



WSS NEWS

May 2007

WASHINGTON
STATISTICAL
SOCIETY

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2007 WSS ELECTION

The 2007 WSS election will be held online from Monday, May 7th through Friday, June 8th. Instructions on voting will be sent to members the first week of May. Below are the candidates for this year's election. All WSS members are urged to vote once the balloting begins. The results will be announced at the WSS Annual Dinner on June 27th.

CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT (select one)

Mel Kollander, SciMetrika, LLC

Mel Kollander presently serves as the Director of D.C. Operations and Chief Survey Methodologist for SciMetrika, LLC. Previously he served as the head of the Survey Methods Unit of the National Centre for Social Research in London, the founder and Director of Temple University's Institute for Survey Research Washington Office, and the Senior Statistician, Manager, and Principal Survey Methodologist for the USEPA. While with EPA, he spent six years as an advisor to the World Health Organization and Kuwait Government. Kollander is an elected member of the International Statistical Institute, a member of the International Association of Survey Statisticians, a member of the American Statistical Association, and member of the Washington Statistical Society, where he served on the board as video librarian for six years and currently serves as co-chair of the Agriculture and National Resources Program. He was the 2006 recipient of the Washington Statistical Society President's Award.

Kollander received a BS in Statistics and Operations Research from New York University in 1962 and an MA in Economics from the New School for Social Research in New York in 1964. He has served as guest lecturer, written chapters for several books, published papers and participated in workshops. He was the lead author of the EPA's Survey Management Handbook—this manual is now in its second edition and is used as a guideline for EPA staff and contractors when conducting surveys. He serves as Chair of the Bronx High of Science DC Chapter and Treasurer of the NYU Stern School DC Chapter.

Karol Krotki, RTI

Karol Krotki is currently Senior Research Statistician at RTI where he has worked since 2003. He is Manager of the Survey Research Program in the Statistics and Epidemiology Unit. Prior to RTI, he worked at various private, government, and international organizations primarily as a survey statistician.

Karol received his Ph.D. in Sociology (Population Studies) and a Masters in Statistics from the University of Michigan. He studied sampling and survey theory and practice under Dr. Leslie Kish and he has over 30 years of experience in most phases of survey methodology, especially sampling and statistical analysis. He has been a member of ASA for over 30 years and a member of WSS for over 10 years during which term he served as Methodology Section Chair in 1996-1998. He was also President of AAPOR-DC in 1999 and serves on the AAPOR Education Committee.

CANDIDATES FOR SURVEY METHODOLOGY SECTION CHAIR (select one)

Keith Rust, Westat

Keith Rust is a Vice President and Associate Director of the Statistical Group at Westat, where he has been for over 20 years. He is also a Research Professor in the Joint Program in Survey Methodology at the University of Maryland. He is a Fellow of the ASA and an elected member of the International Statistical Institute. He has previously served on the executive committees of both the Survey Research Methods and Social Statistics Sections of the ASA. He was formerly a member of the Committee on National Statistics of the National Academy of Sciences, and was Chair of the Committee's Panel on Alternative Census Methodologies for the 2000 Census.

Robert Baskin, AHRQ

Robert Baskin is a senior mathematical statistician with over 20 years of experience in project management for a full range of statistical projects and a broad range of statistical consulting. At the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), he is responsible for statistical consulting across the Agency and for conducting statistical research. Since joining AHRQ, Dr. Baskin has worked on a variety of statistical projects including estimating random effects models using data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS), evaluating the impact of imputation on variance estimation for MEPS expenditure data, and carrying out numerous statistical consulting projects relating to healthcare research and policy. Dr. Baskin has consulted on a range of statistical issues within AHRQ including variance estimation using complex survey data, Bayesian modeling, predictive inference, and sample size determination. Dr. Baskin holds a BA in mathematics from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and a PhD degree in statistics from the University of Florida.

Before joining AHRQ, Dr. Baskin worked at Westat where he was associated with projects such as evaluation of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign; sample redesign for the Drug Abuse Warning Network; and regulatory support for the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Water. In previous work for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Dr. Baskin supervised and took part in statistical work related to the Consumer Price Index.

CANDIDATES FOR WSS REPRESENTATIVES AT LARGE (select two)

Johnny Blair, Abt Associates

Johnny Blair is Abt Associate's Senior Survey Methodologist and Director of Abts' Cognitive Testing Laboratory. Over the course of his career, he has managed survey operations, designed surveys for both population and business establishment research, and conducted methodological research in several areas, including sampling for rare populations, measurement error in proxy reporting, and the design and the analysis of cognitive interviews for pretesting. He has served on committees for the National Academy of Sciences, American Statistical Association and NCES, among others. From 1994-1999, he served on the editorial board of Public Opinion Quarterly.

His publications include "Survey Pretesting: Do Different Methods Produce Different Results?" (with Stanley Presser), "Aspects of Data Quality in Cognitive Interviews: The case of verbal reports," (with Frederick Conrad), "Dual Frame Web-Telephone Sampling for Rare Groups" (with Edward Blair), and the book *Designing Surveys: A guide to decisions and procedures* 2nd edition (with Ronald Czaja).

Jeri Metzger Mulrow, NSF

Jeri Metzger Mulrow is a Senior Mathematical Statistician at the National Science Foundation where she provides a broad range of statistical and survey expertise to the Division of Science Resources Statistics. She has been a member of the Washington Statistical Society for 20 years and has served on the WSS board on the Short Course committee and as Social Chair.

Jeri has worked in academia, government and the private sector gaining a broad view of statistical applications. She has held positions at Ernst & Young (Senior Manager in the Quantitative Economics and Statistics Group), NORC, IRS Statistics of Income Division, NIST and the University of Southern Illinois. She is an active member of the ASA serving on the Committee of Sections Governing Board.

Brian A. Harris-Kojetin, OMB

Present Position: Statistician, U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 2001. Former Positions: Senior Project Leader, Arbitron Inc., 1998-2001. Research Psychologist, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1992-1998. Degrees: Ph.D., Social Psychology, University of Minnesota. Bachelor of Arts, Psychology and Religious Studies, University of Denver. Fields of Major Statistical Activities: Survey methodology, survey nonresponse, data quality, confidentiality. Publications: "Implementing the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002" (with Katherine K. Wallman) Chance, 2004. "Exploring the relation of economic and political conditions with refusal rates to a government survey" (with Clyde Tucker), Journal of Official Statistics, 1999. Proceedings of the Section on Survey Research Methods, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion. ASA Activities and Offices Held: Government Statistics Section Program Chair 2005, ASA Survey Review Committee, WSS Public Policy Chair, Roger Herriot Award Committee.

Joy Sharp, BTS

Joy Sharp is a statistician at the Research and Innovative Technology Administration where she has worked for last six years as part of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS). She is currently co-manager of the Commodity Flow Survey and has been actively involved in the design, development and management of several passenger travel and freight surveys. In addition, she has 12 years experience working on health, housing and income surveys at the U.S. Census Bureau, and two years of experience as a consultant while working for the Pricewaterhouse Coopers Survey Research Center. Her educational background includes a B.S. in Mathematics from Jacksonville State University and an M.S. in Survey Methodology from the University of Maryland.

CANDIDATE FOR SECRETARY (select one)**Chris Moriarity, NCHS**

Chris Moriarity is a Mathematical Statistician in the Division of Health Interview Statistics at the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Chris previously worked at the Census Bureau from 1986 to 1993, in the Office of Research and Methodology at NCHS from 1993 to 2002, and at the Government Accountability Office from 2002 to 2005. He served on the FCSM subcommittee that produced Statistical Policy Working Paper 31, "Measuring and Reporting Sources of Error in Surveys". He received a Ph.D. in Statistics from The George Washington University in 2001.

WSS and Other Seminars

(All events are open to any interested persons)

May

- 4 Fri. Systems pharmacology of type 2 diabetes: a case study for pharmaceutical development
- 8 Tues. The STATCOM Network: A Role for Students in Pro Bono Statistical Consulting to the Community
- 10 Thurs. Using the t-distribution to Deal with Outliers in Small Area Estimation
- 15 Tues. Confidence Interval Coverage in Model-Based Estimation
- 17 Thurs. The Role of Statistics and Statisticians in Human Rights
- 22 Tues. Characterization, Modeling and Management of Inferential Risk, Data Quality Risk and Operational Risk in Survey Procedures

Also available on the Web at the following URL: <http://www.scs.gmu.edu/~wss/>

Announcement

2007 Annual Dinner

The WSS Annual Dinner will be held Wednesday, June 27, 2007, at China Garden in Arlington, VA. Further details appear on the last page of this issue. Francesca Dominici of Johns Hopkins University and winner of the Gertrude M. Cox Award will be our Guest Speaker.

As always, this event provides a great opportunity to spend time with friends and make new acquaintances. We look forward to seeing you there!

Announcement

Committee on National Statistics of The National Academies

Seminar Announcement

Measuring the Economic Effects of GLOBAL WARMING

*Models, Data,
and Policies*

Thursday, May 10, 2007 • 3:00 PM
Auditorium of the Main Building of the
National Academy of Sciences
2100 C Street NW

William D. Nordhaus

Sterling Professor of Economics, Yale University

Member, National Academy of Sciences • Former Member, Committee on National Statistics

William D. Nordhaus will present an overview of the current state of research in the field and challenge the federal statistical and research communities to develop the data, statistics, methodological research, and analyses needed to help us chart our future course. Specifically, he will discuss "integrated assessment" and other economic models of global warming; present results of recent modeling efforts attempting to identify the relative efficiency of different policy objectives; assess the major uncertainties that limit our modeling efforts and, in turn, our understanding of the issues; and offer recommendations for improving statistical data that would improve our models, projections, and policy assessments.

Discussants: **Howard Gruenspecht**, *Deputy Administrator, Energy Information Administration* and
J. Steven Landefeld, *Director, Bureau of Economic Analysis*

Introductory remarks on federal statistics by **Katherine Wallman**, *U.S. Office of Management and Budget*

*Coffee, tea, and cookies available in Great Hall at 2:30 PM
Reception following the seminar*

*All are welcome to attend. Please RSVP by May 7 to
Bridget Edmonds at (202) 334-3096 or cnstat@nas.edu.*

Program Announcement

Title: Systems pharmacology of type 2 diabetes: a case study for pharmaceutical development

Speaker: Terry Ryan, PhD
Senior Director, Chemical Biology
Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, Collegeville, PA

Date/Time: Friday, May 4, 2007 / 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. (refreshments will be served at 9:45)

Location: Georgetown University
Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center
3800 Reservoir Road, NW
LL Lombardi, Room 131
Washington, DC 20057

Phone: 202-687-4114

Abstract: A key issue in drug discovery is the appropriate use of animal models to study human disease and therapeutic drug response. Animal models have, in general, been used to mimic human disease based upon relatively few points of analogy. The richness of open discovery “omics” platforms allows a comprehensive measurement of disease and drug response across a range of analyte classes, allowing investigators to better understand the predictive value of animal models for human disease. In a study conducted by GlaxoSmithKline, we compared disease effects and treatment response in two mouse models of type 2 diabetes and in a parallel human study. Three registered medicines for diabetes (rosiglitazone, metformin, and glyburide) were studied, and detailed measurements of transcripts, lipids, metabolites, and proteins were obtained in tissues and biofluids. Integrated data analysis using various multivariate techniques allowed for the generation of predictive fingerprints which shorten the time required to demonstrate treatment efficacy in diabetes trials, as well as allowing the identification of patients most likely to respond to a particular therapy from baseline measurements. In addition, analysis uncovered a previously unsuspected mechanism for rosiglitazone activity in diabetic adipose. The use of Systems Biology approaches with large “omic” datasets holds great promise for deeper understandings of disease biology and pharmacology

Note from the WSS NEWS Editor

Items for publication in the June issue of the WSS NEWS should be submitted no later than May 4, 2007. E-mail items to Michael Feil at michael.feil@usda.gov.

Program Announcement

Title: The STATCOM Network: A Role for Students in Pro Bono Statistical Consulting to the Community

Speakers: Cherie Ochsenfeld and Gayla Olbricht, Purdue University

Discussant: Shail Butani, BLS

Date/Time: Tuesday, May 8, 2007 / 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center room 10, Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.

Sponsors: WSS Human Rights, Quantitative Literacy, and General Methodology Programs

Who should attend: Students, faculty and professionals who are interested in statistical volunteer work in the community.

Abstract: The Statistics in the Community (STATCOM) Network is a graduate student-run consulting service that provides free statistical consulting to local governmental and nonprofit community groups. A need for statistical expertise in the local community was identified by a graduate student at Purdue University who founded STATCOM in 2001. Students who participate in STATCOM work in teams on community projects, while applying classroom knowledge and gaining marketable skills. STATCOM also has a P-12 Outreach component, which serves as an effort to increase interest and achievement in statistics among pre-college students by involvement in community events and classrooms. STATCOM, through a Strategic Initiatives Grant from the American Statistical Association, is currently developing a network across institutions of students devoting time to pro bono statistical consulting. This talk will cover the structure of the STATCOM Network, from a national and local level. In addition, this talk will address how the STATCOM Network can help fill a niche in pro bono statistical efforts and be supported by professional statisticians.

This is joint work with Alexander E. Lipka, Amy E. Watkins and Nilupa S. Gunaratna.

Cherie A. Ochsenfeld

Cherie A. Ochsenfeld received a B.S. in Mathematics/Economics, a M.A. in Teacher Education, and a California Teaching Credential in Mathematics from the University of California, Los Angeles. She received a M.S. in Applied Statistics from California State University, Hayward, a M.S. in Mathematical Statistics and is currently a Ph.D. student in Statistics at Purdue University. Her research interests include statistical genetics, nonparametric statistics, and QTL analysis. Cherie is the current Director of STATCOM at Purdue University and has served within the organization for three years.

Gayla R. Olbricht

Gayla R. Olbricht received a B.S. in Mathematics from Missouri State University. She received a M.S. in Applied Statistics and is currently a Ph.D. student in Statistics at Purdue University. Her research interests include statistical genetics, hidden Markov models, and epigenomics. Gayla is the current Student Advisor of STATCOM at Purdue University and has served within the organization for four years.

Shail Butani

Ms. Butani is Chief of the Statistical Methods Staff in the Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). She received both her B.A. and M.A. in mathematical statistics from George Washington University. Last year, she was one of the organizers of the ASA Special Interest Group for Volunteers.

In the early 1990's to mid 1990's, she led a very successful quantitative literacy (QL) effort for Washington Statistical Society particularly in the Fairfax County, VA. Major activities were: 1) Conducted and organized speakers and materials for career days for over 100 math classes each year. 2) Participated and provided consultants for QL workshops conducted by ASA for local teachers. 3) Provided statisticians to assist in developing math curricula for Fairfax County Public Schools. 4) Conducted and provided statisticians for elementary schools teachers' workshops. 5) Presented materials at Female Achieving Mathematics Equity (FAME) project. 6) Provided speakers for Girls Excelling in Math and Science (GEMS) programs. 7) Conducted and provided consultants for girls scouts' workshops.

Notice about Seminars at the Bureau of Labor Statistics

To attend a Bureau of Labor Statistics seminar, you will need to do one of the following:

1. e-mail name, affiliation, and name of seminar to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message.
2. Bring a photo ID.

BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Ave NE. Take the Red Line to Union Station.

Program Announcement

Title: Using the t-distribution to Deal with Outliers in Small Area Estimation

Speakers: William R. Bell and Elizabeth T. Huang, U.S. Census Bureau

Chair: Donald Malec, U.S. Census Bureau

Discussant: Alan M. Zaslavsky, Department of Health Care Policy, Harvard Medical School

Date/Time: Thursday, May 10, 2007 / 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center in G440. To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.

Sponsor: WSS Methodology Section

Abstract: Small area estimation using linear area level models typically assumes normality of the area level random effects (model errors) and of the survey errors of the direct survey estimates. Outlying observations can be a concern, and can arise from outliers in either the model errors or the survey errors, two possibilities with very different implications. We consider both possibilities here and investigate empirically how use of a Bayesian approach with a t-distribution assumed for one of the error components can address potential outliers. The empirical examples use models for U.S. state poverty ratios from the U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program, extending the usual Gaussian models to assume a t-distribution for the model error or survey error. Results are examined to see how they are affected by varying the number of degrees of freedom (assumed known) of the t-distribution. We find that using a t-distribution with low degrees of freedom can diminish the effects of outliers, but in the examples discussed the results do not go as far as approaching outright rejection of observations.

Program Announcement

- Title:** Confidence Interval Coverage in Model-Based Estimation
- Chair:** Yan Liu, IRS
- Speakers:** Jinhee Yang and Archana Joshee, Ernst & Young, Quantitative Economics and Statistics
- Discussant:** Kimberly Henry, IRS
- Date/Time:** Tuesday, May 15, 2007/12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center. To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** Methodology Program, WSS
- Abstract:** When there is a strongly related auxiliary variable, model-based estimation can yield more precise estimates from smaller samples. Assumptions are made to build the models, produce estimates, and calculate confidence intervals. The first talk explores confidence interval coverage with deep stratification under scenarios when the assumptions are not quite correct, such as failing to assume correct scedasticity, recognize curvature, or incorporate an intercept. In these settings confidence interval coverage can be poor, robust, or ultra conservative. The second talk explores confidence interval coverage and Satterthwaite's approximation to the degrees of freedom when two or more model based estimates are summed in complex sample designs.

Program Announcement

Title: The Role of Statistics and Statisticians in Human Rights

Speakers: David Banks Duke University;
Gary Shapiro, Westat;
Paul Zador, Westat

Chair: Ariela Blätter,
Director, Crisis Preparedness and Response Center,
Amnesty International

Discussant: Erik Voeten, Department of Political Science
Elliott School of International Affairs
The George Washington University

Date/Time: Thursday, May 17, 2007 / 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Location: AAAS Headquarters Auditorium
1200 New York Ave NW
Washington DC 20005

Note the location change. To RSVP, please submit your name, professional affiliation, and the title of the seminar to shrp@aaas.org (even if your name is already on the BLS visitor list).

Sponsors: Human Rights Section, Washington Statistical Society (WSS)
Science and Human Rights Program of the American Association for the
Advancement of Science (SHR-AAAS)
Washington-Baltimore Chapter of the American Association for Public Opinion
Research (DC-AAPOR)
Capitol Area Social Psychological Association (CASPA)
District of Columbia Sociological Society (DCSS)
District of Columbia Psychological Association (DCPA)

Who Should Attend: Human rights activists, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, survey researchers, researchers of unsettled populations, and statisticians.

Abstract: This seminar, designed with human rights practitioners in mind, outlines some examples of situations in which statisticians were asked to contribute to human rights projects. Our hope is to allow networking between the statistical community and the human rights community so that the unique contributions that statisticians can make towards human rights advocacy will be utilized in the future.

David Banks - A Katrina Experience

In 2005 the NSF sponsored a number of research projects on the aftermath of Katrina. This talk describes a survey led by Duke, UNC-Charlotte, and Tulane to study the factors that affected whether or not New Orleans residents chose to evacuate in advance of the storm, and what factors affected their post-Katrina experience. As part of this effort we found that some aspects of classic survey methodology do not work well with unsettled populations, and we developed workarounds that often were surprisingly successful.

Gary Shapiro - Guatemala Police Records

Several warehouses were discovered in Guatemala that contain millions of documents belonging to the National Police prior to 1996. The documents are of interest because some provide information on instances of police violence. The Human Rights Data Analysis Group at Benetech was asked to provide technical assistance for understanding and analyzing the archives. In turn, a group of ASA members provided assistance to Benetech on how sampling of these documents could be done. This talk discusses the complex structure of the archives, the sampling that is now being done, and the type of assistance provided to Benetech.

Paul Zador - Darfur What Could Have Been

Several estimates of deaths during the Darfur crisis will be summarized. The methods used to derive them, and their reliability, will be reviewed and critiqued based in part on comments recently published in GAO's report on the Darfur crisis. The question will be raised: How do we determine the practical difference having precise disaster estimates of deaths, hunger, injuries, etc. might make? A volunteer group designed a survey of refugee camps in Chad, but the survey was never conducted. We will describe the survey's design, and discuss why it never happened.

Program Announcement

- Title:** Characterization, Modeling and Management of Inferential Risk, Data Quality Risk and Operational Risk in Survey Procedures
- Chair:** Meena Khare, SRSDS/ORM/NCHS/CDC
- Speaker:** Dr. John Eltinge, Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Discussant:** Dr. Fritz Scheuren, NORC, University of Chicago
- Date/Time:** Tuesday, May 22, 2007/12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center. To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** Methodology Program, WSS
- Abstract:** This paper explores some conceptual and methodological issues that are important in the design, operation and analysis of large-scale government surveys. We view the design of survey procedures (including initial planning, sample design, data collection, inference and dissemination) as a mixture of optimization and risk management efforts in the presence of constraints and incomplete information. This in turn suggests several potentially rich areas for research in mathematical and applied statistics.

Five topics receive principal attention, beginning with some relatively well-defined technical issues and then expanding to several broader topics related to data quality and risk management. First, a review of the goals, constraints and risk profiles of survey practice suggests a spectrum of potential approaches to survey work, ranging from rigorously predetermined survey procedures at one extreme to highly exploratory analyses of previously collected data at the other extreme. Classical randomization-based procedures are arguably compatible with a mandate for predetermined methodology. Nonetheless, these procedures have limitations arising from efficiency issues, the presence of nonsampling error, and prospective inferential interest beyond the finite population that was sampled. These limitations lead to review of a second class of approaches to the analysis of survey data, based on models for survey variables, auxiliary variables and nonsampling error processes. Third, we use the framework of risk management to explore six dimensions of survey data quality suggested in Brackstone (1999): accuracy (incorporating all of the components of error considered in standard models for total survey error), timeliness, relevance, interpretability, accessibility and coherence. Fourth, we expand our discussion of risk management by considering operational risk, i.e., the risk that one or more steps in a survey procedure may not be carried out as specified. Finally, we note that work with large-scale surveys will involve a mixture of statistical science and statistical technology, and we suggest that the literature on adoption and diffusion of technology can offer important insights into the distribution of expectations, utility functions and behaviors of large survey organizations, data analysts and other data users.

Students' Corner

One of the best ways to enrich your academic experiences during your studies is to expose your curiosities not only to the topics that you are interested in, but also to those that are even unknown to you. Are you guilty of staying within your comfort zone (e.g., your cozy office on campus surrounded by the same people everyday)? I personally believe that ideas, especially for your thesis research, are often born out of encountering something new and not necessarily related to the topics of your interest. So, where can we, as students, get these opportunities? My answer is "Get out of your campus and attend seminars and short courses!"

As you probably know already, WSS sponsors a series of statistical seminars and short courses. You can get a list of upcoming seminars and short courses at the following web pages:

For seminars: <http://vanish.science.gmu.edu/~wss/seminar.html>

For short courses: <http://vanish.science.gmu.edu/~wss/shortcs.html>

These seminars and short courses are held multiple times every month across a wide variety of topics. It is good to check these web pages periodically, because for short courses, available seats are limited, especially for student registrations, and they get filled rather quickly.

I attended a WSS short course in March: "R and Analysis of Complex Survey" taught by Prof. Thomas Lumley from the University of Washington. It was a well-attended two-day course: I heard there was a long waiting-list. As a student, I got a discounted registration fee of \$50 (which is very reasonable especially with lunch, coffee, and snacks provided!). Prof. Lumley, the instructor, went through well-prepared power-point lecture notes, and it was very interactive sessions where he welcomed many questions. One nice thing about this kind of short courses is that you get to talk with the instructor personally during breaks and ask some of the lingering questions you have been pondering about.

As much as I liked the content of the course, what I liked the most was the opportunities to interact with working professional statisticians who were also attendees of the course. Through these interactions, I expanded my network in the professional statisticians' community and also received a lot of stimuli for my research ideas.

Finally, let me add to the list the series of seminars that the department of statistics at the George Washington University organizes. You can get more information about the upcoming seminars and also join the mailing list at:

<http://www.gwu.edu/~stat/seminar.htm>

That's all I have for this month. If you have any feedback on this column or ideas of topics for future issues, please send an email to me at hikawa@gwu.edu.

Hiro Hikawa
The George Washington University

Employment

As a service to local statisticians, *WSS News* provides notification of employment opportunities and description of those seeking employment here in the Washington, DC, area. Readers are encouraged to take advantage of this feature of the newsletter. The deadline for inserting notices is five (5) weeks before the publication date. Those interested should email or call Anne Peterson, at apeterson@insightpolicyresearch.com or (703) 373-6645.

CLINICAL TRIAL BIOSTATISTICIANS M.S. and Ph.D. Level Positions

With an opportunity for substantial leadership responsibility in studies of international public health import.

The Biostatistics Center of The George Washington University, founded in 1972, is a leader in the statistical coordination of clinical trials conducted by the National Institutes of Health. We enjoy over \$45 million per year of NIH research funding for major studies in cardiovascular disease, diabetes, maternal/fetal medicine, osteoporosis, urology, and the genetic basis for various diseases. The center has a staff of over 100 with 27 biostatisticians/epidemiologists, including 10 faculty. We are recruiting M.S. and Ph.D. level staff to participate in these and future studies. Please visit our web site (below).

Master's Level Research Positions: These positions require a Master's in Biostatistics or Statistics and 1-5 years experience in analysis, supervision of data management and study design for biomedical applications. Good written and oral communication skills, and detailed knowledge of SAS required. Send CV to address below.

Assistant to Full Research Professorial Positions are available immediately to serve as Co-Investigator or Principal Investigator (Project Director) and to provide statistical direction of the design, conduct and analysis of studies and the conduct of methodologic research to meet the projects needs. We are seeking individuals who want to join a highly competent team of academic biostatisticians and epidemiologists; who desire to contribute to the design and analysis of major medical studies, seek substantive scientific and statistical responsibility, enjoy interacting with medical investigators; take pride contributing to the publication of major papers in leading medical journals, and desire to make an impact on the public health. Our faculty also participate in graduate programs in biostatistics, epidemiology and statistics which afford opportunities for teaching at the graduate level. The research projects also provide an environment rich in methodological problems, with opportunities for collaboration with research active Center faculty and graduate students.

Minimum Position Requirements: Doctorate in Biostatistics, Statistics or Epidemiology, or alternatively an M.D. or Ph.D. in Biological Science, Physical Science or Computer Science with a Masters in Biostatistics or Statistics, 1-5 years' experience with clinical trials, especially study design and statistical analysis of study results using SAS, excellent oral and written English communication skills, and supervisory experience.

Application Procedures: Applicants must send a Curriculum Vitae and three letters of reference; a letter to include a synopsis of their role in collaborative medical research that has led to medical scientific presentation or publication and a statement of career purpose indicating their career goals and how this position can help you achieve those goals; and applicants for Assistant Research Professor positions must send an Official Transcript of graduate coursework leading to the doctoral degree to: Sarah Fowler, Research Professor and Director, The George Washington University Biostatistics Center, 6110 Executive Blvd., Suite 750, Rockville, MD 20852.

[HTTP://WWW.BSC.GWU.EDU](http://www.bsc.gwu.edu)

Review of applications is ongoing until the positions are filled. Rank/position title and salary commensurate with experience and qualifications. Tuition benefits for employees (including Ph.D. in Statistics, Biostatistics and Epidemiology) and for spouse and dependent children.

All research and regular faculty at the rank of Assistant Professor in Biostatistics or Statistics may apply for the Samuel W. Greenhouse Biostatistics Research Enhancement Award. For a period of 1 year, the award will provide 20% effort for methodological research and a discretionary fund to support professional activities, travel to professional meetings, supplies and equipment. Applicants for the research faculty position may also apply for the Greenhouse Award while their faculty application is being considered. For complete information including Award Application Materials Requirements, please visit our website at: www.bsc.gwu.edu.

The George Washington University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer

Survey Sampling Statistician

WESTAT: AN EMPLOYEE-OWNED RESEARCH CORPORATION

Westat is an employee-owned corporation headquartered in the suburbs of Washington, DC (Rockville, Maryland). We provide statistical consulting and survey research to the agencies of the U.S. Government and to a broad range of business and institutional clients. With a strong technical and managerial staff and a long record of quality research, Westat has become one of the leading survey research and statistical consulting organizations in the United States.

Our company was founded in 1961 by three statisticians. The current staff of more than 1,800 includes over 60 statisticians, as well as research, technical, and administrative staff. In addition, our professional staff is supported by data collection and processing personnel situated locally and in field sites around the country. The work atmosphere is open, progressive, and highly conducive to professional growth.

Our statistical efforts continue to expand in areas such as the environment, energy, health, education, and human resources. Westat statisticians are actively involved in teaching graduate-level courses in statistical methods and survey methodology in collaborative arrangements with area colleges and universities.

We are currently recruiting for the following statistical position:

Survey Sampling Statistician (Job Code WSS/DRM/7001)

Three or more years of relevant experience in sample design and selection, frames development, weighting, imputation, and variance estimation. Must have a master's or doctoral degree in statistics and have excellent writing skills. Coursework in sample survey design is highly desirable.

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Statistician

MAXIMUS, a consulting firm based in Reston, VA, seeks a statistical consultant who can provide expert assistance in the areas of sampling design and data analysis. The assistance we seek might include the following types of issues: (1) developing complex sample designs for reviewing administrative and claims records; (2) analyzing and presenting data in reports and defending the results to OIG staff; and (3) developing various data mining approaches to large datasets. We seek candidates with a familiarity with various public assistance and related programs, including Food Stamps, TANF, Medicaid, child welfare. The assignments will be variable and primarily of a short-term variety. The opportunity would be best suited to someone who is able to respond quickly. Please contact by email to the following: bobbleimann@maximus.com.



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Washington Statistical Society Annual Dinner

Wednesday, June 27, 2007, 6:30 PM

Cocktails 5:30 PM

China Garden, 1100 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22209

(Metro: Rosslyn on the blue and orange line)

Keynote Presentation

by

Francesca Dominici, Johns Hopkins University

2007 Gertrude M. Cox Award Recipient

- Made Possible by Funding from RTI International -

Cash Bar

Wide Variety of Dishes Including:

Roast Chicken Cantonese Style

And

Double Mushroom with Mustard Green

And

Fresh Seafood with Bean Curd Soup

And

Vegetable Fried Rice

Price:..... \$35.00 per person.....Check Payable to WSS

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Or email yves.thibaudeau@census.gov or call (301) 763 1706