councils input) and, with RSS Professional Affairs, one on the 'people pipeline'.
- Discussion on internal RSS issues, including arrangements for read paper meetings, the place of methodological research at the RSS Conference, and on applied probability research in RSS journals.
- Input to consultations on vision for science and research funding and on capital investment in big data (BIS), research metrics (HEFCE), data analytic skills in higher education (UUK), review of the ESRC doctoral training centres network, a national strategy for quantitative skills (British Academy), revision of the QAA MSOR benchmark statement, mathematics and digital science (EU), Healthcare Technologies Grand Challenge strategies (EPSRC).
- Made nominations to strategic advisory bodies for EPSRC and NERC.

### **Future AAAG (etc.) work includes...**

- More of the above! Sessions at 2015 Exeter conference.
- Meetings with Research Council staff and other funders (Wellcome Trust? Nuffield Foundation?).
- Under the working arrangements arising from the RSS Strategy Review, there are some changes in VP responsibilities. The VP (Education and Statistical Literacy) now more clearly has responsibilities that include higher education in statistics.