

SUCCESS -Saskatoon User-Centered Community for an Enriched SAS Society (Con't)

We knew there were many SAS users on campus, but were surprised at the breadth of SAS usage in the city and province. With tremendous assistance from SAS Canada, our first users group meeting was held in June 2004, and, to our surprise, we had 25 attendees.

The next meeting was held in February 2005, and the attendance grew even more – in fact, we outgrew the capacity of the room and had to look for a new venue for the next meeting. The third meeting, November 2005, had the same number of attendees, but there were many new faces.

We now draw members from many disciplines at the University of Saskatchewan, from anatomy and cell biology to veterinary medicine. I think an added bonus is the interest in the SAS user group from the federal government (Environment Canada), the provincial government (Saskatchewan Health) and local business, such as Federated Co-op. The applications of SAS are astounding, and the cross-learning opportunities on how to exploit specific SAS procedures for one's own requirements continue to be a big draw for the local users group.

The quality and level of presentations at the local users group meetings have been astounding. There have been presentations explaining how to set up and use the data warehousing tools (including useful internal benchmark data such as the anticipated return on investment), how to customize SAS style sheets and how SAS products assist in order process forecasting to health-related analysis. SAS presentations on specific applications and the workshop for SAS Enterprise Guide have been useful to raise people's interest in increased functionality through the graphical user interface and the sharing of information.

There is a real thirst for sharing information and applications of SAS solutions. The power of SAS is so broad that any individual benefits even when only using just a fraction of the functionality.

Our SAS users group provides an opportunity to bring 30-plus SAS users together to share their SAS knowledge and challenges. SUCCESS meets twice a year as a formal group and plans are now underway to hold more frequent "lunch-and-learn" forums where willing members will report on specific uses of SAS functionality in a less formal setting.