



WSS NEWS

WASHINGTON STATISTICAL SOCIETY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2** NEWLY ELECTED TO 2013 WSS BOARD
- 3** 2012-2013 WSS ANNUAL REPORT
- 8** SEMINARS
- 15** CONFERENCES
- 17** SHORT COURSES AND WORKSHOPS
- 20** WSS ON THE MOVE!
- 23** WSS MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT
- 25** BE INFORMED AND GET INVOLVED!
- 28** STUDENT CORNER
- 29** EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
- 30** WSS BOARD OF DIRECTORS, COMMITTEES, AND PROGRAMS
- 35** FROM THE WSS NEWS EDITOR

NEWLY ELECTED TO 2013 WSS BOARD

The Washington Statistical Society was privileged to have an exceptional slate of candidates who volunteered their services and stood for election to the WSS Board this year. We would like to thank each of the candidates for volunteering despite the many other responsibilities they have. We would like to congratulate the members who were elected based on the votes of the membership. They will join with the remaining members of the Board beginning this summer.

Congratulations to the newly-elected Board members!

President

Diane Herz

Methodology

Mike Fleming

Representatives-at-Large

Jaki McCarthy, Steve Paben

Secretary

Andy Keller

~Jonaki Bose
Past-President, Chair of the Nomination Committee

2012-2013 WSS ANNUAL REPORT

August 2013

The 2012-13 year was an active one for the WSS on several fronts. The Society continues to be active in a wide variety of areas. A large number of volunteers contribute to the Society's efforts, and this year saw several members step forward to make major contributions in new ways. The continuing challenges for the Society appear to be the role of WSS in organizing and promoting seminars in the age of remote access; how best to communicate effectively with members; and the strategy for developing effective short courses, again in an environment of webinars and other opportunities for remote access. Membership numbers remain strong, with approximately 1000 members.

Constitutional Changes

In September the WSS membership voted to amend the constitution two ways. The first amendment removed the ASA District 2 Vice-Chair as an ex-officio voting member of the WSS board. This change was appropriate now that District 2 encompasses more than just the Washington area (the current District 2 Vice-Chair is from Kentucky and is not a WSS member). The second amendment added a voting position of Communications Officer. This position was added in recognition of the fact that WSS is a large society that needs to contact its members in various ways for a variety of reasons. A serious commitment to coordinating these communications is required, and the creation of the Communications Officer position was seen as a way to meet this need. The Board appointed Phil Kalina to fill this position until June 2014, at which time the full membership will elect the Communications Officer, to serve a two-year term. The Board is grateful to Jonaki Bose, who organized the referendum, and to the several current and former board members who contributed to the process of introducing these changes.



Connie Citro delivers the WSS President's Invited Lecture at the Bureau of Labor Statistics on May 22, 2013

Awards

The 2012 Roger Herriot Award, co-sponsored by WSS, and the ASA's Government and Social Statistics Sections, was awarded to Paul Biemer of RTI International. On October 23 Dr. Biemer Presented a seminar at the BLS Conference Center on the topic "Issues in the Evaluation of Data Quality for Business Surveys". The award is intended to recognize individuals who develop unique and innovative approaches to the solution of statistical problems in federal data collection programs.

2013 Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics was awarded to The 1973 Current Population Survey (CPS)-Internal Revenue Service (IRS)-Social Security Administration (SSA) Exact Match Study, a joint

undertaking of the SSA and the Census Bureau. A seminar associated with this award will be held during the second half of 2013.

The 2012 Hansen Lecture was presented on October 9 by Kenneth Prewitt of Columbia University, under the title "Thank you Morris et al., for Westat et al." The discussants were Margo Anderson, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Dan Gaylin, NORC at the University of Chicago. As usual the seminar took place at the USDA Auditorium. The Hansen Lecture is supported by Westat and the USDA.

John C. Haltiwanger, Distinguished University Professor of Economics at the University of Maryland, and Maurine Haver, President and founder of Haver Analytics Inc., were selected to receive the 2013 Julius Shiskin Memorial Award for Economic Statistics. The award recognizes unusually original and important contributions in the development of economic statistics or in the use of statistics in interpreting the economy. Both Professor Haltiwanger and Ms. Haver are recognized for initiatives to educate users and producers of key federal economic statistics. The Award is cosponsored by the WSS, the National Association for Business Economics, and the Business and Economics Statistics Section of the ASA.

The 2013 Gertrude Cox Award was presented to Frauke Kreuter of the University of Maryland at College Park. On June 25th Dr. Kreuter gave a seminar on the topic "Big Data in Survey Research: Analyzing Process Information (Paradata)". The Cox Award is sponsored by WSS and RTI International, with RTI International providing financial support. The award recognizes a statistician in early to mid-career who has made significant contributions to one or more of the areas of applied statistics in which Gertrude Cox worked: survey methodology, experimental design, biostatistics, and statistical computing.

The WSS Board again voted to contribute towards the Jeanne Griffith Mentoring Award, which is was established to encourage the mentoring of younger staff in the Federal Statistical

System. The Government Statistics Section (GSS) of the American Statistical Association manages the award. In the coming year the WSS Board will consider whether to cosponsor this award on an ongoing basis.

WSS President's Awards were presented at the Annual Dinner on June 25th to Darryl Creel, Dan Liao, and Dan Jacobs, in recognition of their unique service to WSS.

WSS presented awards at the annual dinner to five outstanding graduate students in statistics attending area universities.

Seminars and Conferences

In addition to the award's seminars discussed above, sixteen seminars were sponsored by the WSS during the year. Seminars were generally held at the BLS conference center, and most were videocast to remote sites. Slides from most presentations are available on the WSS web site.

This year the President's Invited Seminar was delivered by Connie Citro, Executive Director of the Committee on National Statistics. The talk was given at on May 22nd at the BLS Conference Center, on the topic "From Multiple Modes for Surveys to Multiple Sources for Estimates".

The other fifteen seminars were sponsored by various WSS sections, as follows:

- Methodology 7
- Public Health and Biostatistics 3
- Agriculture and Natural Resources 2
- Human Rights 2
- Defense and National Security 1

As was the case last summer, WSS has worked with DC-AAPOR to co-sponsor a Summer Conference Review/Preview, bringing to a Washington audience a sample of talks from 2013 AAPOR and JSM conferences. This year the conference will be held at the BLS Conference Center on July 30th and 31st.

Some members have expressed concern that WSS is not sponsoring as many seminars in recent years as in the past. However, this must be considered in the context of the wide variety of seminar options available for statisticians in the Washington area, with many being available via remote access. An indication of this can be seen by reviewing the selection of seminars listed on the WSS web site (<http://washstat.org/sem2013.html>). In some cases potential speakers decline to give a WSS seminar, citing the fact that they have already given multiple presentations on the topic in question at a variety of venues. Nevertheless WSS does need to be vigilant in ensuring that it continues to strive to meet the needs of its members to receive information about new developments in the statistics field.

Quantitative Literacy

Once again excellent entries were received for the Curtis Jacobs Award, The Poster Competition and the Science Fair Competition. These competitions require a lot of volunteer effort from WSS members, and the Board is very grateful to those who coordinated these events and those who participated. Dhuly Chowdhury took on the role of Quantitative Literacy Chair this year, and her efforts are much appreciated. Tom Krenzke and Barnali Das took on the leadership roles for the Curtis Jacobs Award and Poster Competition respectively.

Short Courses

No short courses were conducted during 2012-13. However, two courses are currently planned for October 2013.

Social Activities

This year Frank Yoon took over responsibility as lead coordinator of social events, and the Board is very appreciative of all his efforts, and willingness to quickly take charge of his new role. The holiday party was again held at Clyde's in Chevy Chase, on December 12th, with good attendance and a great spirit of camaraderie.

The 2013 annual dinner was held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Washington DC, on June 25th, following the Cox Lecture. The arrangements for the past two years, whereby the Cox Lecture is given in a suitable auditorium, immediately followed by the WSS Annual Dinner at a restaurant within walking distance, appears to have been effective in meeting the goal of providing a suitable venue for each function, while keeping them as strongly linked activities in the WSS calendar. The challenge to continuing this approach would appear to be that of finding suitable yet affordable restaurants in convenient locations.

Membership Survey

On the initiative of Representative-at-large Mel Kollander, the Board undertook a survey of members, specifically concerning their views regarding the WSS Newsletter. Respondents generally were satisfied with the content, timing, and delivery of the Newsletter, and no major changes are envisaged as a result of the survey. Members did provide some useful suggestions and helpful insights, which will be used to enhance the newsletter, and communications more generally, in the future. However, with a 25 percent response rate to the survey, there remains a question as to whether we are doing all that is possible to meet the needs of our substantial membership. Many thanks to Westat for technically supporting the on-line survey, and of course to our newsletter editor Colleen Choi whose dedicated efforts enable us to produce a newsletter that members appear to be largely satisfied with.

Finances

WSS continues to have a healthy financial status. Although no short courses were held during the year, which often generate income (although they also represent WSS's greatest financial risks), there were no unexpected expenses, and our co-sponsorship of the new summer conference generated a modest profit. Consequently the WSS account balance at the end of the fiscal year was similar to that at the start of the year.

Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to the success of WSS this year. Some of them are mentioned in this report, but it would be a mistake to think that they necessarily made greater contributions than others. It is not possible here to properly recognize everyone who contributed. WSS continues to thrive only because many members are willing to devote time and effort to its activities.

I have enjoyed great support from Past President Jonaki Bose, who has been so much more than a source of knowledge and guidance about past activities, and President-Elect Nancy Bates, who has been so much more than a 'President-in-waiting'. The effect of Jonaki's coming loss from the WSS Board is fortunately mitigated by Nancy's enthusiasm and perceptiveness. It has been a pleasure to work with both of them.

I thank the members of the WSS for their support over the past year, and look forward to another year of service on the Board.

~Keith Rust
President 2012-2013

SEMINARS

- Title:** **Bio3 Seminar Series:
Contrasted Penalized Integrative Analysis**
- Date/Time:** **September 13, 2013, 10-11 a.m.**
Q&A time until 11:30 am
- Speaker:** Shuangge Ma, Ph.D.,
Professor of Public Health (Biostatistics), Yale University
- Location:** Warwick Evans Conference Room, Building D,
Georgetown University Medical Campus

4000 Reservoir Road NW, Washington, DC 20057
<http://bit.ly/X8OKBN> (map)

Detailed directions for public transportation, car, and parking can be found here: <http://dbbb.georgetown.edu/about/Visitors/>
- Abstract:** Single-dataset analysis of high-throughput omics data often leads to unsatisfactory results. The integrative analysis of heterogeneous raw data from multiple independent studies provides an effective way to increase sample size and improve marker selection results. In integrative analysis, the regression coefficient matrix has certain structures. In our study, we use group penalization for one- or two-dimensional marker selection and introduce contrast penalties to accommodate the subtle coefficient structures. Simulations show that the proposed methods have significantly improved marker selection properties. In the analysis of cancer genomic data, important markers missed by the existing methods are identified.

Title: **The 1973 Exact Match Study
2013 Roger Herriot Award:**

Date/Time: **September 17, 2013, 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.**
Light refreshments will be served following the talk
* Video conferencing will **not** be available.

Speaker: Bertram Kestenbaum, U.S. Social Security Administration

Chair: Fritz Scheuren, NORC at the University of Chicago

Remembrance: Gordon Green, Sentier Research, LLC
Benjamin Bridges, U.S. Social Security Administration
Peter Sailer (Consultant), U.S. Internal Revenue Service

Award Presentation: Jill Montaquila, Roger Herriot Award Committee

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Room 2

To be placed on the seminar attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics 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.

Abstract: It has been almost 20 years since the untimely death of Roger Herriot.

Throughout his career at the National Center for Education Statistics and earlier at the U.S. Census Bureau, Roger demonstrated an enduring commitment to improving federal statistical data and encouraging fresh and original approaches to developing new and better data sources. It was, therefore, most appropriate that his passing should lead to the establishment of the Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics, which is “intended to recognize individuals or teams who, like Roger, develop unique and innovative approaches to the solution of statistical problems in federal data collection programs.”

This year marks the 40th anniversary of a unique project that not only encapsulates the kind of innovation that Roger Herriot was recognized for. He actually co-led the effort which continues, even now, to draw on

the cooperative spirit and creativity of federal statisticians and economists from multiple agencies. This was the 1973 Current Population Survey (CPS) - Internal Revenue Service (IRS) - Social Security Administration (SSA) Exact Match Study.

The 1973 Exact Match Study was a joint undertaking of the SSA and the Census Bureau that linked survey records for persons in the March 1973 CPS to their respective earnings and benefit information in SSA administrative records and, with full IRS cooperation, to selected items from 1972 IRS individual income tax returns. All three agencies offered staff to work on the undertaking, so it was an interagency effort, not just something done by isolated individuals. Needless to say, careful disclosure safeguards, both physical and legal, were imposed. This first-of-its-kind initiative not only encouraged better cooperation among statistical agencies, but also helped to kick-start major advances in record linkage techniques and important research into the use of administrative data to improve survey methods and output. Research with these and other data sets continues to this day.

In recognition of this seminal interagency work, the 1973 Exact Match Study was selected as this year's winner of the Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics. To celebrate that event, WSS will hold a special session at the BLS Conference Center. Alumni of the Exact Match Study and subsequent users of the data are especially encouraged to attend. Refreshments will be served. Join us in commemorating this well-deserved honor and re-connect with old friends!

Point of Contact: Wendy Alvey (301) 775-7094 wendyalvey@hotmail.com

Title: **Bio3 Seminar Series:
Enriched ensemble methods for classification of high-dimensional data***

Date/Time: **September 27, 2013, 10-11 a.m.**
Q&A until 11:30 am

Speaker: Dhammika Amaratunga, Ph.D.
Senior Director and Janssen Fellow, Janssen Research & Development

Location: Warwick Evans Conference Room, Building D,
Georgetown University Medical Campus

4000 Reservoir Road NW, Washington, DC 20057
<http://bit.ly/X8OKBN> (map)

Detailed directions for public transportation, car, and parking can be found here: <http://dbbb.georgetown.edu/about/Visitors/>

Abstract: A spate of technological advances has led to an explosion of high-dimensional data. One of the challenges of modern statistics is how to deal with this type of data. We will consider data from biomedical research that are characterized by the fact that they are comprised of a large number of variables measured on relatively few subjects, such as microarray or deep sequencing data. Classification and regression techniques are often used for analyzing this data, both for prediction as well as for identifying combinations of a few key variables associated with response. However, standard methods do not work well in this setting, due to the small sample size and surfeit of variables, a problem sometimes also exacerbated by the presence of non-specific signals. Enriched methods are a way of circumventing these difficulties. We will describe enriched methods, particularly enriched ensemble methods, that work well with this type of data. Real examples will be used to illustrate the methodology.

*Joint work with Javier Cabrera and others



23rd Annual **Morris Hansen Lecture**

Envisioning the 2030 U.S. Census

Speaker: Stephen E. Fienberg

Discussants

Ivan Fellegi, former Chief Statistician, Statistics Canada

Robert Groves, Provost, Georgetown University

Abstract: The level of the error in the U.S. decennial census as measured by gross error (the sum of the errors of omission and commission), has remained remarkably high at approximately 10% over the last three censuses. During the same period, the cost of the census has skyrocketed from \$2.6 billion in 1990 to over \$13 billion in 2010, even though the census long form was dropped in 2010 in favor of data collection over the decade via the American Community Survey. Without dramatic changes, the cost of a traditional census in 2020 will far outstrip the willingness of Congress to pay. Moreover, we predict that concerns about the confidentiality of census data will pose increasing problems despite the Census Bureau's constant vigilance. The Census Bureau clearly needs to become more nimble in testing new methodologies for census-taking without jettisoning the best of current approaches. In this presentation we will look beyond 2020 to 2030 and speculate on radical changes that could allow for greater census accuracy and lower costs. Methodologies we consider include: the use of aerial photography to supplement or even replace the master address file, the multiple roles for administrative records, and the widespread use of both individual and family-level online census forms. We discuss both obstacles and opportunities in addressing the challenge of placing everyone in the U.S. into appropriate household locations, and we reexamine the concept of counting everyone, "once, and only once, and in the right place."

(This presentation is based on joint research with William F. Eddy)

Thursday, October 3, 2013

3:30 – 5:30 pm

**Jefferson Auditorium, U.S. Department
of Agriculture South Building**

Independence

**Ave. (between 12th and 14th
Streets) Smithsonian Metro
Station (Blue/Orange Lines)**

A reception will follow at 5:30pm in the
Whitten Building Patio

Please pre-register for this event to help
facilitate access to the building online at
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/morrishansen/>

Sponsors: the Washington Statistical
Society, Westat, and the National
Agricultural Statistics Service



STEPHEN E. FIENBERG is Maurice Falk University Professor of Statistics and Social Science at Carnegie Mellon University, holding appointments in the Department of Statistics, the Machine Learning Department, and the Heinz College. He has been on the faculty at Carnegie Mellon since 1980, except for a two-year appointment as vice president for academic affairs at York University, Toronto, and previously served on the faculty of the University of Chicago and the University of Minnesota. He was a member of the Committee on National Statistics from 1978-1987 and chair from 1981-1984 and again from 1985-1987 following a sabbatical year at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. Dr. Fienberg received an honors B.Sc. in mathematics and statistics from the University of Toronto and an A.M. and Ph.D. in statistics from Harvard University. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, and an elected fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Royal Society of Canada, and a fellow of the American Statistical Association and the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, for which he served as president. Dr. Fienberg has chaired and served on numerous National Research Council panels on such topics as sharing research data, statistical assessments as evidence in the courts, decennial census methodology, evaluation of bilingual education studies, measuring racial discrimination, the polygraph and lie detection, and the technical and privacy dimensions of information on terrorism. Best known for his work on the analysis of categorical data, he is also co-author with Margo Anderson of *Who Counts? The Politics of Census-Taking in Contemporary America*.



- Title:** **Bio3 Seminar Series:
Research at Census, including links to Biostatistics/Informatics**
- Date/Time:** **October 25, 2013, 10-11 a.m.**
Q&A time until 11:30 am
- Speaker:** Thomas A. Louis, Ph.D.
Research & Methodology Directorate, U.S. Census Bureau
Professor, Department of Biostatistics, Johns Hopkins
- Location:** Warwick Evans Conference Room, Building D,
Georgetown University Medical Campus

4000 Reservoir Road NW, Washington, DC 20057
<http://bit.ly/X8OKBN> (map)

Detailed directions for public transportation, car, and parking can be found here: <http://dbbb.georgetown.edu/about/Visitors/>
- Abstract:** In order to meet the challenges of efficiently obtaining valid information and making it available to the public, research at the U.S. Census Bureau and survey research more generally burgeons. Many research goals and methods are similar to those addressed by and used in Biostatistics or Informatics. To set the scene, I briefly describe the Census Research & Methodology directorate, list major issues and approaches, then provide details on a small subset. Candidate topics include adaptive design (dynamic survey modes, R-factors in the National Survey of College Graduates, timing of mailing hard copy based on K-M curves, challenges of learning from experience), stopping rules, randomized experiments (the effect of interviewer training in the National Crime Victimization Survey), record matching, prediction (of response propensity, of occupancy, of the "fitness for use" of administrative records), imputation, Bayesian methods (design-consistent analyses, post-processed {confidence} intervals, benchmarking), small area/spatio-temporal analysis (estimation of poverty rates, estimating omissions in the master address file), development and use of paradata (in the National Health Interview Survey), double-robustness, dynamic data posting ("OnTheMap" Local Origin-Destination Employment Statistics), disclosure avoidance/limitation, Big Data (opportunities and challenges), micro-simulation (benefits of research in designing the 2020 Census), and IT infrastructure (the Multi-mode Operational Control System). I close with a call for increased collaboration among statistical agencies and academe, building on the NSF-Census Bureau Research Network.

Title: **Bio3 Seminar Series:
Estimation of mean response via effective balancing score***

Date/Time: **November 8, 2013, 10-11 a.m.**
Q&A time until 11:30 am

Speaker: Zonghui Hu, Ph.D.,
National Institutes of Health

Location: Warwick Evans Conference Room, Building D,
Georgetown University Medical Campus

4000 Reservoir Road NW, Washington, DC 20057
<http://bit.ly/X8OKBN> (map)

Detailed directions for public transportation, car, and parking can be found here: <http://dbbb.georgetown.edu/about/Visitors/>

Abstract: We introduce effective balancing scores for estimation of the mean response under MAR (missing at random). Unlike conventional balancing scores, the effective balancing scores are constructed via dimension reduction free of model specification. Three types of effective balancing scores are introduced, carrying the covariate information about the missingness, the response, or both. They lead to consistent estimation with little or no loss in efficiency. Compared to existing estimators, the effective balancing score based estimator relieves the burden of model specification and is the most robust. It is a near-automatic procedure that is most appealing when high dimensional covariates are involved. We investigate both the asymptotic and the numerical properties, and demonstrate the proposed method in a study of HIV disease.

*Full list of authors for this paper: Hu Z., Follmann D.A., Wang N.

CONFERENCES

NCRN Mini-Symposium: Record Linkage and Metadata

October 4, 2013, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

U.S. Census Bureau Headquarters, Suitland, MD

The eight nodes of the NSF–Census Research Network (NCRN) will hold a one-day technical mini-symposium on Friday, October 4, 2013. The program consists of two sessions focused on topics of broad interest to the nodes, the Census Bureau, and the Federal Statistical System. Presentations by researchers from the NCRN nodes will highlight research performed by the nodes, with opportunity for questions and comments from the audience.

The schedule and topics for the day are:

10:00 AM–12:30 PM: Record Linkage

This session will address such issues as multi-way linkage, unduplication, linkage-induced uncertainty and its consequences for inference (including generation of multiple imputed datasets in order to evaluate uncertainties), and merging concepts and techniques from statistics and computer science.

1:30 PM–4:00 PM: Metadata within National Statistical Systems: Using the Latest DDI Tools to Increase the Return on Investment

In an era of declining resources and increasing demands, metadata has become a key strategy to enabling the use of administrative data for new purposes and is key to providing quality documentation and improving data dissemination systems. Champions of the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI), a well-defined international metadata standard for the social sciences, now exist within National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) around the world. This session will bring leading DDI tools developers together with representatives from NSIs and other federal statistical agencies to: 1) demonstrate the latest data and metadata management, discovery, and dissemination tools; 2) discuss challenges and success stories in DDI implementation and tools use; and 3) provide an opportunity for panelist and audience members to give feedback and input directly to DDI tools developers.

The mini-symposium is free and open to the public. To register for the symposium, contact Ms. Sandra Heineck at Sandra.L.Heineck@census.gov (301-763-7559), and let her know if you will need a visitor's parking pass; Census Bureau headquarters is located at the Suitland Metro station on the Green line. Non-U.S. citizens have special entry requirements -- please also contact our international visitors office, Eugene.J.Vandrovec@census.gov (301-763-6418). Ms. Heineck will supply a more detailed agenda via e-mail to registrants.



The Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) is planning a research conference to be held at the **Washington Convention Center, Washington, DC** on **November 4-6, 2013**. The conference provides a forum for experts from around the world to discuss and exchange current research and methodological topics relevant to statistical programs.

Tentative Schedule of Activities

Activity	Date
Abstracts due	<i>passed</i>
Papers selected/Authors notified	May 2013
Advance program ready	August 2013
Conference registration open	August 2013
Draft paper due to Organizers/Chairs	September 2013
Final program ready	October 2013
Conference dates	November 4-6, 2013
Final paper due (FCSM on-line proceedings)	January 31, 2014

To obtain conference information or to be included on the mailing list, contact:

Anna Holau, Conference Coordinator
Email: fcsm.conf@gmail.com
Phone: 301-763-2308

For questions about abstracts or the program, contact:

Pam McGovern, Program Chair
Email: pam.mcgovern@nass.usda.gov
Phone: 202-720-8853

SHORT COURSES AND WORKSHOPS

Short Course Sponsored by Joint Program in Survey Methodology

Course and registration information for all JPSM-sponsored short courses listed below are available at www.jpsm.org/shortcourses.

Balancing Data Confidentiality and Data Quality

SEPTEMBER 24-25, 2013

Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Washington, DC 20212-0001

Presented by Lawrence Cox

Payment and Registration Due by September 20, 2013

https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=092413

Primary Funding for JPSM is from the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy

WSS Short Course Introduction to R

October 15, 2013

Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center

This course introduces R to those who are interested in using R for their statistical analysis and have little or no prior experience using R. R is open-source software that is widely used in the statistical community. It provides a flexible platform for both analysts who prefer performing analysis with pre-packaged functions and those who wish to develop their own routines. Because of its open-source nature and flexibility, many R&D and academic researchers have been developing R packages and functions for state of the art statistical methods. R is also highly customizable for producing visual presentations.

The course will cover four introductory subjects: R basic operations, data manipulation, univariate statistics and simple graphics. The goal of the course is to provide sufficient fundamental knowledge to start using R and enable users to further advance their knowledge of R from various sources as desired.

The format of the course will include lecture and hands-on opportunities. Lunch will be provided.

Participants are encouraged to bring their own laptops with R installed (<http://www.r-project.org/>).

Who Should Attend: This course is designed for those who are interested in using R for their statistical analysis with little or no prior experience using R.

About the Instructor: Cha-Chi Fan is a Mathematical Statistician from the US Energy Information Administration. Her work has focused on dynamic system modeling and simulation, uncertainty and risk assessments, and spatial methods.

Course Schedule:

9:00-10:30	R Basic Operations
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-12:15	Data Manipulation
12:15-1:15	Lunch (provided)
1:15-2:45	Univariate Statistics
2:45-3:00	Break
3:00-4:30	Simple Graphics

Registration Fee	Online (by October 8th)	At the Door
Full-time students (limited to 8)	\$40	\$50
WSS members	\$150	\$170
All other registrants	\$200	\$220

Register for this course online at URL: <https://www.123signup.com/register?id=dqffn>

For more information about this course, please contact Brian Meekins: meekins.brian@bls.gov

WSS ON THE MOVE!

WSS Members Serve as Expert Judges on Science Fair Circuit

During the peak of the spring semester, members of the Washington Statistical Society (WSS) served as expert judges in five regional science fairs which occur in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. The WSS annually participates in these regional science fairs as part of its quantitative literacy and community service programs. During the fairs, WSS representatives also promoted the Curtis Jacobs Award for Outstanding Statistics Project. The award was established in 1991 to honor the memory of Mr. Jacobs, who served as a chief statistician at the US Bureau of Labor Statistics on many major Federal economic statistics programs, including the Consumer Price Index.

Many of the judges recounted their high school careers, recalling that statistics courses were at best a lecture or two in a math class. In current days, many high school students even have the opportunity to take Advanced Placement statistics courses from qualified teachers. The diversity of the projects which made some use of statistical ideas and the truly high sophistication of some science projects exemplified the dramatic change that has taken place over the past. Even projects conducted by junior high school students demonstrated the increasing knowledge of statistical uncertainty at an early level. They exercised an awareness and understanding of statistical uncertainty in their study designs and analyses, through concepts such as standard deviation, model estimation, and statistical reporting. Mike Messner of the Environmental Protection Agency served as head judge for the science fair coordinated by the Montgomery County schools, having done so for many years. He gave his impression of the students who dedicate countless hours and energy to their scientific efforts: "These kids are awesome."

For example, in the Northern Virginia Regional Science and Engineering Fair, the first place winner Margaret Doyle (Yorktown High School) applied a probit model to assess the efficacy of sweet potato extracts as an inexpensive mosquito larvicide. She had collected a sample of 2,000 larvae and measured the lethal dose of extracts from different parts of the plant. The second place winner, Christopher Gerlach (T.C. Williams High School) addressed a meteorological issue. Christopher had collected weather data from multiple sources and fitted models to determine which forecasting method had the highest predictive ability. He used the R statistical software to estimate models and develop attractive plots in an exuberant display that was nearly 6 feet tall.

Margaret received a check for \$100, Christopher received the book *Statistics* by McLave and Sincich (Pearson Education 2012), and both received a subscription to *Chance* magazine. The WSS gratefully acknowledges contributions from Cengage Learning, Pearson Education, the SAS Institute, and an anonymous donor for their donated prizes.

Winners of awards in recognition of excellence in investigation or use of statistical methods in a science fair project

Northern Virginia Regional Science and Engineering Fair - March 2, 2013

Prize	Name	School	Grade
1	Margaret Doyle	Yorktown	10
2	Christopher Gerlach	T.C. Williams	12
3	Matthew Lowen	Yorktown	12
3	Emma Beall		12

Prince George's Area Science Fair – March 9, 2013

Prize	Name	School	Grade
1	Susan Ojo	Eleanor Roosevelt	12
2	John Bielec		
2	Dimitri Morake		
3	Hunter Whaples		

Fairfax County Regional Science and Engineering Fair – March 16, 2013

Prize	Name	School	Grade
1	Andrea Li	Thomas Jefferson	
2	(team) Eduard Danalache	Thomas Jefferson	
	Hanna Carolina		
	Hatanpaa		
	Emily Rogers		

Science Montgomery - March 16, 2013

Prize	Name	School	Grade
1	Pushkar Aggarwal	Poolesville H.S.	
2	Lucia Jiang	Takoma Park Middle School	
3	Noah Kim	Takoma Park Middle School	
3	Kisha Thakur	Thomas Wootton H.S.	

DC Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics Fair - March 23, 2013

Prize	Name	School	Grade
1	Emma Johnson	School Without Walls	12
2	Lauryn Mitchell	School Without Walls	12
3	Alexander Morales-Sanz	School Without Walls	12

Washington Statistical Society Science Fair Judges 2013 and Curtis Jacob's Award representatives

Lee Abramson, Jeff Bailey, Promod Chandhok, Dhuly Chowdhury, Mike Fay, Mike Fleming, Whitney Kirzinger, Laura Lee Johnson, Tom Krenzke, Jurate Landwehr, Daniel Lee, Ruey-Pyng Lu, Mike Messner, Mark Otto, Arnie Reznik, John Rogers, Scott Rumburg, Glenn White, Matt Williams, Frank Yoon, Audra Zakeski



WSS members (from left to right) Jurate Landwehr, Danny Lee, and Lee Abramson judging projects at the DC STEM Fair

WSS MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

See next page.

Washington Statistical Society

Member Spotlight

Introducing your fellow members and showcasing the diversity of the WSS membership



Meet WSS President-Elect Diane Herz...

1. Where do you work and what do you do?

I work in the Washington, DC, office of Mathematica Policy Research, where I have multiple roles. I'm a vice president at Mathematica, contributing to planning on several levels—corporate-wide, for the Survey and Information Services division, and for the survey research department. I also have a corporate position as “area leader” for the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Homeland Security. In this role, I'm responsible for leading business development and ensuring high quality project delivery to those clients. My days are full of variety—planning, leading projects, providing quality assurance (QA) on other projects, meeting with clients and business partners, making bid decisions and writing proposals for new work, recruiting talented staff, and attending industry conferences.

2. What attracted you to your current position?

About five years ago, a former colleague who was working at Mathematica contacted me to see whether I might be interested in joining the company's management team. She described an organization that was at an exciting transition point: it had a new president (Paul Decker), was growing across divisions, and was specifically deepening its expertise in survey methodology. It needed help recruiting talented staff, matching staff skills to project work, and expanding its survey research capabilities and business. This was an opportunity for me to stretch in the two areas in which I was most interested in growing: staff development and entrepreneurship. I thought it would be fascinating to learn how to run a business. I also felt aligned with Mathematica's mission—conducting evidence-based research to improve public well-being—and was impressed with the range of policy areas in which they worked: in labor, education, health, nutrition, early childhood development—both domestically and internationally.

3. Finish this sentence: “I joined WSS to...”

...for a variety of reasons. Over the years, I've attended WSS workshops on many subjects. As a rule, WSS has been well-considered and well-organized, offering expertise and new research on important topics. At first, I thought the organization was largely for statisticians, but I quickly grew to appreciate the integration of multiple disciplines in addition to statistics: survey methods, economics, psychology, and information technology.

4. What was your first job?

My first job was for American Frozen Foods. I was 15, and one of my mother's friends offered it to me. I cold-called people to sell them large quantities of frozen meat and the refrigerators they would need to hold them. I was terrible at it—I was becoming a vegetarian at the time! But it was good; I learned

how to identify my strengths and weaknesses and how to leave a job that didn't suit me.

5. What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?

I'm fascinated by the brain—specifically by the intersection of the hemispheres—how we combine and integrate creativity and logic, emotion and intellect. I'm interested in how we process time, why we sleep, and similar questions. If I were to pursue a different path, I'd probably pick a combination of neuroscience and art. I really like the paintings of Alex Grey. He brings together anatomy, neuroscience, and emotion. I'm also inspired by Jill Bolte Taylor, a neuroscientist who had a stroke, wrote about it in *A Stroke of Insight*, and is changing the medical treatment for stroke survivors.

6. If you could give your 18-year-old self one piece of advice, what would it be?

To trust the process of life and worry less. What I didn't realize at 18 is that, throughout our lives, we continuously develop new tools to address new challenges. The world is full of talented people—working together, we can solve our problems (even “big data”).

7. If you could have any super power, what would it be and why?

Controlling the weather. We need this now.

8. What is your favorite vacation spot?

I love to travel. My favorite vacation spot would be the Okavango Delta in Botswana. I went on a water safari there, speeding around in a small boat with amazing birds, alligators, water buffalo, and hippos all around us. We were floating quietly when a herd of elephants crossed the river in front of us. A lone elephant on the other side came out to greet the group, touching each trunk individually and then leading them to the other side.

9. How do you like to spend your free time?

I like to travel to at least one faraway place each year. I also enjoy playing golf, boating at Assateague Island, and genealogy.

10. Have you had any great career mentors? If so, what made them great?

Yes. I hesitate to name them at the risk of leaving someone out. The best mentors have been those that boldly face challenges, consistently demonstrate integrity, and never lose their sense of humor.

BE INFORMED AND GET INVOLVED!

Latest News on International Year of Statistics

The *Statistical Journal of the IAOS* showcases eight top leaders—four women and four men—from six different countries: United Kingdom, Canada, China, Haiti South Africa and the United States. These leaders are:

- Ivan Fellegi, Statistics Canada, Canada
- Jill Montaquila, Westat, United States
- Denise Lievesley, King's College, United Kingdom
- David Hemson, DTS, South Africa
- Christy Chuang-Stein, Pfizer, China
- Arthur Kennickell, Federal Reserve Board, United States
- Jean Orelie, SciMetrika, Haiti
- Mary Batcher, Ernest and Young, United States

All three US leaders are WSS members! This special issue is available to all statisticians at the following link:

<http://iospress.metapress.com/content/j82gg2jh57w1/?p=16c5b4a47fc94461a720b70d2fbc65ee&pi=0>.

All other news are available in the latest International Year of Statistics newsletter, at <http://www.statistics2013.org/files/2013/08/August-26-2013.pdf>.

Past newsletters can be reviewed at <http://www.statistics2013.org/participant-newsletter-archive/>.

~ Donsig Jang, WSS Liaison for the International Year of Statistics

Volunteer Positions Still Sought for 2013-2014 Term

The Society currently has several critical vacancies for various WSS committees. I encourage you to read over the descriptions below and consider volunteering. I believe the involvement in WSS from a committee perspective will prove very rewarding. To volunteer, please contact Nancy Bates, WSS President 2013-2014 at: (nancy.a.bates@census.gov or 301 763-5248).

WSS webmaster

Dan Jacobs has been the WSS webmaster since the 90's. Understandably so, Dan has expressed a desire to step down. The Webmaster has long been a key role at WSS. The webmaster maintains the website and posts materials provided by officer and committees. The webmaster also develops, maintains, and runs the scripts that implement our annual and special elections.

The WSS webmaster should have knowledge of current web technologies and pay careful attention to detail. Ideally, he or she will be familiar with WordPress, Drupal, Joomla, or other content management systems so he or she can help decentralize website maintenance. The webmaster should also know php so she or he can implement, maintain, and improve the scripts we use for elections and other special purposes.

Social Committee Co-Chair

Since 2012, Frank Yu has been at the helm of the WSS Social Committee (and doing a terrific job). However, Frank could use a co-chair to ease some of his work. Social committee responsibilities include arranging for an annual holiday event, the annual awards dinner, and food for the Morris Hansen Lecture. If you enjoy event planning, please consider this position.

Short Course Committee Members

Volunteers are sought to help research topics for new short courses and names of potential instructors. Committee members will help the Chair develop budgets and cost of conducting courses, arrange for locations, create course announcements, arrange for course materials, and facilitate class registration. Brian Meekins is currently the Short Course Committee Chair and would welcome committee members to help organize more WSS sponsored short courses. To volunteer for any of the above, contact Nancy Bates (nancy.a.bates@census.gov, 301 763-5248).

~ Nancy Bates, WSS President

Washington Statistical Society's Spotlight on Members Program

The WSS Board of Directors has established a program to highlight members who have made or are making notable contributions to the work of their organization or their professional field of expertise. We know that WSS members are doing interesting work in the fields of statistics, survey methodology, and the social sciences. Through this program, we hope to spotlight the accomplishments of our fellow WSS members.

This is our first request for nominations, to be featured in an upcoming issue of WSS News. We are interested in featuring members at all levels of the employment spectrum including recent graduates, mid-career employees, and those seasoned veterans.

Please feel free to nominate more than one person or a team working together. You may also nominate yourself as well. The nominees must be members of the WSS and not currently affiliated with the Board.

Please provide us with the following information about your nominee or nominees.

1. *Your* name, email address, and telephone number
2. Name or names of nominee(s)
3. Organizational affiliation
4. Job title
5. Their contact information including email address and telephone number
6. A brief narrative describing the reasons for your nomination
7. A photo of the nominee, although not required, would be greatly appreciated

Please submit your nominations or direct any questions to, John Finamore (jfinamore@nsf.gov), member of the WSS Board.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Join the WSS Meetup

The Washington Statistical Society has begun to use Meetup to help spread the word about WSS events. Members are invited to join at <http://meetup.com/WashStat/> for benefits such as:

- Notices and reminders of WSS events
- Ability to indicate whether you will attend
- Opportunity to offer suggestions and other feedback.

Users can specify their preferences for email and other features.

STUDENT CORNER

WSS ON CAMPUS

The Fall semester has started; DC Statistics students are attending their first week of classes. As WSS's Student Rep, I've had the opportunity to meet and talk with a good number of those students. It's been a great opportunity.

I have been in the Applied Statistics program at UDC now for a year. The University considers me a "non-traditional" student. My fellow students most likely consider me a "dinosaur". Going back to school mid-career gives me a unique perspective: I know what it's like to be a student, but as a manager I've also interviewed many potential employees. I know what it's like to worry about what will happen after graduation (well, I did undergrad at the Naval

Academy, so I knew I had a job lined up—I just didn't know *where*). And I know what it's like to see a bright interviewee just out of college, terrified that they are blowing the interview—and how nice it is to offer that interviewee the job.

When I was in undergrad, I came across a paperback copy of a book written in 1969 by Andrew Tobias: *Honor Grades on 15 Hours a Week* with the intriguing subtitle, *How to Keep Studies from Interfering with Your College Education*. It was mostly comedy; I'm pretty sure that following his advice to the letter could seriously jeopardize your grades, honor or not. But one passage stood out for me: "College is more than library fines and lab notes and lecture notes and legible examinations. Just as much it is touchdowns, identity crises... karate clubs, choral societies, roommates, disputes about phone bills... making a mistake without losing a job, lying on the grass on a spring day thinking while the 'adult' world is indoors until rush hour." And then, "Don't let rush hour be foisted on you in college. It will come soon enough."

I know that in the current job environment, college may seem like a very serious thing. It is. Doing well in school is important, especially in a field as technical as ours. But I also know that college was a unique opportunity to find out who I was. It's a privilege for me to have an opportunity to resume that search now. Having sat through my share of rush hours, I can say with some authority: don't be in a rush to get there.

Lest you think that the Society made the mistake of appointing a Philosophy major to be the Student Rep, here is this month's **Probs & Stats Brain Teaser**:

Imagine you have two one-liter glasses. You can put any level of water you want into the first glass. Then you can put water into the second glass, up to the level of the first glass. Pour the contents of the second glass into the first glass. What is the probability that the first glass will overflow? Please email your answer to timothy.allen@udc.edu. Thanks!

- Tim Allen, WSS Student Representative

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

**Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health
National Cancer Institute/Biometric Research Branch**

The Biometric Research Branch of the National Cancer Institute is seeking candidates with a Ph.D. in statistics or biostatistics. Statisticians in the group have the following main functions: conduct research in biostatistics, bioinformatics, and computational biology on topics ranging from methodology to facilitate understanding at the molecular level of the pathogenesis of cancer to methodology to enhance the conduct of clinical trials of new therapeutic and diagnostic approaches; provide consulting and statistical leadership for the national and international research programs of the NCI in clinical trials to evaluate therapy, developmental therapeutics, developmental diagnostics, and diagnostic imaging.

The Biometric Research Branch (BRB) is the statistical and biomathematical component of the Division of Cancer Treatment and Diagnosis of the National Cancer Institute (of the National Institutes of Health). Its members provide consulting and statistical leadership for the national and international research programs of the division in developmental therapeutics, developmental diagnostics, diagnostic imaging, and clinical trials to evaluate therapy. The members of the Branch (BRB) conduct research in biostatistics, bioinformatics and computational biology on topics ranging from methodology to facilitate understanding at the molecular level of the pathogenesis of cancer to methodology to enhance the conduct of clinical trials of new therapeutic and diagnostic approaches. In particular, the BRB staff collaborates in the design and implementation of analytic tools to predict clinical efficacy, or action against a molecular target, for potential anti-cancer agents, from the NCI in-vitro and in-vivo tumor cell line screens. The BRB collaborate in research to elucidate the inter-related roles of agent biochemical mechanism and tumor molecular characteristics. The BRB conduct independent and collaborative research on the effects of new cancer treatments, and on improved statistical methodology for the evaluation of new treatments and they develop mathematical models for the design of treatment regimens for evaluation in clinical trials. The BRB also develops statistical and computational methods and bioinformatic systems for the analysis of genome and gene expression data.

BRB offices are located in the suburbs of Washington D.C. on the NCI Rockville, MD headquarters, 15 minutes from the NCI/NIH Bethesda campus. Candidates must be U.S. citizens. Experience in the statistical methodology of clinical trials design and analysis, in particular, the role of biomarkers in diagnosis and therapeutic decision making is advantageous. This is a pre-vacancy announcement to gauge interest. Individuals should send their resume and a statement of interest to Dr. Richard Simon, Chief BRB, at rsimon@nih.gov. Additional information is at <http://brb.nci.nih.gov>.

DHHS, NIH and NCI are Equal Opportunity Employers.

Washington Statistical Society Board of Directors, Programs, and Committees

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WSS Member Spotlight

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FROM THE WSS NEWS EDITOR

Items for publication in the **October, 2013** issue of WSS NEWS will be accepted thru the **15th** of **September**.

Email items to wss.editor@gmail.com.

The authors are responsible for verifying the contents of their submissions. Submissions requiring extensive revisions on length and/or contents will be returned.

Please submit all materials as an attachment in **MS WORD** or **plain text**. Submissions in any other format will be returned.

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