

Statistics News

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Hello and Welcome to the Statistics News

Welcome to the second annual Division of Statistics newsletter! Our newsletter is a yearly effort to help alumni and friends learn about happenings in the division, and keep in touch with each other. It has been an eventful year and we have many news items to report, and updates from several alumni to share. If you have not contacted us yet about your latest professional and personal information, please do so and we can share it in the next newsletter.

College of Science Recruits New Dean

Last year, the division became one of seven units in the new College of Science. This past year, the college recruited a permanent dean, Professor Judy Parrish. Parrish has been the associate dean of the College of Science at the University of Arizona, Tucson for the past three years. She joined UA in 1988 as an associate professor and had been a professor in the Department of Geosciences since 1992.

Previously, Dr. Parrish worked as a research geologist for the U.S. Geological Survey in the Branch of Oil

and Gas Resources at Denver, Colo. She earned her bachelor's degree and master's degree in biology from the University of California, Santa Cruz. She completed a master of science degree in earth sciences there in 1977 and her Ph.D. in 1979.

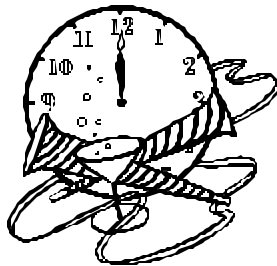
Parrish served on the National Science Foundation's Advisory Committee for the Geoscience Directorate from 1999 to 2001 and served on the NSF-NATO Postdoctoral Fellowships review panel. She has served on the NSF/Joint Oceanographic Institutions Board of Govern-

ors, Performance Evaluation Committee for the Ocean Drilling Program. For the past four years, she has been a reviewer for the National Science Foundation, NSERC in Canada, NERC in the United Kingdom, National Geographic Society and the American Chemical Society, among others.

She is a prolific researcher with numerous refereed journal articles. Columbia University Press published her book, "Interpreting Pre-Quaternary Climate from the Geologic Record," in 1998.

Division Searches for New Director

The Division has received approval from our new dean, Judy Parrish, to proceed with a national search for a permanent division director. Look for the ad in the January and February issues of Amstat News. The new director will be hired before July 2004. If you know someone who might be interested in the position, please encourage them to apply before March 1. We're including a copy of the official vacancy announcement in the postal mailing of this newsletter. Please share it as you think appropriate. The vacancy announcement also is available on the division's Web site at: <http://www.sci.uidaho.edu/stat>. Thank you for your help with the division's director search. We look forward to introducing you to our new director in the next issue of our newsletter.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RECENT GRADUATES

Xin Dai - Summer 2003
Zaofei Fan - Summer 2003
Hua Feng - Spring 2003
Stephen Hayes - Spring 2003
Allan Hicks - Summer 2003
Oussama Marseli - Fall 2003
Richard Remington - Spring 2003
Glenn Szerlong - Spring 2003
Fei Tian - Fall 2003
Ray Wallace - Spring 2003
Aiyuan Xie - Summer 2003
Sawir Yakup - Fall 2003



Record Graduates

The division had a record number of graduates this past year. Ken Newman's departure coupled with our revised degree options inspired many students to finish. Dr. Newman left for Scotland in summer 2003 so his students made sure to finish before his departure. The new multiple options for the master's degree in Statistics became official in summer 2003 but the Registrar allowed students to use the new regulations for spring 2003. The master's degree in Statistics now has three options: thesis-based; internship-based; or non-thesis research-based. The third option involves hands-on experience with statistical consulting. The much-dreaded Qualifying Exam will now only be required for the non-thesis based research option. Our program now has much more flexibility to meet our students' academic and career goals. We expect that current and future students will complete their degrees and graduate in less time than before.

Students to ASA Meeting

A large group of students from the division made the trip to the national meeting of the American Statistical Association this year in San Francisco. Students who attended were Chris Lighty, Katherine Lam, Fei Tian, Aiyuan Xie, Xin Dai and Sammy Marseli. Some of the students met up with division alums Meng Xu and Yaomin Xu. Also in attendance were Visiting Assistant Professor Dean Johnson and his spouse, Nairanjana Dasgupta, an associate professor from Washington State University's Department of Statistics.

Statistics Assistance Center

The division has instituted a course fee for students taking Stat 150, Stat 251, Stat 271, Stat 301, or Stat 401. This \$15 fee is used to fund Statistics Assistance Center (SAC) tutors, a SAC coordinator and the creation of Web materials for these courses. Ann Abbott is our first SAC coordinator, and her years of experience teaching each of these courses has really helped her in coordinating the efforts of TA's and SAC tutors. There is regular communication between Ann and faculty teaching the courses to insure SAC help covers current course topics.

Chris Lighty Interns at Coldwater Creek

This summer, Christine Lighty completed an internship at Coldwater Creek in Sandpoint, Idaho. Coldwater Creek is a catalog and retail company that sells women's apparel and gift items. She worked with Carl Brenner in the Business Intelligence Department at the corporate headquarters. Carl is a graduate of our own master's degree program. There were several areas of interest. One was to determine whether it was worthwhile to buy customer information from outside companies in order to better identify potential customers. This included learning how to prepare data for SAS: cleaning it up and making sure the variables were named correctly. Writing and running the large SAS programs on the CPU, as well as remotely to the server, was quite a learning experience. Christine had the opportunity to design and carry out some projects of her own beginning with data collection all the way through to presenting her results. Working in the corporate environment and seeing how a business intelligence department interacts with all other departments was a great learning experience. Coldwater Creek created this department about 18 months ago to bring analytical people together in one group and have them work together to help all areas of the company. The statisticians are an integral part of this group and Christine was exposed to and participated in many of their activities.

Farewell to Ken Newman

Dr. Ken Newman has left the division to accept a position at the University of St. Andrew's in Scotland. Ken greatly contributed to the division in his nine years here. Among his instructional contributions were the development of the Sampling course (Stat 422) into a three credit course and many valuable contributions to the Introduction to Statistics course (Stat 150) and to the Statistical Computing course (Stat 540). Ken was instrumental in our efforts towards developing an introductory statistics course at the graduate level. We hope to implement that curriculum change in the near future. Ken also was much in demand in the Statistical Consulting Center. We certainly miss Ken and send our best wishes to him and his family.

Fang Bai is Kellogg's Intern

One of our students, Fang Bai, was selected from a national pool of more than 150 applicants for an internship with Kellogg's in Battle Creek, Michigan. Her internship began in summer 2003 and will extend through spring semester 2004. Fang works very closely with the sensory department. Sensory is a field of food science. Sensory evaluation is defined as "a scientific discipline used to evoke, measure, analyze and interpret reactions to those characteristics of foods and materials as they are perceived by the senses of sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing." Fang is mostly involved in Food Diagnostic Research (FDR) tests and Stability tests. FDR testing is used to assist in understanding the effects of product ingredients and food forms on consumer tastes during all stages of product development and/or product improvements. She uses mixed model methods for these data analyses. Fang is learning much more than just statistics. She's found that communication is key, especially for statisticians. Understanding what must be done with the data is vital. Another thing Fang has learned is to never take anything for granted. People make many more mistakes than they realize. Fang accidentally found that the program that makes the tables in her unit's reports gives only the general mean when it was assumed to give the least squares mean. If you see something suspicious, take a closer look and never let it slip. It might look like just a small thing, but it may be caused by a big problem. It is wise to be cautious.

Division Picnic

The second annual Division Picnic was held on September 10, 2003 in Ghormley Park. Many graduate students attended and enjoyed a fine time with faculty, staff and guests. The most notable foods at the potluck were two dishes from the same household. Lily Steinhorst brought a delicious gourmet salad made from ramen noodles. Kirk Steinhorst made a wonderful jambalaya. Elhadji Sidi, last year's champion cook, brought some fine fried bananas which delighted young Griffin Olsen. Cool weather discouraged the yellow jackets.



Faculty and Staff News

Brian Dennis has a new book out. "Chaos in Ecology: Experimental Nonlinear Dynamics" was co-authored with J. M. Cushing, Robert Costantino, Robert Desharnais and Shandelle Henson.

Dale Everson, professor emeritus and former director, continues to help the division immensely. Dale was one of our statistical consultants this past year.

Dean Johnson, visiting assistant professor, received a \$500 travel grant for organizing a session for the 2003 Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) of the American Statistical Association (ASA). At the 2003 JSM, he gave a presentation entitled "Factors Relating to the Degree to which Statistical Con-

sulting Clients Deem their Consulting Experiences to be a Success." Dean's manuscript, "Statistical Consulting Sessions: Clients' Perspectives," was accepted for publication in the ASA's Statistical Consulting Newsletter.

Ismail Genc received a Vandal Helping Hand Award in April 2003 in recognition of his support for Vandal student athletes. He was named "Most Influential Faculty" in the academic life of Craig Weaver, one of the Academic Excellence Award winners in December 2003. This was the second time that Ismail has been so honored. He also received a Distinguished Research Award in Economics and Economic Education from Allied Academies in Las Vegas, Nevada in October 2003 for an

article he co-authored along with S. Bekmez and J. R. Miller, "Economics in the Integrated Business Curriculum: In or Out?," which is forthcoming in the Economics and Economic Education Research Journal.

Kirk Steinhorst presented a paper at the Hawaii International Conference on Statistics and Related Fields with Carolyn Keeler in June 2003 titled, "Teaching Statistics I: Putting it all together." This research was funded by the Idaho State Board of Education Technology Incentive Grant Program.

Chris Williams has done a great job as interim director for the division. He is really looking forward to handing over the reins to a new director in July 2004.

Alumni News

Ann Abbott began working for the U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station Forestry Sciences Laboratory in August. She's working as a biometrician through their Student Career Employment Program and has just completed her first semester as a Ph.D. student in Forest Biometrics at the University of Idaho. In her spare time, she is the coordinator for the Statistics Assistance Center (SAC).

Zaid Abdo is currently working towards a Ph.D. in Bioinformatics and Computational Biology at the University of Idaho.

Carl Brenner has been promoted to manager of the Statistics and Geography group within Coldwater Creek's Business Intelligence Department. He lives with his family in Sandpoint, Idaho.

Celeste Brown completed her master's in Statistics while she was working at Washington State University as a research scientist in Biochemistry. When the faculty member with whom she was working took a job in another state, Dr. Brown returned to the University of Idaho as the bioinformatics coordinator for the Initiative for Bioinformatics and Evolutionary Studies (IBEST). Her role as coordinator is to facilitate the use of bioinformatics tools, both computer hardware and software, by the IBEST community. Her background in biology, statistics and bioinformatics aids her greatly in talking to the diverse types of

researchers in IBEST. Celeste also is a research associate professor in the Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Graduate Program and the Department of Biological Sciences.

Hailong Cheng has a new job in Clinical Research and Development at Sepracor Pharmaceuticals in Marlborough, Massachusetts.

Xin Dai has a new job as a staff scientist for the State Office of Technical Services of the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality in Boise, Idaho.

Hua Feng works parttime for institute research in the Office of Effectiveness and Advancement at Amarillo College in Amarillo, Texas. This office mainly assists the college president in gathering and analyzing information of the college, to plan budgets and to make decisions for development of the college. Amarillo College has more than 10,000 students with three campuses. One of Hua's duties is to analyze survey data and to write survey reports. Moreover, she must draw data from the college database system to periodically produce statistical reports.

Jeff Hovermill has recently married and has a new name to go with his new life. His new name is Jeffrey Hovermill Shamatha. His wife's name is Abby Hulser Shamatha. Jeff has a new job as an assistant professor of Mathematics Education in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Northern Ari-

zona University in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Lin Lu continues as a Ph.D. student in Statistics at Oregon State University in Corvallis.

Richard Remington is a statistician for KERN Statistical Services in Boise, Idaho.

Salman Sabir is a senior instructor in the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the Department of Community Health Sciences at The Aga Khan University. He lives with his family in Karachi, Pakistan.

Kurex Sidik works as a principal biostatistician for preclinical drug discovery for Wyeth Research in Princeton, New Jersey.

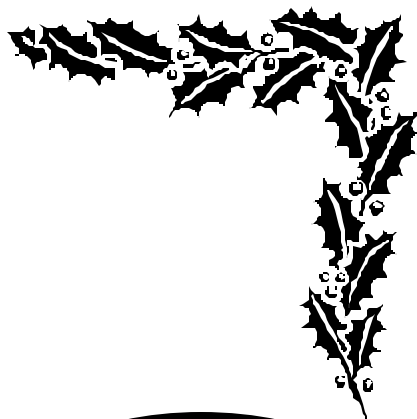
Greg Stenback currently works as an associate scientist at Iowa State University in the Department of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering doing research on characterization and remediation of former manufactured gas plant sites in Iowa. This work provides him the opportunity to perform the occasional statistical analysis. His current research is focused on the use of field data to assess natural attenuation mechanisms for several classes of organic contaminants at contaminated sites. On the personal side, Greg's wife, Jana, (B.S. Chemistry 1986 and B.S. Botany 1994 from UI) is laboratory and field manager of the Wetland Research Laboratory at ISU and is very active with both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.

Division of Statistics
Brink Hall Room 415A
PO Box 441104
Moscow ID 83844-1104

ARX850

Phone: 208-885-2929
Fax: 208-885-7959
E-mail: stat@uidaho.edu

Happy Holidays!



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Their oldest son, Eric, is in Moscow, Idaho, working full time and attending UI part time. Their second son, Isaac, graduated from Ames High last May and is hoping to join the U.S. Coast Guard in the spring of 2004. Finally, their daughter, Kenna, loves every moment of seventh grade and keeps active with soccer and a wide variety of non-stop, 13 year old activities.

Norm Varin moved with his family in August of last year to Meridian so he could work out of the Regence BlueShield of Idaho office in Boise. He's still employed as an actuary for the company (since 1991) and enjoys working in the health insurance environment.

Ray Wallace has been working as an institutional research analyst for the University of Idaho since Octo-

ber 2000. In addition to his duties at UI, Ray does statistical consulting work for the USDA Forest Service - Southern Research Branch. Ray, his wife, Jennifer, and their two children purchased a house this summer and live in Moscow.

Aiyuan Xie has a new position as a statistical analyst in the Clinical Research Unit of the Department of Ophthalmology, School of Medicine, Eye Foundation Hospital at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She is also a Ph.D. student in the Department of Biostatistics at the University of Alabama School of Public Health.

Jianying Zhang is a second-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Statistics at Purdue University.

Lifen Zhou is a senior biostatistician for Amgen Bio-

stat. She and her family live in Thousand Oaks, California.

Junjia Zhu is now a Ph.D. student at Penn State University majoring in Statistics. He expects to finish his studies in three to four years. Junjia married Li Wang in January and they now live together in State College, Pennsylvania.

Manson Memorial Fund

The division continues to solicit donations for a memorial to former Director Al Manson. Depending upon the amount raised, the memorial will range from an object on campus (a tree or bench), up to an endowed faculty position. For information, please contact Chris Williams at chrisw@uidaho.edu.