



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS
STATISTICS NEWS

Spring
2016



LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

Nicole Lazar | Interim Department Head

Dear alumni and friends:

It's springtime again in Athens, which means that the flowers are blooming, the days are getting longer, and it's time for the departmental newsletter! We have had another eventful year here at UGA, filled with faculty and student achievements, special events, and the ever-constant change.

We have another new face in the front office, Kirsten Jackson, who replaced Ashten Goeckel as our Administrative Associate. Kirsten joined us from the McPhaul Center, College of Family and Consumer Sciences. Faculty are also on the move, with Jack Morse accepting a position at the Terry College of Business, Kim Love opening her own statistical consulting service here in town, and long-time Undergraduate Coordinator and Senior Lecturer Christine Franklin announcing her retirement at the end of this academic year. Steve Morris, who has been teaching in the department for the last two years on a limited-term appointment, will be exploring new opportunities in the Atlanta area. We wish Jack, Kim, Chris, and Steve the best of luck in all of their future endeavors. Finally, we were fortunate to have another former student, Chenhua Zhang, return to the department as a limited-term Assistant Professor for the year.

This year has also, not coincidentally, seen us undertake a rather intensive period of recruiting of faculty. We continue our search for an external

Department Head, interviewing some very strong candidates. I hope that there will be updates on that search in the next newsletter! We have successfully recruited a new Lecturer and a new Assistant Professor, both of whom will join our ranks in Fall 2016. The search for a new Associate Director of the Statistical Consulting Center is still ongoing as I write these words. In all, we will have interviewed 13 candidates for four different positions during the Spring term! Faculty, graduate students, and staff pulled together to show all of our job candidates a good time, and the best of Southern hospitality.

"In all, we will have interviewed 13 candidates for four different positions during the Spring term!"

In Fall semester, the department hosted the first ever GA Statistics Day. Abhyuday Mandal and I worked hard over the spring and summer to line up speakers and a range of internal (UGA) and external (corporate) sponsors for this event, which brought together faculty and students from UGA, GA Tech, and Emory, as well as from several other universities around the state, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and local industries. We mingled through the day, starting with an interesting keynote talk by Rob Tibshirani of Stanford University, followed by technical talks given by representatives from each of the three sponsoring institutions, roundtables, and student posters. By all accounts the day was a great success, and I am already looking

forward to the next GA Statistics Day, to be hosted by GA Tech next fall. Please join us if you can.

Also of note from the Fall term is that the department sent two teams to the SAS Data Analytics Shootout this year, one supervised by TN Sriram, and one by Jaxk Reeves. Several of the students from last year's winning team participated again. Both UGA teams placed in the top three, with the team supervised by TN taking first place overall, and the team supervised by Jaxk coming in third. Congratulations to both teams for raising the bar on this data analysis competition. I've heard graduate students talking about finding other such competitions to participate in, bringing to bear their data analysis and communication skills. This is definitely an exciting time to be a statistician, and it's fantastic to see our students jumping in to tackle these large, competition-style data sets.

Departmental faculty have also seen some recognition this year. Lynne Billard was recognized as an Honorary Member by the Statistical Society of Slovenia. Lynne was honored at a special ceremony of the Society held at the Institute for Biostatistics and Medical Informatics, University of Ljubljana. In recognition of this rare honor, Lynne gave a lecture entitled "Sir Ronald A. Fisher and the International Biometric Society." Pengsheng Ji was awarded the M.G. Michael Research Award from the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, and Kim Gilbert received the Sandy Beaver Excellence in Teaching

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LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD *(continued)*

Nicole Lazar | *Interim Department Head*

Award, also from the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences.

I'm also happy to announce some successful promotions for our faculty this year. Liang Liu has been promoted to Associate Professor with tenure, and Mark Werner has been promoted to Senior Lecturer. Congratulations to all of these accomplished members of our faculty.

Our faculty members continue to be active in publishing papers and writing (and obtaining) grants. Congratulations particularly go out to Ping Ma, Wenxuan Zhong, and Jennifer Kaplan, who are building up vibrant research labs in bio-informatics/Big Data (Ma and Zhong) and statistics education (Kaplan). All are attracting strong graduate students to our program and allowing us to flourish in new directions. Many faculty members continue to serve on the editorial boards of leading journals in statistics and subject matter areas, as well as taking roles in organizing invited and other sessions at major statistics conferences around the world.

Later this Spring semester we will have a few more noteworthy events. First, on April 7, David

Ruppert will be the speaker in the joint Clemson-UGA seminar, held this year here at UGA. David Ruppert is Andrew Schultz, Jr., Professor of Engineering, School of Operations Research and Information Engineering, and Professor of Statistical Science at Cornell University. He is an internationally known scholar whose current research is on calibration and uncertainty analysis, semiparametric regression, splines in statistics, functional data analysis, astrostatistics, biostatistics, and more. We look forward to welcoming Professor Ruppert to campus.

In mid-April, the fMRI statistics research group will host the fifth NOGGINS workshop, with keynote speaker Daniel Rowe of Marquette University. For the past ten years, NOGGINS has been a leading venue in Northern GA for faculty and students interested in functional neuroimaging data to share ideas, start collaborations, and learn about cutting-edge methods.

And, finally, our Bradley speaker this year, coming at the end of April, is Professor Jun Liu of Harvard University. The Bradley event is always a highlight of the year, giving especially our graduate students an opportunity to meet and

interact with a leading scholar of statistics. The lecture is co-sponsored by the graduate student organization, STAT Club, which has been revitalized this year under the dynamic presidency of Kristen Roland.

While we have many reasons to be proud, there are also many ways in which we can become better. A good strategic plan can help with this, and we are working on improving and fine tuning our current plan. Attracting the best faculty and graduate students will also help, but competition is stiff. Endowed professorships and graduate fellowships can help, and if you are in a position to consider helping us with this, I encourage you to explore this possibility with the Office of Development & Alumni Relations in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. Donations, large or small, have increasingly become critical to maintain programs of high quality, and we are very appreciative for your continued support.

I hope that you enjoy the articles in this Newsletter, and look forward to meeting many of you during the next year, either here in Athens or anywhere else on the planet.

Nicole Lazar

FACULTY AWARDS

Kim Gilbert

Sandy Beaver Excellence in Teaching Award

This award for excellence in teaching is given annually to honor outstanding faculty in the Franklin College who have shown a sustained commitment to high-quality instruction.

Pengsheng Ji

M.G. Michael Award for Research

The M. G. Michael Award was established in 1944 to stimulate new initiatives in scholarship in all areas of the Arts and Sciences. Its primary purpose is to encourage the development of a new idea or project during the coming year.

Jennifer Kaplan

Jackie Dietz Best Journal of Statistics Education Paper Award

The Jackie Dietz Best Journal of Statistics Education Paper Award, established in 2011, is given annually to the best paper in the Journal of Statistics Education in the previous year. It is named in honor of Jackie Dietz, the founding editor of the journal.

Abhyuday Mandal

2015 Faculty Division Outstanding Academic Advisor Award in the Franklin College of Arts & Sciences

This award is given annually in the Franklin College and Arts & Sciences. Recipients are chosen based on nominations from undergraduate students.

Lynne Billard

Honorary Member of the Statistical Society of Slovenia

Lynne was honored at a special ceremony of the Society held at the Institute for Biostatistics and Medical Informatics, University of Ljubljana. In recognition of this rare honor, Lynne gave a lecture entitled "Sir Ronald A. Fisher and the International Biometric Society."

T.N. Sriram

2015 Abraham Wald Prize in Sequential Analysis

This award is given each year to the best published paper among all papers published in the premier international journal *Sequential Analysis*.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM UPDATE

Christine Franklin | *Undergraduate Coordinator*

Since the last newsletter where we listed our graduates from 2014, we proudly graduated in 2015 the following students with a BS degree in Statistics: Spring 2015 – Vaibhav Ashok, Cody Baetz, Daniel Bailey, Haley Bird, Samantha Cao, Isabelle Dooley, Allison Griffin, Samuel Hempel, Colton Holder, Kristan Jackson, Tara Kelly, Zhuoxi Li, Joshua Lukemire, Alfred Meadows, Joseph Powell, Alyssa Sanders, April Thompson, Brogan Williams, Peter Yang; Summer 2015 – Stephanie Hamon, Jonathan Smith, and Katherine Vauz; Fall 2015 – Robyn Braid, Emily Burr, Alexis Cassotta, Zixuan Jiang, Yan Li, Elliot Outland, Stephen Terry, Michael Tseng.

Several of our students continue to be inducted into honor societies such as the National Statistical Honor Society Mu Sigma Rho, Phi

Kappa Phi, and Phi Beta Kappa. Some of the students have continued with graduate school and others have joined the workforce using the skill-set they gained as a statistics major. Our students are sought out as future employees in this data-centric world. Congratulations to all our graduates!

If you haven't already, browse our undergraduate website. Here is the link: <http://www.stat.uga.edu/undergraduate-students>.

Our undergraduate program continues to thrive with UGA students recognizing the importance of a background in statistics – this is seen in the increasing number of both majors and minors. The demand for the seats in our classes is greater than seats we have available. We continue to find ways to improve our undergraduate program, which is

now larger than our graduate program. We continue to work diligently to examine the desired program goals and learning outcomes for both our undergraduate and graduate students and how to assess the learning outcomes. We are also examining possible new introductory course sequences are our majors and other STEM related fields.

Our year-long Capstone course (STAT 5010-5020) continues to provide our undergraduates the opportunity to apply the knowledge they've gained to real-life research problems. This current academic year we have another large class, with 32 students.

We continue to have several students taking advantage of internship opportunities. We welcome any leads on summer and academic year internship possibilities for our students.

GRADUATE PROGRAM UPDATE

Lynne Seymour | *Graduate Coordinator*

Our graduate students have always been successful in the job market, but now more than ever, they are in extremely high demand! All of our PhD graduates have accepted offers before they graduate. In fact, last year, three of our nine PhD graduates joined the Quantitative Associates program at Wells-Fargo in both Charlotte, NC, and San Francisco, CA. Another four took very nice positions in academia.

The same is true of nearly all of our MS graduates though many go on to PhD programs in another discipline and/or elsewhere.

In spite of the incredible job opportunities in Statistics these days, we are still seeing a dearth of domestic applicants to the program. In recent years, we have been very successful in attracting domestic students, but for Fall 2016 we have noted a significant drop in applicants. Overall applications are down by 100, and applications from domestic students have dropped from 44 for Fall 2015 to 18 for Fall 2016. If you have any ideas for helping us to increase our domestic applicant pool, we would love to hear them!

UPDATE: *Colloquium Series*

Abhyuday Mandal, Associate Professor | Mark Werner, Lecturer
Jeongyoun Ahn, Associate Professor

The Fall 2015 Colloquium series featured a stimulating and diverse array of speakers. A total of 17 presentations were given, on both theoretical and applied topics ranging from forensic science, text mining and paleoclimatology to Bayesian neural networks and probabilistic models for gene evolution. Two of these talks were jointly held with the UGA Biostatistics department. The department chair, Dr. Nicole Lazar, initiated a program to provide support for up to three graduate students to have lunch with the seminar speaker in order to allow UGA students to ask questions and receive advice from established statisticians from all over the country. Feedback from the students was very positive as they took full opportunity to interact with the various guests.

We had a shortened colloquium series of eight talks during the Spring 2016 semester, due to a lengthy interview period over the first half of the semester for four separate faculty openings (Department Head, Assistant Professor, Associate Director for Statistical Consulting Center, and Lecturer). Short-listed candidates for each position gave a presentation (or in the case of Department Head candidates – 2 presentations) which didn't leave



Bradley Speaker, Dr. Jun Liu, with Statistics Faculty

much time for additional colloquium talks! It was indeed a busy time for the entire department but following the end of the interviewing process near the midway point of the semester, the colloquium series returned to the regular weekly schedule.

On April 22 2016, the UGA Statistics department hosted the annual Bradley lecture, in honor of the late Professor Ralph A. Bradley. The guest speaker this year was Jun Liu from Harvard University who spoke about, “*Detecting Nonlinear Relationships via Slicing*”, and how a Bayesian approach was developed to

detecting nonlinear dependencies and interaction effects, with particular applications in bioinformatics.

We encourage you to visit the colloquium website for the most up to date information on upcoming speakers, presentation abstracts and links to guest speakers' websites. Our Colloquium Series enhances the educational experience of our students, provides research opportunities for our faculty, and enriches the academic environment of the UGA Statistics Department. If you would like to support this endeavor, please click on the link below.

[Colloquium Series Website
www.stat.uga.edu/events/colloquia/upcoming](http://www.stat.uga.edu/events/colloquia/upcoming)

[Support the Department
www.stat.uga.edu/giving](http://www.stat.uga.edu/giving)



Statistics Graduate Students enjoy a lunch discussion with Bradley Event Speaker, Jun Liu

COLLOQUIUM SPEAKERS 2015-2016

FALL 2015

Liang Liu
University of Georgia

Philippe Barbe
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique

Yao Xie
Georgia Institute of Technology

Ming Hu
New York University

Gary Green
University of Georgia

Debashis Paul
University of California at Davis

Yingnian Wu
University of California, Los Angeles

David Banks
Duke University

Shuangge Steven Ma
Yale University

Karen Kafadar
University of Virginia

Bing Li
Penn State University

Anindya Roy
University of Maryland Baltimore County

Robert Tibshirani
Stanford University

Max Morris
Iowa State University

Faming Laing
University of Florida

Zhongxue Chen
Indiana University

Bo Li
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

SPRING 2016

Vladimir Dragalin
Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Johnson & Johnson

Jae-Kwang Kim
Iowa State University

Subhashis Ghoshal
North Carolina State University

Howard Bondell
North Carolina State University

Amy Froelich
Iowa State University

David Ruppert
Cornell University

Jun Liu
Harvard University

Soumen Lahiri
North Carolina State University

STAT CLUB UPDATE

Kristen Roland / STAT Club President

What a year it has been for the Stat Club! This academic year has been packed with social and academic events. To kick off the beginning of the semester, the Stat Club hosted a river tubing expedition to allow new graduate students to interact with veteran graduate students. Several Happy Hour events downtown enabled students to interact in a social setting and discuss classes, research, and departmental events. UGA's home football schedule (Go Dawgs!) was filled with amazing opportunities for the Stat Club to get together to tailgate before and view the game as a group. In October, the Stat Club helped with the first Georgia Statistics Day, hosted at the department and held at UGA.

Stat Club was excited to introduce its own Junior Colloquium Series. The purpose of this Junior series was to promote student presentations on research graduate and undergraduate students might benefit from, current dissertation or thesis work, independent research, and skills student require for classwork or to find internships and jobs. This allowed our students to gain experience in presenting, and sharing topics that they have worked on. Our first Junior Colloquium was held in November where Andrew Mullins, a second year Master's student, discussed R-Markdown, which combines LaTeX and R into a seamless document without using the two individual programs. It was a useful talk that has since inspired many students to incorporate it into their own research, projects, and assignments! We are excited to develop this series in the 2016-2017 academic year!

The Fall semester ended with the



Faculty and Students enjoying the International Potluck Dinner hosted by the Stat Club

International Pot Luck! This year had a great turn out with many different dishes available. Traditional American dishes blended with several Chinese and Korean dishes, which expressed the extreme diversity of our department. Students were able to enjoy the hearty feast while discussing the upcoming finals and Winter Break.

Spring Semester was a blur of departmental events, many of which Stat Club has helped host. There have been many lunches with the visiting speakers where students have been able to interact with such talented and prominent members of the statistical field. The department also hosted Industry Day and the annual UGA/Clemson Joint Seminar. Stat Club helped organize lunches for the students attending to interact with the guest speakers, Vladimir Dragalin and Dr. David Ruppert. It has been quite the semester!

The final academic event of the year was the Bradley Lecture. Students were eager to meet with Dr. Jun Liu at the student lunch before the afternoon talk. The talk and dinner following was held at the State of Georgia Botanical Gardens. At this year's event, the department recognized the students who received the annual departmental awards during the dinner. The Bradley Lecture Picnic was the final social event of the semester. Students and faculty were able to mingle before students prepared for finals and dispersed all over the world for the summer.

Stat Club is eager to continue these new events and develop many more social and academic opportunities for the graduate and undergraduate students within the department!

CONSULTING CENTER UPDATE

Jaxk Reeves / Director

The SCC started off well in 2015 under the leadership of Director Dr. Jaxk Reeves and Associate Director Dr. Kim Love. However, 2016 has gotten off to a rocky start as Dr. Love resigned as of Dec. 31, 2015 to form her own private consulting practice. Kim's 5.5-year tenure in the SCC has been characterized by tremendous growth in the training of graduate students working in the SCC, as well as implementation of many procedures to increase the efficiency of the SCC operation and to improve client satisfaction. The department has interviewed several candidates for the position during Spring of 2016, and hopes to have a new Associate Director in place by July 1st. It will be very difficult to fill Dr. Love's shoes, but the SCC is committed to continued development in the directions which she espoused.

During the 2015-2016 Academic Year, the SCC has provided consulting assistantships for eight graduate students from the Department of Statistics: Fei Liu, Wenhao Pan, Zhen Yan, Yaotong Cai, Patrick Kriebel, Xianyan Chen, Hao Tong, and Xiaodong Jiang. These paid consultants, along with about 20 volunteer consultants, have made strong contributions to research efforts at UGA and beyond. Support for the SCC continues to be provided by the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, the Office of the Vice President for Research, and the UGA Graduate School, in addition to the income earned through SCC projects. This year, the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences also agreed to contribute to this effort because of the large number of their students and faculty who benefit from the SCC's assistance.

The SCC's collaborative relationships across the University remain strong. The SCC has continued to maintain a strong client base from the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, the Odum School of Ecology,

the College of Family and Consumer Sciences, and the College of Veterinary Medicine. The SCC plans to offer more short courses and workshops soon after a new Associate Director is hired. The relationship with our primary corporate client, Unclaimed Property Consulting and Reporting, remains strong, but we hope to develop several more strong corporate relationships so as to be better equipped to handle the financial exigencies which seem to occur fairly regularly with academic budgets.

Both the Director and Associate Director have been active participants in bi-weekly conference calls with similar staff at ten other land-grant institutions (Virginia Tech, Clemson, Penn State, Ohio State, Texas A&M, Purdue, Minnesota, Nebraska, UCLA, and Washington State) which have statistical consulting centers. These conversations have proven quite useful in allowing UGA's SCC to learn what others are doing and to anticipate potential problems before they occur.

The SCC has continued to emphasize graduate student training, with a new course (STAT 8001 – Advanced Statistical Collaboration) added to the curriculum and taught for the first time in Fall 2015. In addition, senior students continue to mentor students who are new to the SCC and the practice of consulting. Senior PhD student Zhen Yan has taken a lead role in this process as the SCC's current Administrative Consultant, and both she and Wenhao Pan have been instrumental in keeping the SCC functioning after Dr. Love's departure.

The SCC is looking forward to returning to full strength in the coming year and hopes to continue to develop ways to meet the three areas of its mission, including making statistical support available to UGA researchers, increasing the quality of quantitative research at the University, and providing valuable educational experience and training to graduate students in the Department of Statistics.

STAFF PROFILE: Nathan Cooper

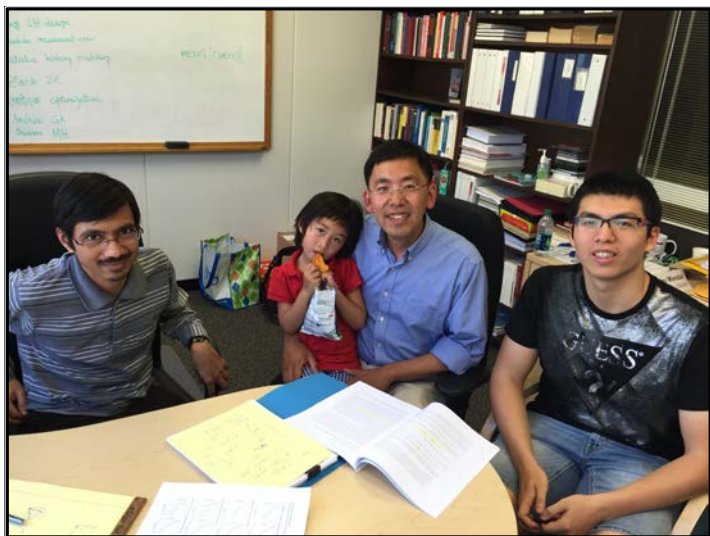
Nathan is a graduate of the University of Georgia and has been working at the University since 2007. He has worked within Franklin College IT for 6 years. Along with Matt Lemieux, he provides IT support for Statistics, Biochemistry, Artificial Intelligence, Bioexpression & Fermentation, and the Institute of Bioinformatics. Previous to working for Franklin College, he worked at GEICO and UGA's Undergraduate Admissions Office. He is from Warner Robins, GA and has 6 siblings along with 14 nieces and nephews.

He considers himself a health nut and spends a lot of time on nutrition and working out. His hobbies include mountain biking, backpacking, and kayaking. He tries to meditate daily and wants to get into yoga. He would like to live in Colorado one day and his Patronus is a moose.



NEW EXTERNALLY FUNDED GRANT PROJECTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS

"A Young Statistician is Learning Design of Experiments"



Professor Abhyuday Mandal, Professor Ping Ma and daughter, and Statistics Graduate Student, Chul Moon are working on research related to Design of Experiments.

Jennifer Kaplan, Associate Professor, Co-PI

NSF-DUE "The HILT-LAS Project: High Impact, Little Time activities that address Lexical Ambiguity in Statistics"

Education researchers in the STEM disciplines have long noted that language poses a barrier for students studying science. Statistics, as a discipline, has no lack of jargon, so it is no surprise that undergraduate students in introductory statistics courses have difficulty mastering the language of statistics. Through this project the research team will create and study a collection of research-based activities and corresponding materials for first-year undergraduate statistics courses. These activities and materials will be designed to have high impact on student learning, while requiring little time for an instructor to adopt and implement. These High Impact Little Time (HILT) activities and materials also will focus on breaking down language and jargon barriers in statistics in the process.

The goals of this project are to: (1) develop a set of research-based HILT activities for addressing issues in student learning of statistics related to language use; (2) generate evidence-based knowledge of the effects these activities have on

student learning in statistics; (3) create an interactive professional development instructional model in statistics education that can be widely disseminated; and (4) produce the basis for a web-repository designed not only to disseminate the HILT activities, but also to contain the functionality necessary to promote and sustain the success of the professional development model. The research team is working with 6 instructors who meet regularly and create and implement HILT activities. The researchers will employ a mixed methods methodology to determine (a) to what extent the implementation of the HILT language activities promote student learning in statistics and (b) the instructional approaches which are effective for developing or improving student learning outcomes in statistics. Quantitative and qualitative data collected from both students who are exposed to the HILT activities and those who are not will be used to determine the extent of differences in student learning related to the activities and professional development of the instructors.

Jennifer Kaplan, Associate Professor, PI

NSF-DUE "Fostering Active Learning in Statistics: Research on Students and Graduate Teaching Assistants"

Recently, much has been learned about the teaching and learning of undergraduate statistics, and one of the recommendations in statistics education is to foster active learning in the classroom. Little is known, however, about the training needs of GTAs, who represent the largest group of instructors of introductory statistics courses, to foster active learning. In connection with this, the investigators will: (a) produce materials to foster active and lasting learning for undergraduate students in introductory statistics courses; (b) train statistics graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in the content and pedagogical issues needed to implement these materials effectively; and (c) conduct research to understand and generate improvements regarding the effectiveness of the developed materials and the graduate student training.

The goals of this project are to produce and disseminate a research-based student manual and instructor's guide along with the associated materials necessary to train GTAs to facilitate active learning experiences using the department's STAT 2000 course as

context. Another outcome of the project will be an addition to the body of research on the professional development needs of GTAs to implement successfully active-learning experiences in undergraduate classrooms. The following research questions will be investigated. (1) To what extent do the active learning labs result in higher levels cognitive learning outcomes, attitudes toward statistics, and successful completion of introductory statistics course? (2) What is the content and pedagogical knowledge needed by GTAs in statistics to facilitate active learning labs and how does their knowledge change as a result of facilitating active learning? The questions will be addressed using mixed methods, repeated measures, and hierarchical models. Materials generated from the project will be portable to other institutions, and the accompanying research will inform these institutions; whereas, information generated from the research on professional development not only will apply to institutions with GTAs, but will also be pertinent to any higher education institution where introductory undergraduate statistics is taught.

Abhyuday Mandal, Associate Professor, Co-PI

Comparison of Oconee and Ocmulgee river basins for sustainable ecosystem and economic development of Middle Georgia

Water management and economic development of Middle Georgia are the main focus areas of this project. Our study compares the Oconee and Ocmulgee river basins and examines how reservoir operation can influence local hydrology and fish habitat. Since water flow in both river basins is affected by the dams, we examine trade-offs between ecological impacts and economic development under

different environmental flow scenarios. We also use geo-spatial analysis in order to incorporate archaeological information about Indian artifacts along the Ocmulgee River. The historical aspect of the region is an important component of our work which supports the UGA-Archway Partnership for the Ocmulgee River Water Trail National Park Initiative.



Franklin Retires & Named ASA K-12 Statistical Ambassador

Christine Franklin will be retiring from the University of Georgia at the end of Spring 2016. The ASA has announced Christine as the inaugural ASA K-12 Statistical Ambassador beginning in September. Franklin will provide leadership in the creation and presentation of professional development materials for teacher educators and teachers. She will present at national conferences, conduct workshops, collaborate with ASA chapters to enhance their education initiatives, and assist in outreach to the STEM education community.



Christine Franklin, Statistics Senior Lecturer

on Curriculum in Statistics and Probability. She also has authored or co-authored two textbooks and numerous articles and book chapters related to K-16 statistics education. Finally, she was a key member of the National Science Foundation-funded LOCUS project, chairing the committee that developed statistical assessment items for grades K-9.

Franklin is a true statistics education ambassador and after 27 years of service with the Department of Statistics at the University of Georgia, she will be greatly missed. We wish Christine Franklin all the best in her retirement!

Franklin is a recognized leader in K-12 statistics education. She is the lead author of the GAISE Pre-K-12 and SET reports, a proponent of the inclusion of increased statistics content in the Georgia K-12 standards, a recent Fulbright Scholar focusing on statistics education in New Zealand, an ASA Founders Award recipient, a former AP Statistics chief reader, a member of the presidential initiative workgroup to provide career information to AP and other K-12 teachers, and the current chair of the ASA/NCTM Joint Committee

SAS Analytics Shootout Winners

Two teams of students from the Department of Statistics placed in the top three teams in the SAS Analytics Shootout, a contest sponsored annually by the SAS Institute. It was announced Tuesday, October 27, 2015, at the SAS Analytics 2015 Conference in Las Vegas that the UGA Department of Statistics's two teams placed first and third. First place went to Fei Liu (Captain),

Lina Liao, and Wenbo Wu who were advised by TN Sriram. Third place went to Hao Tong (Captain), Anzhi Li, Richard Ross, Yan Wang, and Guohui Zhao who were advised by Jaxk Reeves. Congratulations to both teams on their accomplishments! The University of Georgia's Department of Statistics is lucky to have each of them on our team.



Advisor, T.N. Sriram, with first place winning team and SAS organizers

2016 UGA/Clemson Joint Seminar

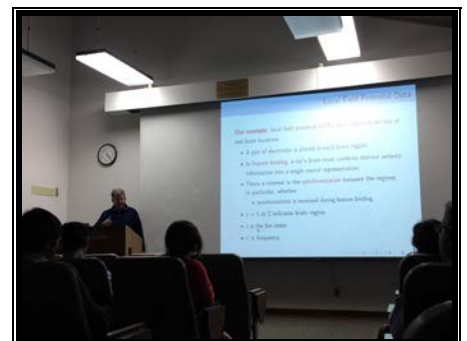
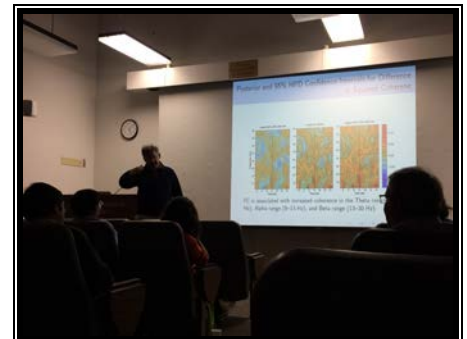
Since the 1970's, statisticians from the University of Georgia Department of Statistics and the Clemson University Mathematical Sciences Department have organized the annual UGA/Clemson Joint Seminar. Each year, the venue alternates between Athens and Clemson with an outstanding speaker invited to present on a topic of his/her choice. The speaker for the UGA/Clemson Joint Seminar held at the Georgia State Botanical Gardens Callaway Building on April 7th, 2016 was Dr. David Ruppert.

Dr. Ruppert is the Andrew Schultz Jr. Professor of Engineering, School of Operations Research and Information Engineering, and Professor of Statistical Science, at

Cornell University. He received his BA in Mathematics from Cornell, MA in Mathematics from the University of Vermont, and his PhD in Statistics from Michigan State. After receiving his PhD he joined the Department of Statistics at UNC Chapel Hill, where he was a faculty member for 10 years. In 1987 he moved to Cornell and he has been there ever since. Among his many accolades, Dr. Ruppert is a Fellow of ASA and of IMS, a winner of the Wilcoxon Prize for best practical applications paper in Technometrics, and the recipient of the Cornell University Department of Statistical Science Distinguished Alumni Award. He has authored or co-authored 8 books, and over 150 papers, letters, comments, and reviews. He has served on the

editorial boards of many leading statistics journals and is currently co-editor of JASA Theory and Methods. Dr. Ruppert has worked in many areas of statistics, including stochastic approximation, transformations and weighting in regression, and smoothing. More recently, he has been focusing on astrostatistics, splines, semi-parametric regression, functional data analysis, and environmental statistics.

Dr. Ruppert's presentation was titled "A Bayesian Multivariate Functional Dynamic Linear Model". Following the talk, conference attendees were given the opportunity to interact with Dr. David Ruppert and to network amongst each other as well as enjoy dinner catered by Mama's Boy.



Industry Day 2016

Alexei Ionan



Dr. Vladimir Dragalin

On Industry Day 2016, we were honored to have Dr. Vladimir Dragalin share his 25-year experience of statistical research in the industry. From his stimulating presentation that evoked a number of interesting questions from the audience, we learned about the current pharmaceutical industry trends from a statistical

perspective, and several groups of students had an opportunity to interact with the speaker after the talk.

The talk focused on design challenges in modern clinical trials. A shifting landscape of pharmaceutical drug development presents important implications for statisticians. The era of "blockbuster" drugs that covered for the expense of about ten failed products has almost come to an end. Instead, we are gradually converging on truly personalized medicine, where the market for each drug is much smaller, but medicine is crafted specifically for a specific group of people, not for the entire human population! I-SPY2 (<http://ispy2.org/>) is an example of a step in such a direction, with a few similar projects in development. However, development of such highly specific drugs poses many statistical challenges, including design of experiments, among many others. Whereas the

majority of statisticians employed by the pharmaceutical companies are "project statisticians" who primarily focus on analysis, there are other opportunities as well, including management and research positions. The latter is a particularly interesting prospect.

To accommodate the need for new statistical methods, some pharmaceutical companies are establishing or expanding statistical research divisions. This provides a unique opportunity for statisticians to work on relevant, cutting-edge research in an academic environment. However, to thrive in such an environment a number of diverse skills are needed. The most important skill is the in-depth knowledge of statistics. Another skill is communication of statistical information to non-statisticians. The importance of mastering the subject knowledge is critical for the advancement of science. The importance of

communication skills, which are crucial in convincing multiple groups involved in a project to adopt your plan, cannot be understated. As D.R. Cox said, "There are no routine statistical questions, only questionable statistical routines." Developing innovative relevant methods requires solid theoretical basis, and it is important to be able to disseminate those well, otherwise the suggestions may even be dissected by an entire department of financial analysts! Solid knowledge of the statistical theory, computing, and communication skills, among others, are key to a successful career in statistics. Students who have such skills would do well in an industry environment and may find exciting new research and analysis opportunities!

We are very grateful to Dr. Vladimir Dragalin for visiting us and sharing his experience!

Statistics Undergraduate Students at CURO 2016 Symposium

UGA offers CURO Assistantships to enhance the University of Georgia's learning environment by fostering student research. Each year, the Symposium has grown larger, and the 2016 Symposium was the largest to date with 408 undergraduate researchers communicating their substantial accomplishments to their peers, mentors, and the public at large. From its inception, the CURO Symposium has showcased research and scholarship in all disciplines. The 2016 Symposium continued that commitment, featuring presenters pursuing 85 different majors from 14 schools and colleges who are conducting research with 248 faculty members from 69 departments. This

two-day event displays UGA's broad and substantial support of research and the invaluable commitment of UGA's administration and faculty to providing exceptional learning opportunities for our undergraduates.

This year, two students from the Department of Statistics, Andrew Kane and Zachary Stokes, received awards. Both students presented at the 2016 CURO Symposium which was held at the Classic Center in downtown Athens on Monday, April 4th and Tuesday, April 5th 2016. Andrew's presentation was titled "Finding Optimal Designs Using Genetic



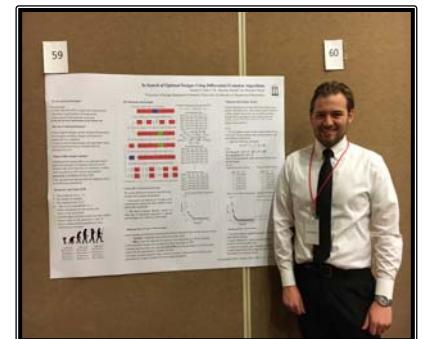
Algorithms". Zachary's presentation was titled "In Search of Optimal Designs Using Differential Evolution". These exceptional students did an excellent job representing our

Department at CURO 2016.

For more information about this year's presentations you can visit: http://curo.uga.edu/symposium/sites/default/files/2016_BOA_Final.pdf



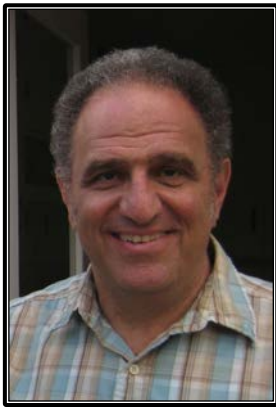
Andrew Kane with poster presentation



Zachary Stokes with poster presentation

Georgia Statistics Day 2015

Abhyuday Mandal & Nicole Lazar



Keynote Speaker, Dr. Robert Tibshirani, Stanford University

Georgia Statistics Day is a one-day conference on theoretical and applied data science with the goal of promoting interdisciplinary research within the flagship institutions of the state of Georgia. This annual conference aims to enable junior researchers in the Southeast region of the United States, including graduate students, to present their work, to see state of the art developments in research on statistics and related scientific areas, and to interact with some of the key players in the area. Georgia Statistics Day puts emphasis on mentoring of junior researchers and on interaction between senior and junior researchers.

The first GA Statistics Day, held on October 30, 2015 at the GA Center for Continuing Education was a resounding success. There were 164 registered participants, and a handful of unregistered ones. Of those 164, 109 were students. 126 of the participants came from the three sponsoring institutions (UGA, GA Tech, and Emory); 21 from other universities in and around Georgia; 8 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and 9 from our corporate sponsors.

Professor Robert Tibshirani of Stanford University gave the keynote address, in which he discussed modern, big data applications of his LASSO method. The talk was well-received and generated much interest from the audience, as did the three technical talks given by Professors Lynne Billard (UGA), Roshan Vengazhiyl (GA Tech), and Lance Waller (Emory).

The afternoon roundtable sessions, consulting session, and industry session were attended by a mix of faculty and students from different departments and institutions, which allowed for a great exchange of ideas and experience. We hope that these interactions in particular will lead to new collaborations and research opportunities especially for students, junior faculty, and isolated statisticians.

We had a good selection of student posters from the three institutions. The quality was so high that the poster session judges, TN Sriram, Brani Vidakovic and Minsoo Kim, decided to pick a winner and an honorable mention from each university:

- Best Emory Student Poster: Phebe B. Kemmer; Honorable Mention: Joshua Lukemire
- Best GA Tech Student Poster: Yuchen Richard Zheng; Honorable Mention: Yang Cao
- Best UGA Poster: Yiwen Liu; Honorable Mention: Fei Liu

Informal feedback from the participants was positive. Everyone seemed to have

a good time and there was a lot of mingling during the breaks and in the time surrounding the roundtables and student poster presentations.

This event was sponsored by several internal and external agencies. Apart from GaTech and Emory, the Graduate School, Office of Vice President of Research and the Department of Statistics of UGA sponsored it. This was a NISS event. The GA Chapter of ASA also lent their helping hand to us. CRC Press and John Wiley donated books. Finally, Wells Fargo, State Farm, JMP, LexisNexis and Procter and Gamble were our corporate

sponsors.

The event was organized by Abhyuday Mandal and Nicole Lazar. Several student volunteers worked very hard to make it a grand success. Among them, Adel Bedoui, Minsoo Kim, Krissy Knight, Yiwen Liu, Andrew Mullins, Richard Ross, Xiaoxiao Sun, Rui Xie, Xin Xing and Xinlian Zhang deserve special mention. They all wore the special GA Statistics Day T-Shirts which became so popular that we had to order more after the event. After all, we could not deny the request for a T-Shirt from our special guest, Professor Rob Tibshirani!



Participants enjoying lecture by keynote speaker, Dr. Robert Tibshirani



Dr. Ping Ma and Georgia Statistics Day participants observing poster presentations



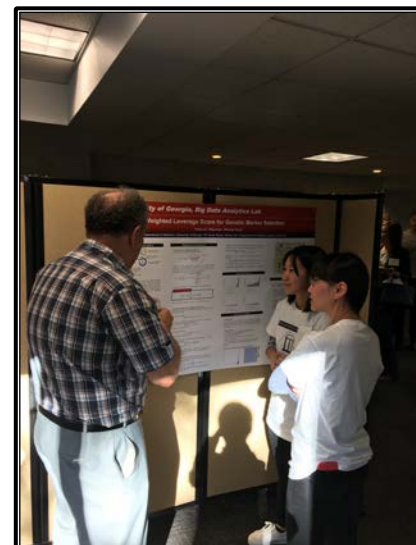
Fei Liu, UGA Honorable Mention, with Dr. Robert Tibshirani



Professor Lynne Billard presents at Georgia Statistics Day 2015



Participants listen to Dr. Jeff Wu



Dr. Robert Tibshirani with Yiwen Liu, winner for Best UGA Poster, and Xinlian Zhang, UGA student participant

Undergraduates Seek to Pursue Higher Studies in Statistics

Theresa Devasia and Zachary Stokes | Statistics Undergraduate Students

Zach and I are both senior statistics majors. We would both like to pursue graduate study in statistics, so we applied for Ph.D. programs last fall. Zach primarily applied to Statistics programs, while I applied to Biostatistics programs. We applied to a range of schools all across the country, and this past semester, we have had the opportunity to visit a number of schools. During these visit days, we were able to interact with faculty and meet with current students. Meetings with faculty largely consisted of discussions of their research. Current students gave us more information regarding difficulty of coursework, housing, and life

as a graduate student. For me, these visits also provided a better idea of where I could potentially be spending the next 5 years of my life. In

short, these events allowed us to get a better feel for each department and what life would be like if we were to accept our offers of admission.



Theresa Devasia and Zachary Stokes visiting Ann Arbor

2016 Best Capstone Student Award Winners:

John Chamberlin & Cody Pace

Jaxk Reeves | Director

Each year, the University of Georgia, Department of Statistics awards the Kermit Hutcheson Best Capstone Student Award to an undergraduate student who best exemplifies the standards set by Professor Kermit Hutcheson, an emeritus professor of the department who highly valued undergraduate instruction. The winner of this award is a student in the Capstone Course who consistently demonstrates throughout the year dedication to the Capstone philosophy of seeing the big picture of statistical analysis; embraces the importance of writing, communication, and research skills; displays a strong work ethic; provides leadership while being a team player; and who demonstrates professionalism within the class and while working with the group's client. The winner of this annual award receives a check for \$500 from the department's Alumni account.

For the second consecutive year, the award has resulted in co-winners. The co-winners of the 2016 Best Capstone Student Award, who will split the \$500 award, are John Chamberlin and Cody Pace. Both students

are very deserving of the award and the Department of Statistics would like to congratulate them

on all their hard work this past year.

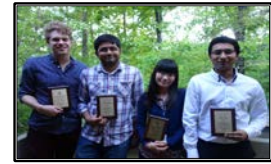


Participants of the 2016 Capstone Presentations



Interim Department Head, Nicole Lazar, with 2016 Capstone winners, John Chamberlin and Cody Pace

STUDENT AWARDS



Andrew Mullins

Best Master's Student

Chul Moon and Xinlian Zhang

Best Beginning PhD Student

Fei Liu

Best Senior Student

Zhen Yan

Best Student Consultant

Kegan Baird, Brittani Haag, Spencer Hall, Jonathan Rawls, Zachary Stokes, Charles Turnbow

2016 Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society Inductees

Alexei Ionan, Arunava Samaddar, Vineet Vora, Yuanwen Wang

2016 Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant

Hee Cheol Chung, Natalia Costa Araujo, Theresa Devasia, Barbara Dolansky, Xi Gu, Jiami Han, Chunla He, Xiangyu Jiang, Chao Li, Shenwu Liu, Andrew Mullins, Tae-Young Pak, Deegala Perera, Jingyi Zhang, Xinlian Zhang, Guohui Zhao

2016 Graduate Mu Sigma Rho Inductees

Kegan Baird, John Chamberlin, Andrew Ciaccio, Brittani Haag, Spencer Hall, Samuel Johnston, Cody Pace, Justin Richards, Yimeng Shi, Zachary Stokes, Charles Turnbow, Cody Walls

2016 Undergraduate Mu Sigma Rho Inductees

John Chamberlin and Cody Pace

2016 Best Capstone Student Award

Zachary Stokes

Blue Key Honor Society Inductee

Statistics Students Win Capital One Contest



Statistics students Xianyan Chen, Xiaodong Jiang, Jerry Shi, and Yang Song, were one of five finalist teams in the Capital One Contest. The team members, along with advisor Jaxk Reeves, were invited to Capital One headquarters from April

20-22, 2016, where they, along with the four other finalist teams, presented their analysis. After team presentations, our UGA team was named first place! Congratulations to these students and Dr. Jaxk Reeves for this great achievement!

WELCOME NEW FACES!

Kirsten Jackson, Administrative Associate II Matthew Lemieux, IT Professional Associate Sharon Barnhart, IT Professional Associate



Kirsten Jackson is the new Administrative Associate for the Department of Statistics. She has been employed with the University of Georgia for two years. She moved to our department in October from the College of Family and Consumer Sciences where she was

an Administrative Assistant for the Child Development Lab. In her spare time she enjoys reading and spending as much time as possible with her husband (Kenny), two fur babies (Kolby & Hank), and her 2 month old son (Liam).



Matthew Lemieux is one of the new faces of Franklin OIT working with the Department of Statistics. While he has a background in health-care IT, his current specialty is with the Apple ecosystem. He previously worked for local Apple Specialist PeachMac and assisted

with running their service departments throughout the Southeast. He attended Clemson University and is an avid fan of his Tigers, especially in football and baseball. In his spare time, Matt enjoys movies and is a practitioner of the martial art of Kvuki-Do.



Sharon Barnhart is the new IT Professional for Franklin College. She grew up in Marietta, GA and came to UGA as a student in 1988. She loved it so much that she never left Athens! She has been employed at UGA for 15 years and with Franklin OIT for the last two. Sharon has a husband of 25 years, and a lovely

daughter looking forward to coming to UGA next year! Those two take up most of her time away from work, but she also enjoys reading, driving, and the ongoing effort to teach her dog a trick. Sharon is delighted to be part of the Life Sciences Hub, and hopes to be able to help Statistics with their IT needs!

ALUMNI UPDATES

David Bruggeman
B.S. | 1986

This year David will be celebrating 30 years with Munich Re- US Life, a leading US life and health reinsurer. After graduating from UGA, he accepted a position with Munich Re and began taking actuarial exams in pursuit of obtaining his Fellowship from the Society of Actuaries (FSA). He received his FSA in 2001 and is currently AVP & Actuary in the Force Management area.

Jeff Anderson
B.S. | 2011

Jeff attended GSU after graduating from UGA where he earned his J.D. and M.B.A. Jeff is currently working as an Associate in the Real Estate Department at Schulten Ward Turn and Weiss, LLP in Atlanta, Georgia.

Joseph Hosmer
B.S. | 1976

After graduating from the University of Georgia Joseph worked for the International Appraisal & Research Group, Inc. in Atlanta, Ga, GTS Computer Systems in Birmingham, Al, and Presbyterian Publishing House in Atlanta, Ga. Joseph is currently with Business Software, Inc. and has been with them for 26 years. There they do Regulatory Software. His current job title is Sr. Quality Assurance Analyst. He works with the Payroll Tax Withholding Software. Business Software, Inc. is business partners with IBM, Oracle & SAP.

Paul Hofmann
B.S. | 1995

Paul is a Principal Statistical Programmer/Analyst at Duke Clinical Research Institute in Durham, NC. Within the Center of Predictive Medicine group, he has been focusing on Big Data, as well as ECHO/Duke Databank manuscript work. In addition, he is also managing a great group of individuals who work within both Clinical Trials and CPM programming groups.

Glenn Branscomb
B.S. | 2013

Glenn will be starting Wharton's MBA program with focus in Actuarial Science starting in the fall of 2017. Otherwise, he expresses that he is getting excited about Kirby Smart's first season as head coach to the Georgia Bulldogs!

Will Keyes
B.S. | 2010

Will Keyes graduated from the University of Georgia in 2010 with a BBA in Economics, a BS in Statistics, and a Masters in Economics. Will attended UGA's School of Law and graduated in 2013. He is an associate at the law firm, Campbell and Brannon, LLC in Atlanta, GA. He recently graduated from the U.S. Army, JAG Officer Basic Course, and is serving as a 1st Lieutenant in the 213th Legal Operations Detachment, providing legal assistance to U.S. soldiers.

Austin Layton
B.S. | 2013

Austin Layton is currently working for Electronic Arts as a data analyst for the Madden video game franchise in Orlando, FL. He analyzes gameplay telemetry in coordination with the video game producers in order to provide a better gameplay experience. Before that, he spent a year working for a data analytics consulting firm based out of Raleigh, NC. While there, he spent the majority of his time on-site at Caterpillar's in order to help improve supply chain efficiency and customer retention.

Jack Schuenemeyer
PhD | 1975

Jack remains as president of Southwest Statistical Consulting, a small firm located in Southwest Colorado. He continues to develop statistical models to assess in-place gas hydrate in the US Federal Offshore area. In 2015 he was elected as a member of the International Statistical Institute and is active in the American Statistical Association (ASA) and the International Association for Mathematical Geosciences. He also serves on an ASA advisory committee to provide advice to the US Energy Information Administration. In addition to professional activities, he was elected as board president for the Cortez-Montezuma Colorado School District, a K-12 district with 2700 students. For fun he enjoys swimming, walking his dogs Cory & Bailey, reading and running triathlons.

Alumni updates continued on page 11...

ALUMNI UPDATES *(continued)*

Xiaojun Li M.S. | 2007

Xiaojun Li joined the Political Science Department at the University of British Columbia as an Assistant Professor in 2013. His research falls broadly in the area of international and comparative political economy with a focus on China. He is currently working on a book manuscript that examines the domestic sources of the wide variation in both statutory and administered protection across Chinese manufacturing industries during and after China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). His research has appeared in Asian Survey, Chinese Journal of International Politics, Foreign Policy Analysis, International Studies Quarterly, Journal of Chinese Political Science and The Journal of Contemporary China. During the 2014-2015 Academic year, he was at Princeton-Harvard, China and the World Fellow at Harvard University's Fairbank Center for Chinese Research. A native of Shanghai, China, he received his Bachelor's degree in English and International Studies from China Foreign Affairs University in Beijing, his Master's degrees in Political Science and Statistics from the University of Georgia, and his Doctorate of Philosophy in political science from Stanford University.

GuanNan Wang PhD | 2015

GuanNan Wang graduated from the University of Georgia in Spring of 2015 with a PhD in Statistics. While in the department he had the good fortune to serve as a Graduate Assistant, Research Assistant, Consulting Assistant, and Graduate Teaching Assistant. In September 2015, he began his career as an Asst. Professor in Mathematical Sciences at the College of William & Mary, where another former UGA Statistics department alumni is also on the faculty. He and his family miss Athens and hope to visit soon.

Former Student, Dipankar Bandyopadhyay, Receives Young Researcher Award

Professor Dipankar Bandyopadhyay is an alumnus of the University of Georgia, Department of Statistics where, in 2006, he received his Ph.D. in Statistics. Recently, he accepted an Associate Professor job in the Department of Biostatistics at Virginia Commonwealth University, located in Richmond, Virginia. Dr. Bandyopadhyay's primary research interests are in Bayesian biostatistics, spatial data analysis, survival analysis, robust regression, clustered/correlated data, longitudinal data, nonparametric methods, and also their applications to problems in epidemiology and behavioral studies. His major clinical interest is in dental epidemiology, in particular, investigating periodontal health status and progression through a number of studies funded by the **NIH/NIDCR**. Other clinical



research interests are in diabetes and kidney diseases, substance abuse and alcohol addiction, medical imaging, and Parkinson's and other neurological diseases.

Dr. Bandyopadhyay was recently awarded the 2015 Outstanding Young Researcher Award from the International Indian Statistical Association in the Applications Category. The recipients of this award have made a notable impact on real world problems either through significant contributions to statistical methodology or through the novel use of existing statistical methodology. Furthermore, the recipients must either be a life member or an active member of IISA for at least two years.

Dr. Bandyopadhyay was also awarded Best Associate Editor of the Journal of Agricultural, Biological and Environmental Statistics (JABES) for the year 2014 from the International Biometric Society. Dipankar Bandyopadhyay is an avid steward in the Statistical Community and is currently serving as an Associate Editor for JASA-A&CS for a three year term and also as the Program Chair for the Biometrics Section of the American Statistical Association for the 2016 JSM at Chicago.

The Department of Statistics at the University of Georgia would like to congratulate Dr. Dipankar Bandyopadhyay on all his continued success and as well as his advancements in the field of Statistics.

David Nelson M.S. | 2010

David Nelson graduated from the University of Georgia in 2010 with a M.S. in Statistics and is currently a Professor of Mathematics at Mercer University. Recently, Mercer University's Student Government Association and members of the student body selected Professor David Nelson as the 2016 Professor of the Year.



We invite all of our alumni to keep in touch!
Let us know how you are doing by submitting an alumni update form on our website at:

<http://www.stat.uga.edu/alumni-update-form>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

We would love to see you soon! Stay tuned for future event information by visiting our website:

www.stat.uga.edu

- DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS FALL 2016 COLLOQUIUM SERIES
*Begins Thursday, August 18, 2016
Athens, Georgia*
- BRADLEY LECTURE 2017
*Friday, April 21, 2017
Athens, Georgia*

STATISTICS NEWS SPRING 2016

brought to you by

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THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



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THANK YOU!

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