**Minutes of the 4th annual W3001 Meeting, September 16-17, 2016, Hernando, MS**

List of Participants

Berry, Eddy – Utah State University

Brown, David – Cornell University

Canarios, Caroline –University of Mississippi

Cromartie, John – Economic Research Service, USDA

Curtis, Katherine –University of Wisconsin

Foulkes, Matt – University of Missouri

Francis, Joe – Cornell University

Green, Eleanor –University of Mississippi

Green, John –University of Mississippi

Johnson, Ken – University of New Hampshire

Kulcsar, Laszlo – Kansas State University

Lobao, Linda –Ohio State University

Molnar, Joe –Auburn University

Monnat, Shannon – Pennsylvania State University

Nelson, Peter –Middlebury College

Parks, Vanessa –Louisiana State University

Rothwell, David –Oregon State University

Swanson, Lou – Colorado State University

Veroff, Dan –University of Wisconsin

Woo, Lynn –University of Mississippi

**Friday, September 16**

John G opened the meeting at 9:00 with a round of introductions. Morning sessions consisted of several station reports:

Ken Johnson described his Carnegie Fellows Program award and the research that it is funding: “Challenges to American Democracy: The Changing Demographic Structure of Rural America.” His proposal included arguments on the importance of studying rural demography that paralleled points made in the W3001 proposal. Child poverty, rural governmental fiscal stress, increasing political diversity and other demographic trends represent challenges to democracy.

Peter Nelson described joint research with colleagues from the UK and France on “International Rural Gentrification, funded by NSF and the Open Research Area (which facilitates research across European countries). The team is investigating the usefulness of “rural gentrification” as a concept and using the idea of “asset-based theorization” to gain a more nuanced understanding of class and its role in gentrification. Peter has mapped U.S. rural gentrification in ways similar to other counties, using ERS RUCA codes to develop a comparable designation of “degrees of connectivity.” He has combined this with indicators of gentrification, such as change in housing value, median hh income, and percent of adults with a bachelor’s degree. Peter also described on-going case studies being undertaken as part of the project in Jackson Hole, WY and Driggs, ID; the Finger Lakes region of NY; and the Mad River Valley in VT.

W3001 Administrative Advisor Lou Swanson addressed the group and answered questions regarding report writing and the proposal needed for the next 5-year project. In writing reports, it is a good idea to include teaching as part of committee accomplishments. It is a “scholarship of engagement” outreach that especially applies to work being done at non-land grant schools. Lou also mentioned that he will be nominating this committee in January for a national award meant to recognize excellence in both research and outreach—for “moving knowledge into public discussion.”

Joe Francis provided an overview of ACS measures of uncertainty and argued for the need to pay more attention to the MOEs provided with all ACS data. He has posted a web site with different methods for mapping MOEs and how to account for spatial differences and changes over time, especially for small geographies.

Shannon Monnat made a presentation on “Despair, Drugs, and Death: Understanding Spatial Differences in ‘Stress-Related’ Mortality.” Several important books have captured important aspects of the problem: Strangers in Their Own Land; Dream Land: and Hillbilly Elegy. Drug-related mortality has been increasing more in rural areas since 1999, while overall mortality declined. Books point to economic restructuring; neoliberal social policy, and cultural anomie. Shannon’s research, funded in part by ERS, shows that long-term, regionally-concentrated economic distress and lack of economic mobility are big explainers, not rising inequality or increased drug supply.

John Green made a presentation on “Problem Solving for Better Data Utilization: Connecting Participatory Processes with Population Data.” There is a growing supply of data but increasing challenges using it. Staff, knowledge, and technical skills are needed to move from passive research presentations to interactive models that emphasize social processes. Projects such as the annual conference on “Problem Solving For Better Health” that include “participatory mapping sessions” are seen as empowerment through statistical literacy. Much of this work is being done in collaboration with the University of Michigan and has received an unrequested letter of support from Senator Cochoran.

Friday afternoon began with a presentation from Tom Pittman, president of the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi, a regional nonprofit that focuses on funding economic development and health initiatives, especially those addressing the needs of children. He provided pointers on communicating research to media and foundations.

Katherine Curtis gave a progress report on the W3001 research brief series and John Cromartie led a discussion of best practices for writing research briefs.

The afternoon concluded with initial discussion of the proposal needed for the successor project to W3001.

**Saturday, September 17**

The morning’s business meeting was taken up with discussion of the proposal for W3001’s successor project. Many potential topics were proposed. Most agreed that the new project should stick close to members’ strengths in tracking basic demographic processes. “Well-being” was proposed as a term to unite economic, social, environmental, and health topics. Determining ways to connect with Cooperative Extension and county extension offices was seen as an important 1st step in the project.

The meeting concluded with election of officers and discussion of next year’s meeting. Laszlo Kulcsar will take over as chair and Katherine Curtis will serve as vice-chair. John Cromartie will continue to serve as secretary. Joe Molnar agreed to serve in the new position of Publications Coordinator. The group agreed to hold next September’s meeting in Fort Collins, Colorado. The tentative dates are September 14-16 2017. John G. adjourned the meeting at 11:.00.

On Saturday afternoon, W3001 members traveled to Clarksdale, MS, and participated in an engagement session with community leaders. Panel members included Rolando Herts, director of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning, Amelia Taylor of the Clarksdale Health Center, and Linda Stringfellow, project director for AmeriCorps/VISTA. Members learned about topics important to the Mississippi Delta, including challenges to providing health services to low-income populations; the need for public transportation, nutrition education, and social services; the role of community health centers as economic engines; and programs promoting cultural tourism.

Respectfully submitted,

John Cromartie