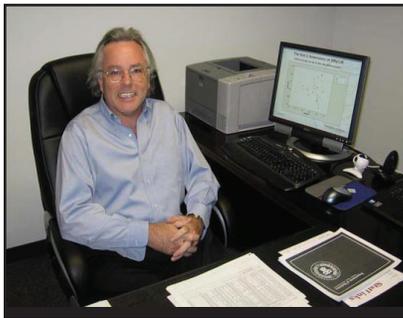


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From the Department Head



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StatLinks

News from the Department of Statistics at Texas A&M University to link its Friends and Former Students

Welcome to a special edition of *StatLinks*. In this issue you will find details of the latest achievements for our faculty, staff, students and alumni from 2012-2013. In addition, you will see coverage from the many events the department hosted over this past year, including the amazing 50th Anniversary Celebration.

I am proud to recognize that a couple of our notable alumni received prestigious awards in the former student section of this issue. In addition, I hope you enjoy reading about the success of our graduate students at the 2012 Capital One Modeling Competition. Furthermore, you will learn about the current research ventures of Professor Mike Sherman.

I am delighted to report the promotions of Drs. Willa Chen and Mikyoung Jun. Both were effective September 1, 2012. Dr. Chen was promoted to Professor and Dr. Jun was promoted to Associate Professor. Effective September 1, 2013, Dr. Ursula Müller-Harknett

will be promoted to Professor. In addition to these great honors, I am pleased that Dr. Mike Speed was named Professor Emeritus, effective May 1, 2013 and Drs. Jianhua Huang and Faming Liang were selected to be IMS Fellows for 2013. Dr. Huang was also selected to be 2013 Fellow of the ASA.

You will also find coverage on three new Assistant Professors hired effective August 1, 2013 as well as two other faculty members, Val Johnson, Professor of Statistics and Elizabeth Kolodziej, Lecturer of Statistics, both hired in 2012. Lastly, in November 2012, we also hired a new staff member, Ms. Myra Gonzalez, as the inaugural Director of Analytics.

Please be sure to keep us updated on your current email address. This information can be sent to us at statlinks@stat.tamu.edu.

I look forward to catching up with many of you at the 2013 Aggie Reunion in Montréal, Canada!



Staff Members enjoy food and relaxation at the 9th Annual Staff Appreciation hosted by Simon Sheather. The staff also presented Dr. Sheather with a plaque in recognition of their great appreciation for his many years of leadership, guidance and continued support as Department Head.

Faculty Recognitions PROMOTIONS

We are pleased to inform you that Dr. Mikyoung Jun has been promoted to Associate Professor and Dr. Willa Chen has been promoted to Full Professor, both with tenure, effective September 1, 2012. In addition, Dr. Uschi Müller-Harknett will be promoted to Full Professor with tenure, effective September 1, 2013.



Dr. **Mikyoung Jun** joined the our faculty as an Assistant Professor in August of 2005. She teaches courses on the principles of statistics for undergraduate engineering and mathematics majors as well as spatial statistics. She has effortlessly dedicated herself to being a good instructor and also advises and supervises a large number of students. Dr. Jun's research interests focus on spatial statistics. She has made excellent progress establishing herself as a top researcher and her work is regarded to be of the highest quality. Her research is funded by two National Science Foundation grants as well as a King Abdullah University of Science and Technology grant. Dr. Jun has served as an associate editor and referee for several top tier journals. She was a member of an ASA/ENVR Student Award Committee from 2006-2008 and has organized several invited and contributed sessions at national meetings.

Dr. **Willa Chen** joined the department as an Assistant Professor in August of 2001 and was later promoted to Associate Professor in September of 2007. Dr. Chen teaches introductory statistical courses for both undergraduate and graduate students who are not statistics majors. She has taught several time series courses including applied and theoretical time series and time series analysis. She has developed an excellent reputation in teaching. Dr. Chen's research interests focus on theory and methods of time series. She has established herself as a leading researcher with a worldwide reputation for her fundamental contributions in areas of long range dependence, fractional cointegration and restricted likelihood methods. Dr. Chen's research is published in top tier statistical and econometric journals. She has also obtained three consecutive NSF grants at a time when funding was at an all-time low. Dr. Chen is extremely active in all areas of service. She is an Associate Editor of three top-tier journals including the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, the premier



journal of statistical science.



Dr. **Ursula Müller-Harknett** received her Habilitation from the University of Bremen in 2005 and a Doctorate in Mathematics from the University of Bremen in 1997. She is currently an Associate Professor of Statistics (promoted in 2009). She held positions at the University of Bremen, the University of British Columbia, and visiting positions at Arizona State University and the University of Siegen before joining Texas A&M University in 2006. She has made significant contributions to the study of non- and semi parametrics and efficient estimators for various functionals of regression and autoregression models. Dr. Müller-Harknett's research in semiparametric regression has been supported by the National Science Foundation. She currently serves as an Associate Editor for *Statistics & Probability Letters* and has served as a reviewer for some of the top journals in the field of statistics such as the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*. She is a Member of the American Statistical Association as well as the Institute of Mathematical Statistics and the International Statistical Institute.

Congratulations to all of you for the hard work and dedication you have given to your profession!

NEW FACULTY

We are pleased to inform you that effective June 1, 2012, **Elizabeth Young Kolodziej** was hired as Senior Lecturer. Prior to joining the department Elizabeth was an Instructor at Robert Morris University. She graduated with her Ph.D in Statistics from Texas A&M University in August 2010. Elizabeth also directed our AP summer program as well as teaching during both fall and spring semesters.



We are also proud to announce that the department hired Dr. **Valen Johnson** as full professor effective September 1, 2012. Dr. Johnson came to us from the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center where he served as Professor and Interim Division Head of the Division of Quantitative Sciences, as well as Interim Chair in the Department of Biostatistics. Valen Johnson is internationally recognized for his contributions to Bayesian statistical methods and their

[continued on next page](#)

FACULTY continued...

application to substantive issues.

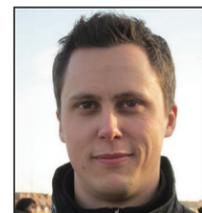


Dr. Johnson received his Ph.D in Statistics from the University of Chicago in 1989. He joined the Institute of Statistics and Decision Sciences at Duke University as an Assistant Professor in 1989 and was later promoted to Associate Professor in 1993. He remained on the faculty at Duke University and was promoted to Professor in 2000. In 2004, Dr. Johnson was hired as Professor in the Department of Biostatistics, University of Texas M.D. Anderson, a position he retained upon accepting the offer from Texas A&M.

Anirban Bhattacharya joins us from Duke University. Anirban received his Master's degree in Statistics from the Indian Statistical Institute in 2008 and received his Ph.D from Duke University in of 2012 under the advisement of David B. Dunson. His research interests include Bayesian semiparametrics, covariance estimation, factor models, Gaussian process, high-dimensional data, large contingency tables, machine learning and shrinkage priors.



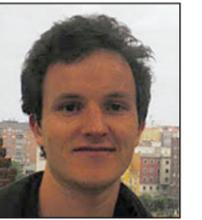
His most recent awards include a Student Paper Award from the Section of Bayesian Statistical Science in 2011 along with Travel Awards from the NIH and the NSF. Anirban has served as a reviewer for *Bernoulli* and the *Journal of Multivariate Analysis*. He is a member of the International Society for Bayesian Analysis, the American Statistical Association, Eastern North American Region and the Institute of Mathematical Statistics. He will officially begin his appointment as tenure-track Assistant Professor on August 1, 2013.



Matthias Katzfuss joins us as a Postdoc from Universität Heidelberg in Germany where he did research on spatio-temporal modeling of large datasets, probabilistic forecasting and analysis of RNA sequencing data. He received a M.S. in Statistics in 2008 and a Ph.D in Statistics in 2011 (under the advisement of Dr. Noel Cressie) from Ohio State University where he later served as a Research Associate for three years. In 2008, Katzfuss was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and went on to be awarded two competitive travel awards from Ohio State as well as First Place for a Student Paper Award from the American Statistical Association, Section on Statistics and the Environment.

In addition, Matthias Katzfuss is a member of the American Statistical Association, the Institute of Mathematical Statistics and the International Society for Bayesian Analysis. He has also refereed for the *Annals of Applied Statistics*, *IEEE Transactions on Geoscience and Remote Sensing*, *Biometrics*, and the *Journal of Time Series Analysis*. His appointment as tenure-track Assistant Professor will begin on August 1, 2013.

Finally, **James P. Long** joins us from the University of California, Berkeley where he received a Ph.D in Statistics in May 2013 after advancing to degree candidacy after receiving a B.A. in Mathematics and Statistics from Columbia University. His research interests are in applied statistics, machine learning, time series, classification, astrostatistics and errors-in-variables.



James received the Citadel Graduate Research Fellowship as well as the NSF VIGRE Graduate Fellowship while at Berkeley. He also worked as an Intern in the Quantitative Marketing group at Google Inc. where he constructed statistical models and wrote software to visualize data and implement models. James Long is currently a member of the American Statistical Association and the Institute of Mathematical Statistics. His appointment as tenure-track Assistant Professor will also officially begin on August 1, 2013.

We are pleased to have each of them represent our department and we welcome you to the Statistics family!

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Carroll Honorary Degree



Distinguished Professor of Statistics and Professor of Nutrition and Toxicology, **Raymond J. Carroll** received an honorary doctorate degree from the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL) in Belgium for his fundamental contributions and international leadership in many areas of statistical research, education and practice throughout his accomplished career. The degree was presented May 31 in Louvain, located near Brussels, by the Faculty of Sciences and the Institute of Multidisciplinary Research for Model-

[See FACULTY on page 4](#)

ing and Quantitative Analysis (IMMAQ) as part of a joint 20-year-anniversary celebration for the UCL Institute of Statistics, Biostatistics and Actuarial Science (ISBA). Carroll was honored for distinction in his scientific career, and he delivered a presentation related to his research in conjunction with the event. More information on this honor can be found at www.science.tamu.edu/articles/907. Congratulations on this well-deserved honor!

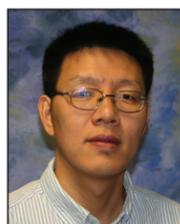
ASA and IMS Fellow Recipients

Dr. **Jianhua Huang** has been selected as a Fellow of the American Statistical Association for 2013. Dr. Huang is cited for his influential contributions to the theory, methodology and practice of nonparametric and semiparametric methods, longitudinal and functional data analysis, and statistical learning; and for excellence in mentoring. Jianhua joined our department in January of 2005 as an Associate Professor and was promoted to Full Professor in March of 2008.



Fellows of the ASA are nominated by their peers and have made outstanding contributions in some aspect of statistical work. Nominations of this great honor are given annually and the number of recipients is limited to no more than one-third of 1% of the ASA membership. In addition, Dr. Huang is also a member of the International Chinese Statistical Association. He is expected to attend the awards ceremony at the Joint Statistical Meetings in Montreal, Canada on August 6 to receive this honor.

Jianhua Huang was also elected Fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics for 2013. IMS Fellowship is a way of honoring the outstanding research and professional contributions of our members, contributions which will help IMS maintain a leading role in the field of statistics and probability. Dr. Huang was cited for his contributions to the theory, methodology and practice of nonparametric and semi-parametric methods, longitudinal and functional data analysis, and statistical learning.



Also elected Fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics for 2013 is **Faming Liang**. Dr. Liang joined our department in 2002 as an Assistant Professor and on a fast-track promotion schedule, earned Associate Professor in 2006 and then full Professor with tenure in 2009. He was cited for his contributions to Markov chain Monte Carlo methods and

their applications to biology, and for his service to the profession. Dr. Liang is also an elected Fellow of the ASA.

Drs. Jianhua Huang and Faming Liang will both be welcomed to IMS and presented with a plaque during the IMS Presidential Address and Awards Ceremony on Monday, August 5th during the JSM Montréal at the IMS Annual Meeting.

Mike Speed Retires

After eighteen years of remarkable service, Dr. **F. Michael Speed** has retired. Dr. Speed earned his Ph.D from Texas A&M University in 1969. At that time, he was working as a scientist for NASA in Houston. Following this position he taught at Texas A&M-Kingsville, Mississippi State University, Louisiana State University and Texas A&M University Corpus Christi. Dr. Speed joined the faculty of Texas A&M in 1994 as an Associate Professor. He was promoted to full professor in 1997. Dr. Speed was Associate Dean for Technology-Mediated Instruction in the College of Science at Texas A&M from 2000-2005. From 2005 until 2011, he was the Inaugural Director of Online Learning for the Department of Statistics at Texas A&M University.



Throughout his career, Dr. Speed has been honored with numerous prestigious awards including the Apollo Achievement Award from NASA in 1969 and in 1980 the Shewell Award from the Chemical Division of the American Society of Quality Control. In 2006, he was elected a Fellow of the American Statistical Association, an honor bestowed on less than one third of one percent of the Association's membership each year. Mike has won prestigious awards from the Department of Statistics such as, the William S. Connor Memorial Award in 1968 in recognition of being the outstanding Ph.D candidate and the H.O. Hartley Award in 1999 for distinguished service to the discipline of statistics. In 2008, Dr. Speed was inducted into the Academy of Distinguished Former Students, which "recognize(s) former students of the College of Science at Texas A&M University who have brought honor to their profession through outstanding leadership in mathematics, the sciences and medicine."

Dr. Speed officially retired from Texas A&M University on August 31, 2012. We are forever grateful for his extraordinary leadership in establishing our on-line programs, as well as his success in growing these programs. Under his leadership, the department's distance program has grown from 19 students in the first intake in Fall 2007 to the current size of almost 700 students (400 in the Master's program and 300 in

see "SPEED RETIRES" on page 11

Texas A&M Offers New Masters Degree in Analytics

An innovative new Texas A&M University program that will position students to navigate the recent explosion of "big data" in the business world received approval on June 6, 2013 from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Texas A&M's newest graduate degree, a Master's of Science in Analytics, will be offered beginning this fall by the Department of Statistics in partnership with Mays Business School.

The U.S. faces a shortage of between 140,000 and 190,000 people with deep analytical skills necessary to interpret big data. Universities are addressing this need with new programs in analytics. In addition to Texas A&M, New York University, Columbia University and the University of Texas at Austin are starting analytics programs in the fall. Texas A&M's program, however, is unique because it is part-time, making it convenient for working professionals. Students will take classes Tuesday and Thursday evenings either at Mays Business School's educational facility at CITYCENTRE in Houston or live and online as a camera set up in the classroom beams video to anywhere in North America.

"The IT revolution means that organizations and companies are able to capture mountains of data -- they're not just looking at samples anymore, but at the whole shooting match," according to Department Head, Simon Sheather. "This is a true partnership between two highly ranked groups on campus to meet an important business need."

This part-time, five-semester program will provide graduates with comprehensive and balanced training in statistical and business processes. We are looking to create data scientists who are thought leaders and innovators.

Students in the program will have individual quantitative analysis projects specific to their employers, giving them real-world skills. Myra Gonzalez, Director of Analytics, said "the department is also in the process of collecting large data sets from companies and other institutions to be used for these student projects as well as general classroom scenarios." Dr. Sheather further commented, "the companies will propose questions they want answered, and the data sets would be assigned to a team of graduate students and a faculty member." The companies basically get free consulting services in exchange for allowing their data sets to be used in the classroom by Texas A&M.

The university is actively holding events across the state and in the corporate world to help recruit the first class of 20 students for the fall. The Department of Statistics and Mays

Business School will pool together existing faculty resources for the program and there are currently no plans to hire new faculty.

The program has received a boost from Texas A&M former student **Roland H. Acra**, who earned a master's degree in statistics in 1986 and recently created an endowment through the Texas A&M Foundation to establish the Roland H. Acra '86 Master of Science in Analytics Award. Funds from the endowment will be used to provide an annual award each May for the student or students who produced the most outstanding master's project in analytics during the previous academic year.



The analytics program also will benefit from a significant donation from SAS, a leader in business analytics software and services as well as the largest independent vendor in the business intelligence market. The North Carolina-based company has more than three decades of experience working with education institutions, and partners with universities around the world to create degree and joint certificate programs in analytics and related disciplines. SAS, with \$2.7 billion in sales, was ranked No. 167 on the most recent Forbes list of America's largest private companies, selected Texas A&M for the gift for many reasons, including its growing reputation as a national model for distance learning.

SAS Institute Inc. gave the donation to aid the new Masters in Analytics program with the purpose of funding the curriculum development and contributing to the success of meeting the growing demands for individuals with business analytics skills.



Simon Sheather, President R. Bowen Loftin, Jerry Oglesby and Mike Speed in honor of receiving the donation from SAS.

For more information about the program, please visit our Analytics website at <http://analytics.stat.tamu.edu>. ■

Texas A&M Statistical Services, LP

BY EDWARD JONES, EXECUTIVE PROFESSOR OF STATISTICS

Texas A&M Statistical Services became an official A&M Partnership in February of 2012. Since then, with the help of faculty and alumni, the partnership has focused on marketing and promoting our services across Texas and beyond. The Partnership's marketing activities started with the 2012 Joint Statistical Meetings in San Diego.



Simon Sheather and Jennifer South at JSM 2012.

The Partnership and the Department sponsored student data mining teams participating in the Capital One Data Mining competition (see the *Capital One Modeling Competition* article on page 12). This competition involved analyzing nearly half a million credit card transactions, to develop a statistical model for identifying fraudulent transactions. Competing against 28 teams from the top universities with programs in applied statistics, the Texas A&M teams placed 1st and 2nd. The winning presentation can be viewed at www.tamstat-services.com/video/C1.html.



Students on the winning data mining teams.

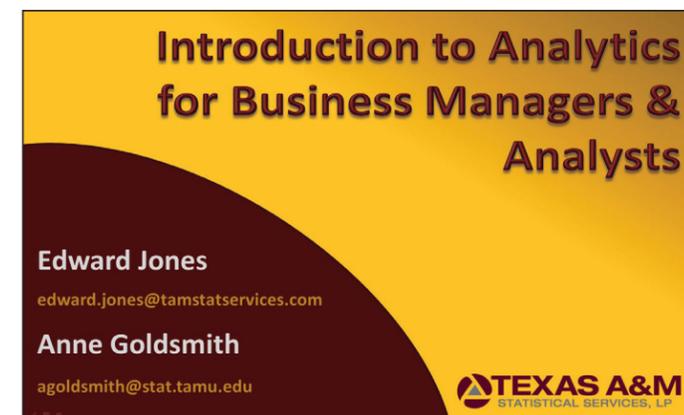
More recently 10 students, organized into two teams, were mentored through the SAS Data Mining Shootout. This problem involved evaluating the cost effectiveness of differ-

ent health care programs as measured by the effectiveness of each program at reducing health care costs and disease incidence. It also required learning about population projections, merging very large SAS databases and modeling disease incidence and health care costs.

The teams consisted of six students who are enrolled in the Department's Distance Learning program. Those students were Tara Cope, Yonatan Negash, Zack Martin, Jason Sumpter, James Joseph and Dan Liu. They held 2-3 weekly project meetings and they were able to complete the project on time. Four of these students (Tara, Yonatan, Zack and James) are using this competition as their MS project.

This year, the American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC) became the first client of Texas A&M Statistical Services. APQC hired the Partnership to provide statistical consulting and training. The consulting effort focused on modeling the linkage between APQC marketing activities, sales revenue and new customer contacts. APQC is using this model to direct future marketing campaigns and benchmark current sales and new customer recruiting efforts. As a result of this work, APQC has decided to add a statistician to their staff.

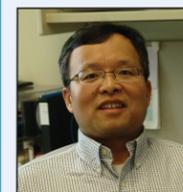
APQC also requested a one-day workshop titled an "Introduction to Analytics for Business Managers & Analysts." The workshop was customized using APQC customer survey data (see artwork below). Anne Goldsmith, a current



graduate student who is working on her Ph.D in Statistics, helped deliver the workshop. She is expected to complete her degree in 2016 under the supervision of Jeff Hart. ■

H. O. Hartley Awards

The H. O. Hartley Award is given annually to a former student of the department for distinguished service to the discipline of statistics.



Dr. **Hua Liang** was the recipient of the 2012 Hartley Award. He received his Ph.D in statistics under the direction of Raymond Carroll. He is currently a Professor in the Department of Biostatistics and Computational Biology at the University of Rochester Medical Center. Dr. Liang is an Elected Member of the International Statistical Institute, Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and most recently Fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics. His methodologic research is independent with innovation, recognized nationally and internationally, and he has provided important contributions to many research topics.

Dr. **Jerry L. Oglesby** was named recipient of the 2013 H.O. Hartley Award. He received his doctorate in statistics in 1971 under the direction of legendary professor Dr. Ronald R. Hocking. Dr. Oglesby began his career as a statistician with the University of West Florida where he served as an Assistant and Associate Professor of Statistics until 1983. He was founder and CEO of SCI Data Systems, Inc. from 1978-1989 and prior to joining SAS in 1996 he also worked for Mon-

santo Chemical Company as Plant Statistician.



Dr. Oglesby currently serves as the Senior Director of Global Academic Programs and Global Certification within the Education Division of the world-renowned SAS Institute Inc. Prior to assuming this leadership, he was Director of Analytical Consulting within the Professional Services Division. As Director he grew the department from its formation to approximately forty modelers and business analysts whose primary function was to provide analytical support and expertise to SAS' sales force and customers.

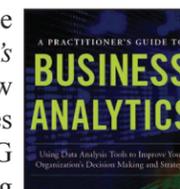
Dr. Oglesby was also selected by the Texas A&M College of Science for its highest alumni honor, induction into the college's Academy of Distinguished Former Students in 2012. Dr. Oglesby joins a prestigious list of 39 previous honorees distinguished for their merit and innovative achievements. Members of the Academy receive a commemorative award and have their names inscribed on a perpetual plaque in the College of Science's Dean's Office.

For more information on this prestigious honor, please visit: www.science.tamu.edu/articles/876/. Congratulations on these fine achievements! ■

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Former student, **Randy Bartlett** published a book entitled, "A Practitioner's Guide to Business Analytics: Using Data Analysis Tools to Improve Your Organization's Decision Making and Strategy."

Recent books and articles have made the case for business analytics. *A Practitioner's Guide To Business Analytics* explains how to compete on analytics and this requires rethinking our current approach. Had AIG pursued sound fundamentals in applying analytics, they would not be the poster child for how not to compete on business analytics. Instead, they chose to be cavalier and now they provide one of the many lessons in this book.



This book was written and reviewed by quants/data scientists, analytics-based decision makers, and directors of analytics in the field. It represents the distilled findings from numerous successes and failures over the course of several years. Some of their experience appears in the form of side-

bars. This first-hand experience provides the reader with a fact-based perspective.

In the Information Age, the decision-making pace is faster and business problems are proving more complex. This book goes beyond offering a few tips on applying analytics and provides all of the tools necessary for rethinking how to compete on business analytics ... and it even does so with a hint of humor.

Randy Bartlett is a business analytics leader with more than 20 years of business experience and 9 years of training in statistics at Iowa State University and Texas A&M University, where he received his Ph.D in 1993 under the supervision of Michael Longnecker. He is currently a Senior Principal with Infosys Technologies Limited, where he leads a growing Business Analytics practice.



Congratulations on this publication and we look forward to hearing more from you and your analytics endeavors! ■

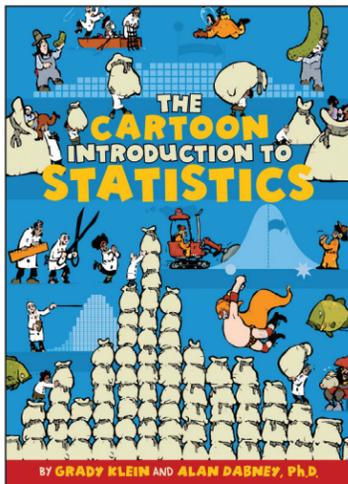
Alan Dabney's Book: *The Cartoon Introduction to Statistics*



Alan Dabney uses mythical examples to explain the concept of Statistics to non-statisticians in his new book, *The Cartoon Introduction to Statistics*. The book was available beginning July 2nd and is co-authored with cartoonist, Grady Klein.

The book was designed to convey the basics of statistics by melding a professor's perspective with that of graphical story-telling. The authors used scenarios that were both real and imagined in hopes of making the material not only accessible but fun!

Imagine Vikings that ride dragons while sitting backwards, rather than the conventional way, because they thought the dragons would be able to fly faster. That's enough to hold the imagination of any reader! However, we still have to consider those rogue riders who chose the lighter, more nimble beasts over the manly, large beasts that the older Vikings preferred. They failed to account for these factors in the the initial analysis and as a result, the verdict was: Guilty of Statistical Confounding! Which is another way of saying they jumped to a conclusion based on an incomplete understanding of data that had an unaccounted-for variable lurking in the background.



"The project was extremely fun for me because it was two very different perspectives trying to come together to do the same thing," Dabney said in an interview with Communications Specialist, Vimal Patel of the College of Science. "Grady is not a statistician, and I'm certainly not an expert story-teller. He would continually ask, 'What does probability mean in plain English, and why do I care?' It was a challenge, but a good challenge, which is why I think it's going to be a good book."

Dabney envisions the book as a primer of sorts for non-mathematicians seeking to familiarize themselves with basic statistical concepts, such as confounding, probability, hypothesis testing, standard deviations and sampling distribution. He says it's not a textbook replacement, but perhaps a

supplement that will help readers develop a solid grasp of the key concepts and give students, especially non-statistics majors, a better ability to understand more in-depth details in textbooks.

A typical textbook example of confounding often taught in classrooms is concluding income bias based on gender. Dabney says data could make it inaccurately look like the salary of male graduates exceeds that of females. But what looks like gender discrimination could be more benign when a variable in addition to gender and salary -- type of degree earned, for example -- is factored into the equation. A science degree typically earns more than an arts degree, and men are more represented in the sciences than women, Dabney says, so looking within each degree would provide more representative data.

"To illustrate the concept of confounding, I came to Grady with the example of graduates, income and gender," Dabney said. "His response was, 'That's extremely boring. What do I care about income?'"

Enter the dragons. And so the process went as the give-and-take between statistician and artist continued through their 225-page journey published by Hill and Wang, a division of New York-based Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

It's the power of statistics that Dabney primarily wanted to convey to non-mathematicians. Statistics is a tool that's increasingly playing a greater role in the world as data becomes more abundant. In the last presidential election, statistician Nate Silver correctly predicted which way all 50 states would vote. Statisticians also are involved in cancer drug testing, space shuttle safety analysis, jury selection and just about any field in which data measurement or analysis is needed.

"I want to make it easier for non-math people to access and benefit from statistics," Dabney said. "I think there are a lot of people in the world, not just math majors, who could greatly benefit from having basic tools for extracting confident information from data."

Congratulations to Dr. Dabney on this publication and we wish you continued success!! ■

Special thanks to Vimal Patel and the College of Science for allowing their articles to be reprinted in StatLinks. To view this article published in the June 2013 issue of discover-e, please visit: www.science.tamu.edu/articles/1074/.

NEW DEPARTMENT HEAD SEARCH

An international search is underway to identify outstanding candidates for Head of the Department of Statistics at Texas A&M University, the fourth largest university in the nation with an enrollment of over 50,000 students. Texas A&M was recently ranked 23rd amongst public universities by the U.S. News and World Report. The Department has a strong tradition of theoretical and interdisciplinary research. Faculty members have extensive research collaborations with faculty in all ten colleges on campus.

The Department seeks an individual with a dynamic and internationally recognized research program, a sincere commitment to undergraduate and graduate education, and proven leadership skills. The Head reports to the Dean of the College of Science and is responsible for the Department's administrative, budgetary, and personnel matters. Candidates for Head must demonstrate a vision for supporting, directing, and enhancing the goals of the Department. The position requires a Ph.D in Statistics or a related field and a record of scholarship and teaching consistent with the level of professor at a major research university. A proven record of extramural funding and administrative experience will strengthen the application.

Applicants should e-mail a letter of interest, curriculum vitae, and the names of three references to headsearch@stat.tamu.edu. Applications will be reviewed until the position is filled. Further information can be found at: www.stat.tamu.edu.

MAY 2012 GRADUATES

PH.D.

Lee, Jun B. (Subba Rao)
Wang, Xuan (Dabney)
Xun, Xiaolei (Mallick/Carroll)
Zhan, Dongling (Hart)

MASTERS

Barman, Poulami (Spiegelman)
Chen, Shuai (Huang)
Neumann, Anthony M. (Longnecker)
Torno, Nathan B. (West)

ONLINE MASTERS

Austria, Gener M. (Speed)
Connelly, Karen E. (Wehrly)
Franklin, Cynthia A. (Wehrly)
Gordon, Charles M. (Sinha)
Hanley-Burkhart, Jennifer E. (Sinha)
Little, Alexander A. (Wehrly)
McManus, Weston K. (Speed)
Ryan, Christopher W. (Dabney)
Tripathi, Anjani (Mallick)
Williams, Kaylee D. (Mallick)
Zhang, Mi (Huang)
Zhang, Rong (Hart)

AUGUST 2012 GRADUATES

PH.D.

Crawford, Scott (Müller-Harkentt)
Kim, Mi Jeong (Ma)
Kohli, Priya (Pourahmadi/Chen)
Park, Jincheol (Liang)

MASTERS

Bateman, Katherine A. (Longnecker/Speed)
Goddard, Scott D. (Genton)
Jennings, Elizabeth M. (Carroll)

ONLINE MASTERS

Goll, Johannees (Dabney)
Gudupuri, Vennela (Perrett/Speed)
Housley, Emily E. (Mallick)
Moody, Grant A. (Toby)
Tuteja, Navneet (Huang/Longnecker)

DECEMBER 2012 GRADUATES

PH.D.

Jann, Dominic A. (Speed/Sheather)
Zhang, Lin (Mallick/Baladandayuthapani)

MASTERS

Lucas, William F. (Speed/Longnecker)
Napier, Todd A. (Longnecker)
Wang, Kai-Sin (Longnecker)

ONLINE MASTERS

Bennett, John C. (Sheather)
Blaskowski, Stacie M. (Sinha)
Olmstead, Kaitlin S. (Cline)
Reed, Paul W. (Jun)
Shetty, Nathan S. (Spiegelman/Mallick)
Uppalapati, Deepthi (Dahl)
Wang, Ling (Speed)
Whitten, Jennifer L. (Wehrly)
Yingling, Michael D. (Wehrly)

MAY 2013 GRADUATES

PH.D.

Ball, Robyn L. (Dabney)
Gaucher, Beverly J. (Hart/Wehrly)
Mukhopadhyay, Subhadeep (Lahiri/Parzen)
Wang, Yiyi (Dahl/Liang)

MASTERS

Whang, Stephanie S. (Huang)
Roychowdhury, Lakshmi (Lahiri)

ONLINE MASTERS

Brown, Angela N. (Wehrly)
Dean, Amber E. (Hart)
Frederiksen, Eric L. (Huang)
Hasbun, Jorge A. (Dabney)
Jackson, Steven M. (Cline)
Jorgensen, Janine M. (Carroll)
Nimchuk, Nicholas (Spiegelman)
Walker, Tobias (Dabney)
Wilson, Celeste K. (Sherman)

My Adventures in Spatial Statistics

BY MICHAEL SHERMAN, PROFESSOR OF STATISTICS

The field of spatial data and spatio-temporal data has expanded greatly over the previous 20 years. This has occurred as the amount of spatial and spatio-temporal data has increased. One main tool in spatial prediction is the covariance function or the variogram. Given these functions, we know how to make optimal predictions of quantities of interest at unsampled locations. For example, in an aquaculture study, scientists were interested in accurately estimating the amount of phosphorus at unsampled locations. As a small example, consider the two (logged) phosphorus measurements at locations s_1 and s_2 with observed values of 4.525 and 2.412 in ppm (parts per million). Figure 1 depicts the spatial arrangement of these two locations, and a third location s_0 .

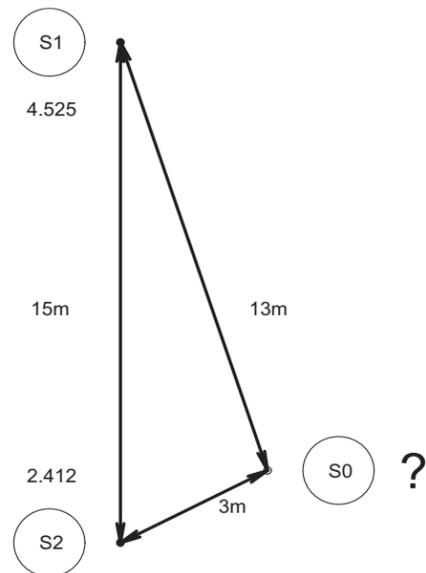


Figure 1: Kriging example: Two observed measurements and a third to be predicted.

The main goal in this situation is to predict the phosphorus level at location s_0 . The naive prediction would simply take the average of the two measurements giving a prediction of 3:47. Noting that s_2 is much closer to s_0 , than is s_1 , suggests using (squared) inverse distance weighting. This puts weights of :0506 and :9494 on the two points, giving a prediction of 2:52. This distance function, inverse weighting, is useful, but is typically not the best. Under an appropriate covariance function, we can use a “statistical distance”. Using this distance involves the covariance between the two sampled locations with the unsampled location, as well as the covariance between the two sampled locations. This “kriging” predictor puts weights of :2503 and :7497 on the two points,

giving a prediction of 2:94. This prediction has minimal prediction error, if the chosen covariance function has been correctly specified. In particular, it has been assumed that the covariance is isotropic, i.e., direction independent. Whether isotropic or not, in practice, these covariance functions are unknown and need to be estimated from sample data. Covariance functions and their estimation is a important subset of the field of spatial statistics.

A common assumption on variogram or covariance functions is that they are isotropic, that is, not direction dependent. For spatio-temporal covariance functions a common assumption is that the spatial and temporal covariances are separable. For multivariate spatial observations a common assumption is intrinsic correlation, i.e. that the variable correlations and spatial correlations are separable. All these types of assumptions make models simpler and thus aid in effective parameter estimation in these covariance models. Much of my research over the last several years, often with collaborators, has shown the importance of the effects of these assumptions and proposed methods to assess the appropriateness of such assumptions for these various data structures.

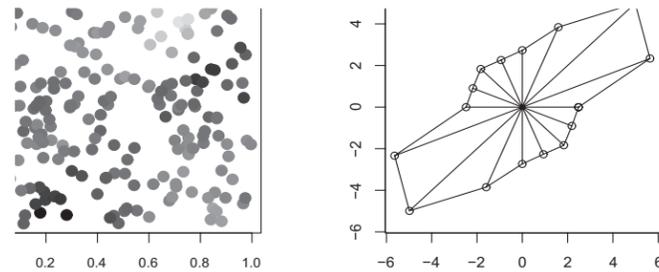


Figure 2: Anisotropy: 200 observations (left plot), and the rose plot with 8 directions (right plot)

Figure 2 (left plot) shows the location and response values of $n = 200$ spatially oriented measurements, with darker colors indicating larger responses. The right figure is a rose plot based on $k = 8$ directions. This plot shows the distance we travel in each direction until we reach a chosen level of correlation. If the covariance were isotropic, this plot should give an approximately circular plot. In these data, the distance from the center is 7.05 in the =4 direction and 2.59 in the 3=4 direction. This anisotropy ratio, $7:05 = 2:59 = 2:72$, suggests that isotropy may well not be reasonable for these data. Of what importance is this in prediction? Analysis shows that predictions under an inappropriately specified covariance, in this situation, are approximately 25% larger than

continued on next page

RESEARCH continued...

under the correctly specified anisotropic covariance.

Testing procedures have been developed to give formal justification to the decisions on the appropriateness of isotropy, as well as the assumption of separable space-time covariance functions for spatio-temporal observations. Some references on kriging include Cressie (1993), Stein (1999) Chiles and Delfiner (1999), and Diggle and Ribeiro (2007). Further background, with specific results on testing for isotropy and separability, as well as other directional properties are in Sherman (2011). ■



About the Author

Michael Sherman is a Professor of Statistics who joined our faculty in 1994. He has done extensive research on re-sampling methods for temporally or spatially dependent data and spatial statistics. His research is further documented in his recent book, “Spatial Statistics and Spatio-Temporal Data: Covariate Functions and Directional Properties.”

SPEED RETIRES continued...

the certificate program).

His monumental contributions and tireless dedication will be sorely missed and without a doubt, impossible to replace. Since his retirement he has been named Professor Emeritus of Statistics effective May 1, 2013. Mike Speed is currently working as an Analytical Consultant for the SAS Global Academic Program at SAS Institute Inc.

Congratulations on your retirement and Emeritus status and we wish you all the best in the new and exciting endeavors you embark upon with SAS! ■

EDITOR'S NOTE:

StatLinks will continue to be published bi-annually. Please contact us at statlinks@stat.tamu.edu if you are interested in receiving the magazine online. Your email address will only be used for Statistics departmental publications.

2012 Parzen Prize Recipient

The 2012 Emanuel and Carol Parzen Prize for Statistical Innovation was awarded to **Adrian E. Raftery**, Professor of Statistics and Sociology at the University of Washington. The award ceremony was held on April 26, 2013 at the Memorial Student Center. Dr. Raftery presented a talk titled “Bayesian Reconstruction of Past Populations for Developing and Developed Countries.”



Adrian Raftery is an elected Fellow of the American Statistical Association, Institute of Mathematical Statistics, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences as well as an elected member of the United States National Academy of Science. Among his significant honors is the 2011 ASA Award for Outstanding Statistical Application, the 2011 ASA Statistics in Chemistry Award, the Jerome Sacks Award for Outstanding Cross-Disciplinary Research for the National Institute of Statistical Sciences as well as the H. O. Hartley Memorial Lecturer at Texas A&M University.



Raftery received the award for his pioneering, influential, and outstanding research in statistical theory, including developing methods for Bayesian hypothesis testing, Bayesian model selection, Bayesian

model averaging, probabilistic forecasting, model-based clustering and classification, inference from computer simulation models, time series, and image analysis; leadership in applications of statistical methods to sociology, demography, environmental sciences, and health sciences.

The Parzen Prize is supported by the Emanuel and Carol Parzen Fund, which was established as an endowment at the Texas A&M Development Foundation in honor of Emanuel Parzen’s birthday. This award was designed to promote the dissemination of statistical achievements and is awarded to statisticians who have made outstanding and influential contributions to the development of applicable and innovative statistical methods.

For more information regarding the Parzen Prize and to view a list of past recipients, please visit our website at: www.stat.tamu.edu/awards-and-prize-details.php?prizeid=7. ■

Texas A&M Team Wins 2012 Capital One Modeling Competition

The Capital One Modeling Competition was a fascinating data mining challenge related to the financial services industry. It was open to students who are problem solvers, innovative, and looking for a challenge. Eligible students had to be enrolled in full-time statistics-related programs, 18 or older, and a US resident or international student with a valid student visa. Competitors were charged with developing a statistical model to identify fraudulent credit card transactions within 400,000 records each containing 340 variables. This competition assists Capital One in recruiting top talent statisticians. Capital One provided transportation, meals and lodging for the finalist teams as well as the two faculty mentors Dr. Edward Jones, Executive Professor and Dr. Simon Sheather, Professor and Department Head. Additional funding was provided by the Department of Statistics. Texas A&M Statistical Services provided funding to help prepare the teams for competition.



The winning teams with Edward Jones and Simon Sheather.

Three teams of graduate students were among 28 teams that competed in the 2012 modeling competition sponsored by Capital One. Of these teams, Capital One judges selected the top five teams to present their solutions at the Capital One international headquarters in McLean, Virginia. All of the students in the finals had their travel expenses paid by Capital One, and each received a new Kindle Fire as a reward for being among the top five.

Texas A&M was the only university with two teams selected for the finals. It seemed impossible to select a winner between them. Team One had an elegant parsimonious solution that made clever use of variables and customer segmentation. The other, Team Two, had a more complex solution, but with greater cost reduction. Dr. Jones commented “During the presentations, I independently scored every team. The competition was tough. Every team in the finals did well, but in my opinion the A&M teams clearly ranked higher than the others. Both Dr. Sheather and I were proud of A&M teams, but neither of

us could pick a winner between them. Both teams produced outstanding solutions and both presentations were excellent!” In the end, however, the Capital One judges selected the A&M team consisting of Ranye Sun, Stephanie Whang, Kun Xu and Bryce Durgin (*below from left to right*) as the winners. Each student was awarded a cash prize of \$1,000.



The second A&M team in the Finals consisted of Yichen Cheng, Ming Lu, Jingang Miao, Ya Su, and Rubin Wei (*below from left to right*). Their solution was the best as measured by the greatest reduction in fraudulent transaction cost. Both teams celebrated their outstanding showing that evening at a dinner hosted by Texas A&M Statistical Services, and some of the students spent the weekend seeing the sights in Washington D.C.



The third team was comprised of Justin Bein, Steven Jackson, Yonatan Negash, and Samuel Temple. They are enrolled in the Master’s distance learning program. Although they have never met face-to-face, their solution was very competitive.

Hats off to the student teams who represented the Department of Statistics in such a grand way! More information and details from the press release can be found at www.stat.tamu.edu/news-details.php?newsid=45. ■

Graduate Student Awards

CONNOR AWARD



The Statistics Department Awards Committee selected **Kun Xu** as the 2012 William S. Connor Award recipient. This award is presented to the student whom the committee deems the most outstanding among current students who have successfully passed both the Theory and Methods Qualifying Exams at the Ph.D level and have completed eight specified required courses.

Kun expects to receive his Ph.D in December 2013 under the advisement of Yanyuan Ma and hopes to acquire a postdoc position after graduation.

Ya Su has been selected to receive the 2013 Connor Award. She received her Master’s degree in Mathematics at Peking University in 2011 and is currently working toward her Ph.D in Statistics under the advisement of Jianhua Huang. Ya expects to complete her doctorate in 2016 and hopes to gain an academic position of employment after graduation. After hearing the news Ya stated, “It was quite an honor to learn that I was selected as a recipient of this award! I wasn’t expecting it at all and it was a really nice surprise.”



KSHIRSAGAR FELLOWSHIP

The Anant M. Kshirsagar Endowed Fellowship was established through the Texas A&M Foundation in 2010 by Texas A&M former students Ersen Arseven ‘74 and Luisa Sia ‘74 to honor their beloved professor, Dr. Anant M. Kshirsagar. Eligible students are selected on the basis of course grades, classroom performance and teaching assistant duties to receive this prestigious fellowship. The award recognizes the brightest and best performing graduate students and provides one or more fellowships to full-time students pursuing graduate degrees in the Statistics Department.



Emily Seem has been selected as the 2013 Kshirsagar Fellowship recipient. Emily is a second year graduate student in our department and plans to work with Val Johnson on her Master’s project. She received her Bachelors degree in mathematics at Viterbo University in Wisconsin in 2011. She is hoping to complete her Master’s degree next summer. Emily also plans to pursue a Ph.D in Statistics with us as well. After receiving the news of the award Emily commented, “Being selected as the 2013 re-

ipient of the Anant Kshirsagar Fellowship is an unexpected and deeply appreciated honor. I am most grateful for the donors, Dr. Ersen Arseven and Dr. Luisa Sia, whose generosity will allow me to be fully focused on classwork and research in the upcoming semesters.”

The inaugural recipients of the Kshirsagar Fellowship in Statistics were named in 2012. Three students seeking Master’s degrees, **Yichen Cheng, Karl Gregory and Qifan Song**, were chosen to receive the fellowship and are pictured below. More information on the inaugural recipients as well as Prof. Anant Kshirsagar and the donors, Ersen Arseven and Luisa Sia, can be found at www.science.tamu.edu/articles/972.



Yichen Cheng, Karl Gregory and Qifan Song

PARZEN GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

The Emanuel Parzen Graduate Research Fellowship Award was created to recognize students who have demonstrated exemplary research, above and beyond what is expected for graduation. The 2013 Parzen Graduate Research Fellowship is awarded to **Qifan Song**.

Qifan (pictured above) earned a Bachelor’s degree in Statistics from Peking University in China in 2009 prior to coming to Texas A&M to pursue his Ph.D in Statistics and has been studying under the advisement of Faming Liang. He expects to graduate in May 2014 and plans to pursue an academic career as a postdoc or junior faculty.

Qifan adds, “I would like to thanks Dr. Parzen and the fellowship committee for selecting me as the recipient of such a honorable award. I am most grateful to my advisor professor, Faming Liang for his great passion for statistics and for his constant encouragement. I would also like to acknowledge all faculty members in the department, who share their knowledge and appreciation of statistics. I also need to thank all staff members and student workers for their excellent service for our department.”

Qifan was selected to receive the Parzen Fellowship for his research papers which “demonstrated substantial promise of making an impact on statistical research”, according the Awards Committee.

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STUDENTS continued...

SHEATHER MEMORIAL AWARD

The Margaret Sheather Memorial Award in Statistics was established in 2010 by Simon Sheather in honor and memory of his mother. The award was designed to recognize and reward a graduate student for the most outstanding master's project in the Department of Statistics completed within the previous year.



Alexander Little was the recipient of the 2012 Margaret Sheather Memorial Award in Statistics for his master's project entitled "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Ground Water Conservation Districts in the Gulf Coast Aquifer of Texas." Alex received his online Master's degree in May 2012 under the advisement of Tom Wehrly. He is also a graduate of Pomona College, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Geology in 2002. Alex worked as a Guest Lecturer for the Universidad Nacional de Asunción and his career as an educator has given him the opportunity to work in Paraguay and various regions of the U.S. He will be coming to campus to earn his Ph.D this fall.

The 2013 Margaret Sheather Memorial Award in Statistics is awarded to **Elizabeth Jennings** for her Master's project "Integrated Analysis of Genomics Data." Elizabeth received a Bachelor's degree in Applied Mathematics (with an emphasis in Statistics) from Texas A&M in 2010. She recently completed her Master's in Statistics in August and plans to pursue her Ph.D at Texas A&M as well.



Elizabeth developed, under the guidance of her advisors Raymond Carroll, Jeff Morris, and Veera Baladandayuthapani, a method to integrate data from several genomic platforms using a hierarchical Bayesian analysis that incorporates the biological relationships between platforms in order to identify not only which genes are prognostic in cancer, but also through which genetic mechanism the effects are modulated. These new statistical modeling techniques offer more power to identify, and more biological insight to understand, cancer biomarkers. After developing the method, it was applied to a brain cancer dataset made public by The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA), and several prognostic biomarkers were identified.

Elizabeth added, "I am honored and grateful to be the recipient of this award. I hope the methods developed in my project will be beneficial to future cancer research endeavors."

OTHER STUDENT AWARDS



Robyn Ball was awarded the 2013 Philanthropic Educational Organization (PEO) Scholar Award. The PEO Sisterhood is an international organization devoted to promoting educational opportunities for women. In particular, the award is granted to women in graduate studies or postdoctoral positions, and supports research and study endeavors. It is a merit-based award and awarded to approximately 80 out of 800 women throughout the USA and Canada.

As a recipient, Robyn received \$15,000 over the 2012-2013 scholastic year which she used to attend various conferences and pay for materials needed for her research. Robyn was also awarded a NASA GSRP Fellowship for the 2011-2012 school year where she worked with alumnus Alan Feiveson at the Johnson Space Center.

Robyn recently received her Ph.D in May 2013 under Dr. Alan Dabney and more recently has begun a postdoc position at the Jackson Laboratory in Maine where she and her colleagues will focus on mammalian genetics research to investigate cancer and other genetic diseases.

Ryan Hollingsworth won the annual School of Rural Public Health Award for Research Excellence for work on his Master's thesis titled "An Investigation of the Propensity Score Method and Its Application to a Clostridium Difficile Infection Study." Criteria for selection includes quality of the research design, scientific rigor throughout, importance of the question examined, and potential impact on the relevant outcomes, either current or future. The award is only presented to one MS level student per year and Ryan received a plaque at the commencement ceremony in May.



Ryan was also selected as one of ten alumni of the SRPH to be inducted into the School's Alpha Tau Chapter of the Delta Omega honor society. Delta Omega is the national public health honor society for schools of public health and membership in the society reflects the dedication of an individual to quality in the field of public health and to the protection and advancement of the health of all people. Election to membership is intended to recognize scholastic merit and to encourage further excellence in and to, public health. Ryan received a MS degree from SRPH in August 2012 and has been working toward his Ph.D in Statistics since then.

Congratulations to all of our exemplary students! We are proud of all of you and we encourage you to continue making the Statistics Department shine! ■

New Senior Staff



Please join us in welcoming Mrs. **Myra Gonzalez** to the Statistics Department. Myra came to us in November of 2012 from the Texas A&M Scholarships and Financial Aid Office where she was the Associate Director of Scholarships and was the overseer of more than 75 different scholarship programs for undergraduates, graduates, and new transfer students. She also supervised approximately fifteen people and worked in this capacity for two years. Myra is currently the Director of our new Master of Science (MS) degree in Analytics. After successfully getting the program approved through the university and state, her first order of business is to enroll 20 students in the inaugural class this fall. When asked to describe her current job description Myra stated, "I have been coordinating 3-7 corporate visits a week since January. We will exhibit at 4-5 relevant conferences a year to market the MS Analytics program. Additionally, of course there are many enrollment processes, course planning, and logistics to be done to make the first class' experience exactly that...first class!"

Myra has been married for twelve years to Ronnie Gonzalez who serves as the Chief Administrative Officer in the Nava-

sota Independent School District. He is currently working on his doctorate and superintendent's certificate. He's an avid sports fan and 100% awesome! They have two amazing daughters, Ariana (age 9) and Ava (age 3). Ariana inspires to be an artist and dancer of all genres and is taking guitar lessons. She also dreams of having a puppy, a donkey, a goat, and maybe a rabbit. We can keep our fingers crossed for the donkey but her parents are only considering a puppy...

Ava is their very own energizer bunny who is always happy and loves snacks, animals and crafts. She is a singer, an artist, a dancer like her big sister, and can't wait to visit Disney World to meet Princess Ariel. Ava wants to be a doctor when she grows up and she even enjoys visits to the doctor! She's fearless and loves TV shows regarding doctors and medicine. Wow!

Myra received a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies with a minor in Business and completed a Master of Arts in Spanish Literature in May 2001 from Texas A&M University. In her spare time, Myra enjoys baking, reading, crafts, and spending time with family and friends. We are thrilled to have her join our department and we applaud her for her dedication and hard work to our Analytics Program! ■

HONORABLE MENTIONS

We would like to commend former students, Hua Liang, '01 and C. Shane Reese, '99 as well as former faculty member, Scott Berry on being elected Fellows of the American Statistical Association!

Hua Liang (University of Rochester Medical Center)

For outstanding contributions to statistical methodology, especially in semi-parametric regression and measurement errors models; for important research in HIV/AIDS dynamics; and for service to the profession.

C. Shane Reese (Brigham Young University)

For substantial research contributions in Bayesian reliability, hierarchical modeling, and sports statistics; for key scientific contributions to national security and defense; exemplary professional service through teaching and outreach activities and exemplary service to the ASA.

Scott Berry (Berry Consultants)

For outstanding contributions to innovative design and analysis of clinical trials, including a highly regarded textbook and an award-winning ASA short course; for excellence in the development and dissemination of Bayesian methods with applications in medicine and sports, for mentoring others in the statistical science community and for service to the ASA.

Congratulations on these prestigious accomplishments!



Just when you thought prestigious statistics journals were the only place you were likely to see members of the Statistics Department, WHOOP!! There goes Simon Sheather, Myra Gonzalez and Edward Jones proudly representing the Texas A&M University Masters in Analytics Program on the cover of TIME! The Statistics Department has now merged into mainstream entertainment media!

NBER-NSF time series conference

Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA
October 26-27, 2012

The Department of Statistics had the pleasure of hosting the 2012 NBER-NSF Time Series Conference in October. This conference ranks as the premier international meeting on the statistical analysis of time series data and attracts leading researchers from around the world. It has been held annually since the late 1970s at universities in the United States, Asia and Europe.

The conference provided an exciting and productive meeting venue for researchers working on time series analysis.

There were more than 80 high-quality papers considered for presentation. After reviewing all of the submission, the selected participants for the conference yielded 6 session chairs, 18 session speakers and 24 poster presenters.

Prof. Mohsen Pourahmadi was Chair of the Program Committee for the event. Other members of the program committee included Willa Chen (TAMU Statistics), Marc Genton (KAUST), Qi Li (TAMU Economics), Richard Davis (Columbia University), James Stock (Harvard University) and Ruey Tsay (University of Chicago).

Sponsors for the conference included the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), the National Science Foundation (NSF) along with Texas A&M University, the College of Science and the Department of Statistics. Previous meetings for this conference were held at Michigan State University (2011) and Duke University (2010). The 2013 NBER-NSF conference is being hosted by the Federal Reserve Board on September 26-27, 2013 in Washington, D.C. More details on how to attend the upcoming conference can be obtained at www.federalreserve.gov/.

We want to thank Dr. Mohsen Pourahmadi and the Program Committee for all of their dedication and hard work that went into planning such a successful conference! Many thanks to all of the speakers, presenters and participants for attending the conference as well. ■



Statistics 50th Anniversary Celebration

The Department of Statistics celebrated 50 years of excellence on May 17, 2013 at the Hilton Hotel and Conference Center. Statisticians from all over the world (as far as Nigeria) returned to Aggieland to celebrate with our current faculty, staff and students in this spectacular event!

It is indeed an honor knowing that the Department of Statistics has produced some of the world's most renowned Statisticians that continue to break the barriers of what the world sees as necessary data analysis. Our department has become the third-largest and one of the most respected in the country. We owe this to our founding father, H. O. Hartley and all of the Statistics Department Heads for their superior leadership and expertise.

The gala began with a Red Carpet Reception where Assistant to the Department Head, Jennifer South interviewed several former students, current faculty, staff and students as they entered the reception. Several alums were asked "what has changed the most in College Station since their time as a student." Roland Acra was most impressed with the commercial development and vowed to come back to visit Aggieland more often. Jerry Oglesby said everything was much bigger than he remembered! Veera Baladandayuthapani commented that the students appeared to look much younger than standard college entrance age and he immediately noticed that there were more coffee shops since his time here.



From left to right: Roland Acra, Tom & Anne Wehrly, Shane Reese, Chris White and Veera Baladandayuthapani on the red carpet.

When asked which statistics professor had the most influence on their career, several alums named notable faculty such as Ron Hocking, H. Joseph Newton, Randy Eubank and Jim Calvin. However, only one statistician was named Most Influential Professor and the award goes to our beloved Associate Department Head, Dr. Michael Longnecker! In the spirit of Aggie traditions, we salute Dr. Longnecker with an honorable "WHOOH!!"

Ralph Kodell mentioned that James Matis was an excellent mentor during his time at Aggieland but also included that Rudy Freund "had several activities that were a lot of fun but he definitely made life interesting!" We got the impression that he probably wanted to skip class a few times... William Smith mentioned that his most difficult task as Department Head was recruiting Distinguished Professor, Emanuel Parzen. "It wasn't easy but it was one the best decisions I ever made as Department Head!"



From left to right: Ralph Kodell, Bill & Pat Smith, Rubin Wei, Alan Dabney and Jeff Hart on the red carpet.

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ANNIVERSARY continued...

The evening concluded with presentations from the evening's co-hosts, Simon Sheather and Michael Kutner. Sheather presented plaques, books and commemorative wine boxes to several colleagues for their distinguished service as well as members of the Department of Statistics Alumni Advisory Board for their guidance and vision of the 50th Anniversary.



From left to right: Co-Hosts Simon Sheather, Michael Kutner, Robert Orth, Michelle Pfleuger, Michael Speed, Shane Reese, Sheather and Ersen Arseven at the reception.

Michael Kutner presented a series of gag gifts to colleagues that included different items ranging from golf balls to bottles of wine! One of the highlights of Kutner's presentations was to Mike Speed who received an actual tail in recognition of "clients who require a ONE-TAILED TEST." Jerry Oglesby also made the official announcement regarding the gift from SAS to fund the new Masters in Analytics program at the dinner. What an incredible evening!



Left to right: Larry Ringer, Bill Smith, Michael Kutner (with hair), Ron Hocking, Mike Speed and Jerry Oglesby.

The celebration continued on Saturday with a picnic at Bachman Community Park where guests enjoyed a good old Texas BBQ! There was great food, laughter, door prizes and fun for the kids too! Everyone enjoyed reminiscing with their colleagues and shared their stories of Aggieland from over the years.

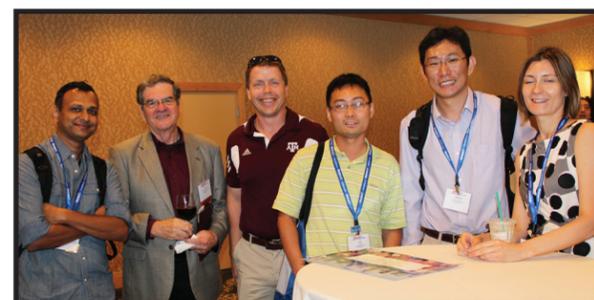


One can only imagine the enormous amount of time and effort that went into coordinating the special commemorative video and planning a milestone event such as the Department's 50th Anniversary, but two very important people always seem to make it seem effortless. A very special **Thank You** goes to Jennifer South and Elaine James (pictured on the right) for their tireless dedication and commitment! We appreciate everyone who had a hand in making this anniversary a celebration to remember! For the official press release, please visit: www.science.tamu.edu/articles/1069/. To watch the commemorative video that was premiered at the event, please visit www.stat.tamu.edu/statvideo.php.



2013 AGGIE REUNION

JOINT STATISTICAL MEETINGS, MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC, CANADA



Monday, August 5, 2013

5:00 PM  Room 516C



Palais des congrès de Montréal

159 St. Antoine West

Montréal (Québec) H2Z 1H2, CANADA



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Follow us on:



UPCOMING EVENTS

New Graduate Student Orientation

Tuesday, August 20, 2013
Room 457 & 453, Blocker Building
Texas A&M University

Faculty Retreat

Wednesday, September 4, 2013
Pebble Creek Country Club
4500 Pebble Creek Parkway
College Station, TX 77845

What's In The Next Issue?

- Coverage from the Aggie Reunion in Montréal, Quebec.
- Coverage from the Graduate Student Orientation and the Faculty Retreat.
- Check back for details on the H.O. Hartley and Ron R. Hocking Lectures to be scheduled for 2014.
- We will continue to keep you posted on events and special conferences hosted by the department.

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