On the 7th and 8th September 2009, the Maths, Stats & OR Network will be running its fourth annual learning and teaching conference in conjunction with the related Centres of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs). The 2009 Conference will be hosted by the Centre for Open Learning of Mathematics, Science, Computing and Technology (COLMSCT), and will take place at the Open University in Milton Keynes.

Further details will appear within the February 2009 issue of MSOR Connections, including a call for abstracts.
From 1 August, Minitab Ltd became a signatory to the contract of affiliation between the Royal Statistical Society, Nottingham Trent University and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) that together provide core funding for the RSS Centre for Statistical Education (RSSCSE). Minitab is providing sponsorship of nearly £30k per year, for five years until 2013, for promoting teaching and learning statistics in the Higher Education (HE) sector. This agreement represents the beginning of an exciting new era for the Centre and will help to enhance its work in HE and for and on behalf of the Maths, Stats and OR (MSOR) Network.

Planned activities include:
- running away-days for teachers of statistics to non-specialist students in statistics;
- provision of facts, formulae and information leaflets in the series published by the MSOR Network;
- publications in MSOR Connections; and,
- running a Minitab-based workshop at the annual Universities Mathematics Teaching Conference (UMTC) event in December and research into teaching statistics to non-specialists.

Sharen Standbridge, managing director of Minitab Ltd said: ‘We are delighted to be teaming up with the RSSCSE and look forward to helping to improve statistics teaching and learning in HE in the UK through both our sponsorship and being a member of the RSSCSE steering committee. This is the first time Minitab has become directly involved with a national and international organisation dedicated to promoting the improvement of statistical literacy’.

Neville Davies, director of the RSSCSE, said: ‘Minitab will help provide a firm foundation for the future of the Centre over the next five years. RSS Council has also committed funding for the long term and the Office for National Statistics will continue its own membership of the steering committee at least until 2012. Getting the support of a company with Minitab’s pedigree of over 35 years experience with providing highly respected software that is extensively used in academia, business and industry worldwide is something for which we are proud’.

On the 8th and 9th of September, the Network’s third annual learning and teaching conference in conjunction with the Centres of Excellence in Teaching and Learning took place at Lancaster University. Almost 130 delegates attended the two-day event, which consisted of over 50 presentation sessions and numerous poster displays and exhibitions. Keynote presentations were offered by Professor Adrian Bowman who spoke about the role of graphics in understanding Statistics; Dr. Markus Hohenwarter who spoke about the GeoGebra resource; and, Professor Alan Agresti who spoke about introductory Statistics courses. The Conference was once again a huge success and we are very much looking forward to next year’s event.

Referred proceedings from the 2008 Conference will be available in Spring 2009, and those who submitted abstracts for sessions at the conference are encouraged to submit papers for inclusion by the 28th November 2008.