

Gregg Bell, Alabama

1) Brief biography.

Currently, I am a faculty member at The University of Alabama's School of Medicine and where I serve as Senior Data Analyst at the Institute for Rural Health Research, a Coordinating Agency with the SDC Network. Prior to this, I was a Socioeconomic Analyst at the Center for Business and Economic Research. It was in this capacity that I served as the Lead for the Alabama State Data Center. Additionally, I recently served a 3-year term on the SDC Steering Committee. At the close of my last year on the steering committee, I found it necessary to not seek re-election so that I might more fully focus on the time-consuming launch of a nationwide genetics research project. Now that the project is up and running, I am excited to return to my passion—public data. As luck would have it, that genetics project has allowed me to add two data analysts to our staff, one of whom is a GIS specialist whose work history includes a stint at the Connecticut State Data Center! What can I say? Sometimes things work out!

2) What special perspective or goals would the nominee bring as a Steering Committee member?

I'm a data guy. While my official area of expertise is Statistics and the Data Arts, my administrative role with the School of Medicine heavily involves me in the privacy and data access issues that surround sensitive data. This experience has been particularly useful as our SDC network enters the new world of differential privacy and all it entails.

On a personal level, I grew up in rural West Texas, lived for many years in Dallas, and have since lived the last 27 years in a small city in Alabama. This variety of locales gives me the benefit of both rural and urban sensibilities from a Southern state's perspective, grounded in my Western upbringing.

As a past steering committee member, I bring the experience of a veteran SDC lead and committee member.

Public data is my passion. Resuming my role on the SDC steering committee will better allow me to continue my work to increase awareness of the SDC Network among data users through presentations at national meetings and conferences. To date, I have made 15 presentations about Census data and the SDC Network across the U.S.

Additionally, with help from others in the network, I continue to curate the SDC Network's Facebook page. Since taking on this function, first at the request of the steering committee and later as a member of the committee, followers of our page have increased 5-fold and content continues to be added.

3) What aspects of the SDC program do you value most?

I most value the network. In my presentations, I preach the value of collaboration. Demographers, Geographers, Economists, Epidemiologists, Statisticians, and more comprise the SDC Network. No question is too small and very few are too big to be handled by the talented folks of our network. Whether by way of the listserv or through personal relationships created at meetings and trainings, it is the network that makes us special.