Greetings from the Chair

Department News

Faculty News

Student News

Alumni News

Giving

Features:

Snedecor remodeling
Department of Statistics now in Wilson Hall...and many other places.

STAT-ers
Student group holds various activities throughout school year.

Banking’s little secrets
Iowa State alumnus Terry Svejda has transferred his accumulated banking knowledge into a successful consulting firm.

On the cover
Renovations are ongoing in Snedecor Hall as the Department of Statistics’ home will have a new look when faculty and students move back in May 2009.

Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran in inquirers. This report places us fifth among graduate programs in statistics in the U.S., up from twelfth in the previous report. We have been very successful in recruiting extremely energetic and talented young faculty and graduate students in the last few years who are helping us build a dynamic core in statistical theory, computational, graphical and financial statistics as well as enhancing our traditionally strong programs in survey sampling, environmental statistics, and genomics. This year our energetic graduate students started an ISU Chapter of STATCOM to provide statistical support for community projects. This was completely a student initiative and they are already involved in several projects.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. Please send us news that you would like to share with our alumni. We will hold an alumni meeting at JSM in Denver this summer (see page 4 for more details). I hope to see you in Denver this summer and in Ames in May 2009.

Ken Koehler
Chair & Director
Graduate program in statistics ranked nationally

Several graduate programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences were ranked among the best in the nation by U.S. News and World Report magazine. Statistics had the top ranking of any graduate program at third in the nation among public universities and fifth overall. Over the last seven years the department has been able to hire some very talented and energetic young faculty to work with distinguished senior faculty to help maintain a solid core in both theoretical and computational statistics and elevate premier programs in engineering statistics, survey sampling, statistical genomics and biological statistics, and visualization and graphics.

“Recent NSF funded VIGRE and Research Training grants have helped us strengthen our Ph.D. program and build partnerships with corporate and government researchers,” said Ken Koehler, University Professor and department chair. “We continue to offer our graduate students very strong and balanced training in both theory and methods.

The very impressive SRC and useR conferences held in Ames last summer provided excellent international showcases for our program, and we are looking forward to an exciting conference on statistical genomics in October.” Koehler said that anticipation of a renovated Snedecor Hall has added to the excitement. “It is a great time to be part of the Statistics Program at Iowa State University,” he said.


Information on other highly ranked programs at Iowa State University can be viewed at www.las.iastate.edu/new/news/usnews.shtml and at Inside Iowa State (www.iastate.edu/Inside/2008/0404/rankings.shtml).

2007 Joint Statistical Meetings

The following faculty attended:
Ted Bailey Karin Dorman
Mike Larsen Sarah Nusser
Alicia Camigny Amy Froelich
Ranjan Maitra Yongzhao Shao
Song Chen Ulrike Gensler
Ranjan Maitra Mack Shelley
Dianne Cook Ken Koehler
Dan Nettleton W. Robert Stephenson
Philip Dixon Steve Vardeman
Dan Nordman

The following graduate students presented papers:
Emily Berg Ivan Ramler
Kun Liang Chunjian Gao
Lucas Beverlin Yong Shi
Lu Lu Jennifer Hackett
Nick Boyler Chengyong Tang
Kim Mueller Wendy Kirsch
Jessica Chapman Cuifei Wang
Min Hui Paik Jasan Legg
Garrett Danick Jiansang Wang
Yingqi Qin Wen Li
Cumhur Yusuf Demirkale

2008 Joint Statistical Meetings

August 3-7, 2008
Colorado Convention Center
700 14th Street Denver, CO 80202

For information on the meetings, contact jam@amstat.org or phone toll-free (866) 421-7169. ISU alumni social preparations have been made and confirmed for an Iowa State University Alumni Gathering to take place during the 2008 joint Statistical Meetings in Denver, Colorado.

Iowa State University Alumni Gathering (closed)
Monday, 8/4/2008
5:30pm – 7:30pm
Hyatt Regency Hotel – Capitol Ballroom 1

There will be a cash bar and snacks will be served. This event will be listed in the JS program.

Researchers Congregate in Ames

SPRING RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2007 AT ISU

The 2007 Spring Research Conference (SRC) on Statistics in Industry and Technology was held May 21-23 on the campus of Iowa State University, hosted by the ISU Department of Statistics. The SRC is an annual meeting co-sponsored by the American Statistical Association Section on Physical and Engineering Science and the Institute for Mathematical Statistics. Conference goals were the encouragement and dissemination of statistical research pertaining to problems that arise in industry and technology. Stephen Vardeman served as Program Chair for the conference and Arka Ghosh served as Contributed Program Chair.

The conference featured plenary talks by George Michalidis of the University of Michigan on ‘Statistical Problems in Network Tomography’; David Baldwin of Ames Laboratory on ‘Statistics and the Practice of Forensic Science’; Frank Patac of Statistics Canada on ‘Statistics and Legal Metrology’; Susie Bayarti of the University of Valencia on ‘Validation of Computer Models with Functional Outputs’; and Dan Nettleton and Helve Hofmann of Iowa State University on ‘Modeling Massive Data Sets: The Netflix Challenge from a Statistical Perspective’.

Invited and contributed paper sessions were also scheduled covering a range of statistical topics motivated by problems from scientific and engineering applications areas. Several presentations were made by students; sixteen of these students received scholarship or grant support from the IMS, the ASA Section on Physical and Engineering Science, or the National Science Foundation through an RTG grant to the ISU Department of Statistics.

The beginnings of the SRC date back to a 1991 IMS ‘Special Topics Meeting on Statistics in Industry’, held in Philadelphia, PA organized by C.J.F. Wu. Following that successful conference, it became apparent that a regular series of meetings focused on research in methods motivated by the changing nature of technology could be valuable to statisticians and others involved in planning and analyzing studies and processes in these areas. The first co-sponsored conference held under the ‘SRC’ title took place in Chapel Hill, NC in 1994, and the conference has been held annually since then.

The 2008 SRC will be hosted by Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA.

useR! CONFERENCE 2007

Iowa State University hosted the useR! 2007 Conference August 8-10. Approximately 250 participants came from many different subject areas – physics, business, ecology, agronomy, bioinformatics, statistics, mathematics – attesting to the impact of R. The conference started off with the keynote talk by John Chambers, the creator of R, in which he noted the similarities between programming with cooking.

There were many interesting talks and posters, including teaching with R, a comparison between the graphical models of lattice and ggplot and graphical user interfaces for R. A panels on the use of R in clinical trials and industry-sponsored medical research discussed the progress towards FDA acceptance of R for reporting on clinical trials.

The event roughly coincided with the 10th anniversary of the forming of R Core.

To celebrate, the group enjoyed a huge blue cake in the shape of an “R”. Thomas Lumley gave a short presentation at the conference dinner about the history of R Core.

There were two programming competitions. The first, announced in advance, to produce a package useful for large data sets. The team of Daniel Adler, Oleg Nenadic, Walter Zucchini and Christian Gläser from Göttlingen won this with their ifr package.

The second competition was a series of short R programming tasks held over a two-hour period during the meeting. This was won by Elaine McVey and Olivia Lau in a tie for first.

Copies of presentation slides, posters and details on the programming competitions are available at www.useR2007.org.

The next useR! 2008 will be hosted by Dortmund University, August 12-14, 2008. Information is available at www.R-project.org/useR-2008.
Statistics pair to receive awards

A pair of faculty members in the Department of Statistics will be honored this fall by Iowa State University and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS).

Dean Isaacson, professor and past head of the department, and Song Xi Chen, professor, will receive their honors at the ISU and LAS Fall Convocations in September. The pair will be among 46 LAS faculty and staff who will be recognized for teaching, research and service.

Isaacson will receive the ISU Regents Award for Faculty Excellence. The award recognizes an outstanding university citizen who has rendered significant service to Iowa State University and/or to the State of Iowa.

A respected scholar, a superb instructor, and a dedicated mentor, Isaacson served as chair of the Department of Statistics and director of Iowa State’s Statistics Laboratory 16 years. During his years at Iowa State, he has been a driving force in recruiting and retaining graduate students from under-represented groups in the U.S. population. He is the recipient of numerous National Science Foundation grants and awards including the ISU Presidential Service Award in 2004 and the ISU Outstanding Teacher Award in 1980. Chen is the recipient of the LAS Mid-Career Achievement in Research Award, which recognizes faculty members who have a national or international reputation for outstanding contributions in research and/or artistic creativity at the mid-career stage.

As a researcher, Chen has made numerous influential and fundamental contributions to both theoretical and applied statistics. His applied research has included extensive work in the areas of theoretical and applied statistics. His applied contributions to both research and/or artistic creativity at the mid-career stage.

In a rare event, Roy Hickman was sighted in Snedocor Hall with former colleague and Ames resident, Don Hotchkiss, in Fall 2007. Roy shared a donut during coffee hour with many old friends in the Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology. Roy headed the Survey Section of the Statistical Laboratory (now called the Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology) from 1965 until 1992.

Memoriam

WALKER, J AUWANTA MAURINE (11/28/1926-12/12/2007)

A private burial service was held at the ISU Cemetery for auwanta Walker. J auwanta’s fond links with Ames and Iowa began in 1943 as an Iowa State student in mathematical statistics and creative writing. She received a B.S. degree with top honors in 1947 and stayed on to work in Iowa State’s Statistical Laboratory for over 30 years, mainly as a technical writer and editor. In 1948 she married Dr. Albert L. Walker, English professor and department chairman. They had a very close relationship until his death in 1980. J auwanta was active in the faculty women’s club and other ISU groups. She and Albert drove frequently to the Southwest to learn about and collect materials about Native American arts and cultures.

After being widowed, J auwanta pursued this interest in Native Americans through further travel in the Southwest, Alaska, and other places in the U.S. and abroad. Besides poetry, she developed skills in art and design by completing a B.A. degree in fine arts (1992, cum laude) and an M.A. in anthropology and related subjects (1995) at ISU. In her thesis she pulled together years of observations about Native American art and artists. J auwanta also pursued interests in creative writing. Many of her poems appeared in “Lyrical Iowan”. She published in other literary magazines. She received regional and national awards for writings, photographs and abstract paintings.

Many of these creations reflected her sensitivity to native cultures, and love for storytelling and Southwest landscapes. She was an officer in the Iowa Poetry Association and National League of American Pen Women groups in Iowa.

Jaunata was born November 28, 1926 in Lubbock, TX. She grew up near Rochester, NY and in Athens, OH. Her parents were the late Col. William Morris Young and Margaret Freedly McWilliams Young. She had two sisters, J enn Brown of Newport, RI and the late J ohn Ellen Snyder of Sierra Vista, AZ. She had 7 nieces and nephews in Arizona, California and Florida, and 15 grandnieces and nephews.

Left to right: Kathie Reinertson, Nancy Heathman, Dianne Anderson, Roy Hickman, Dick Dorach, Sarah Nusser, Jim Kienzlert, Glenda Ashley, Dean Thompson, Wayne Fuller, Harvey Terpstra

ISU 25-Year Club Members

Richard Dorsch and Harvey Terpstra (CSSM) were honored by the University at the 73rd annual ISU 25-Year Club Banquet. Richard and Harvey were being honored for the 35-Year Club. The annual banquet was held at Scheman on February 21, 2008. The 25-Year Club was formed in 1934 to recognize men and women who have loyally served Iowa State for 25 years or more.

M.G.M. Khan, Ph.D. 1996, Aligarh Muslim University, India. Research interests: Mathematical Programming and its Applications, Sampling theory, Operations research.

We are extremely pleased to announce that Dr. Yonghao Shao, associate professor, Ph.D. 1994, Mathematical Statistics, Tufts University, joined our faculty in August 2007. His research interests include Statistical Inference, Experimental Design, and Statistical Genetics.

Visiting Scholar

Richard Dorsch and Harvey Terpstra

Department Resignations

Jean Opsomer, 8/1996-6/2007. Jean is currently professor in the Department of Statistics at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO. While at ISU, Jean was actively involved with the CSSM (Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology), becoming its director in January 2005. Jean extended his initial research interests in nonparametric modeling to develop semi-parametric weighting methods for sample surveys. He worked on a range of research projects on the National Resources Inventory, including sample designs for quality control and measurement error studies, cluster methods for outlier detection, and sample designs for watershed surveys. Jean collaborated with numerous campus researchers on statistical methods for a range of applications such as estimating the prevalence of food insecurity and estimating daily erosion values. He also collaborated with researchers in Europe and Australia. Jean will be missed and we wish him and his partner, Mary Meyer, the best in Fort Collins!

Department News
Stats faculty honored

This year, Iowa State University’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) has honored 25 faculty and staff members with awards for their accomplishments. The recipients were formally recognized September 5 during the LAS Faculty/Staff Convocation. Several faculty member in the Department of Statistics were honored during the convocation including:

**Excellence in Research/Artistic Creativity** - recognizes faculty members who have a national or international reputation for contributions in research and/or artistic creativity and who have influenced the activities of students.

Douglas Bonett, professor and chair of the psychology department and professor of statistics. Bonett’s publications have been cited more than 4,000 times, making him one of the most frequently cited quantitative psychologists in the world. His work on interval estimation and sample size determination gives researchers the tools to design better studies and extract more meaningful information from their data.

**Early Achievement in Research/Artistic Creativity** - recognizes a faculty member who has demonstrated outstanding research activities unusually early in his or her professional career.

Karin Dorman, assistant professor of statistics and genetics, development and cell biology. Dorman is an expert in cell biology who has published 18 refereed papers in 14 different journals, illustrating the breadth of her research program. She is the principal investigator (PI) on a National Institute of Health (NIH) grant and the co-PI on a NIH/National Science Foundation education grant, each worth approximately $1 million.

**Outstanding Teaching** - recognizes faculty members for outstanding teaching performance over an extended period of time in undergraduate education.

Fred Lorenz, University Professor of statistics and sociology. Since 1980, Lorenz has provided outstanding instruction in difficult courses in two departments and has provided superb mentoring and consulting for students, staff and colleagues. His professional dedication results in spectacular course evaluations and a sterling reputation for making demanding course material understandable to all students.

by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

**Mid-Career Award for Excellence in Research/Artistic Creativity** - recognizes faculty members who have a national or international reputation for contributions in research and/or artistic creativity and who have influenced the research activities of students.

Dan Nettleton, associate professor of statistics and the Laurence H. Baker Endowed Chair in Biological Statistics. A national leader in statistical genomics, Nettleton has developed statistical methodologies for gene expression research used by plant and animal science researchers. He strives to understand the relevant scientific problems and then seeks to develop appropriate statistical methods before using those methods to solve problems.

University Awards

Ag Medallion for the Laurence H. Baker Endowed Chair in Biological Statistics Chair

Dan Nettleton

CELT Outstanding and Memorable Teacher Award

Dianne Cook

Louis Thompson Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award

Derrick K. Rollins

LAS Awards

Jerry Shakeshaft Master Teacher in Humanities and the Social Sciences

Fred Lorenz

Promotions

Professor (Already Tenured)

Dan Nettleton

Professor (Already Tenured) (Chemical & Biological Engineering)

Derrick Rollins

Associate Professor (With Tenure)

Karin Dorman

Associate Professor (With Tenure) (College of Veterinary Medicine)

Richard Evans

Associate Professor (With Tenure)

Heike Hofmann

Associate Professor (With Tenure)

Michael Larsen

National and International Faculty Awards/Honors

National and International Faculty Awards/Honors

Jerry Shakeshaft Master Teacher in Humanities and the Social Sciences

Fred Lorenz

Outstanding Teaching - recognizes faculty members for outstanding teaching performance over an extended period of time in undergraduate education.

Fred Lorenz, University Professor of statistics and sociology. Since 1980, Lorenz has provided outstanding instruction in difficult courses in two departments and has provided superb mentoring and consulting for students, staff and colleagues. His professional dedication results in spectacular course evaluations and a sterling reputation for making demanding course material understandable to all students.
On the Cover

A month shy of her 41st anniversary in the Department of Statistics, Norma Elwick finally has a window, albeit in a residence hall south of campus. “I’ve always had an inside office,” she said. The statistics secretary and reading room supervisor along with everyone else in Snedecor Hall are working in new locations, most of them temporary. Snedecor was emptied in December for a $9 million renovation estimated to last 15 months.

Department staff and several faculty are housed in the lower floors of Wilson Hall, the western twin of the Towers Residence Halls, which are nearer to Highway 30 than campus. Upon completion, statistics will return to the Works Progress Administration building that opened during Franklin D. Roosevelt’s second term in 1939. First known as the Service Building, the structure saw an addition on the south side completed in 1961. Eight years later the building was renamed for George Snedecor, who taught Iowa State’s first statistics courses and established the campus Statistical Laboratory in 1933.

The center for Survey Statistics and Methodology (CSSM) moved to the ISU Research Park and will remain there. Faculty with joint appointments in other departments are using their second offices scattered about campus, and some faculty have secured temporary space elsewhere in other ISU buildings. Statistics faculty and staff will continue to keep their existing phone numbers. Snedecor classes will be rescheduled elsewhere on campus, although Koehler said some Ph.D.-level courses could be held at Wilson since the participants are housed there. Teaching assistants will have office hours on campus so undergraduates won’t have to trek to the Towers for meetings. It is believed the Statistics Department’s return to Snedecor in May 2009 will mark the first time an entire academic department has moved back to its renovated space. A department normally moves to a new permanent location and its former space is remodeled for new uses. Or a building may remain partially open during renovation, with occupants moving to new areas as they becomes available.

Although the plan requires two moves, Snedecor will be a completely new structure. After asbestos removal, renovation began in the spring. By the middle of May almost everything, including ceilings and walls, was removed from the building.

The building will be gutted to create a larger and improved computer lab, a bigger general classroom, more graduate student offices, additional conference rooms and more functional space for visitors and students.

“‘This is a total renovation that includes new electrical, plumbing, communications, heating and cooling systems, and even a new elevator,” Koehler explained. “The exterior of the building will remain the same, but you will not recognize the interior.”

“Men’s and women’s restrooms will be located on each floor, which was not the case in the past. Koehler said the remodeled building will aid in attracting top students and faculty and help the department better serve the university community. Statistics faculty and staff assist many people on campus to design surveys and experiments and analyze results.

“We have people all over campus.”

Elwick said statistics has been a “great department” to be part of all these years. “The people are very, very nice and easy to work for. That’s one of the reasons I stayed here so long.” When she and her colleagues return next year, they know they will have to adjust to many changes. But Elwick won’t miss the old Snedecor heating and cooling system, which meant “layers in the winter, and a sweater in the summer.”

SJ
The fall semester started well for STAT-ers. We began the school year with a welcome ceremony for over 20 new students as well as an awards ceremony for some of our top STAT-ers. Congratulations to Patrick Chapin for receiving the Oscar Kernpche Home Award, to Bridget Lavelle and Cherie All for receiving the Vera David Fellowship in Statistics and finally to Emily Berg and Adam Pintar for receiving the Holly C. and E. Beth Fryer Award in Statistics.

The second annual STAT-ers poker tournament was another tremendous success. Tim Bancroft won the grand prize followed by Matt Paul as a close second. This was a very successful event that will hopefully become a STAT-ers long lasting tradition. A big thanks needs to go out to Nick Bleyer for putting the whole thing together.

The Holiday party was well attended this year with some very creative costumes. There were a couple of group costumes that were very memorable including the Scooby Doo mystery team, and Matio, Luigi, The Princess and The One Up. Some of my other favorite individual costumes included the Cat in the Hat and A Pregnant Snow Man. Who knew that socialists could be so creative? Karl Paedernik had a lot of help with this event and I would like to thank everyone who had a hand in putting this party together. A special thanks goes out to Karl, Amy Hoeksema, and Megan Orr who kindly opened up their house for both the Halloween party and Super Bowl party.

The International Dinner and STAT-ers Talent Show was another successful STAT-ers get together. Thanks goes out once again to Karl for organizing this event and recruiting a fine group of talented statisticians posing as Cooks/Actors/Musicians. We tasted an array of delicacies from around the world followed by some informative skits and live music.

There are many other people who need to be thanked for their hard work this year. Thanks to our officers Jessica Chapman, president; Jon Hobbs, treasurer; Emily Berg, secretary; Karl Paedernik, social chair and Dan Nordman as faculty representative. We would also like to thank Lucas Beverlin, intramural coordinator; Adam Pintar, recycling; Amy Hoeksema for remembering all of our birthdays and to the Reading Room for donating books to sell on Amazon as a way of adding money to our treasury. Also, I send a thank you and apology to the many people who have helped with STAT-ers events this year that I have forgotten to mention. All of your hard work is appreciated.

The undergraduates program is currently built up to about 50 statistics majors. Approximately one third of the statistics majors earned the Dean’s List honor. Students make the Dean’s List by earning a GPA of at least a 3.50 for a minimum of 12 graded credit hours. The department is very grateful to alumni sponsors for strengthening our undergraduate program by promoting careers in statistics and providing financial support for scholarships that reward academic excellence and help students with real financial need.

Dean’s List - Fall 2007
Dean’s List - Spring 2008
Qi Gan
Qi Gan
Jason Crowley
Jason Crowley
Feng Xu
Eric Henderson
Kara Hickley
Hae Sung Kim
Hae Sung Kim

Final thanks go out to Emily Berg and Adam Pintar for receiving the Holly C. and E. Beth Fryer Award in Statistics.

The department is very grateful to alumni support for strengthening our undergraduate program by promoting careers in statistics and providing financial support for scholarships that reward academic excellence and help students with real financial need.

The Department of Mathematics and Statistics is proud to support the following "AGEP" (Alliance for Graduate Education and the Profession) fellows: supported by an NSF grant which supports Ph.D. students who come from under-represented groups. For the fall of 2007 we have two African American students starting their Ph.D. program as AGEP fellows. The Baker fellows are supported by Dr. Nettleton, who holds the Laurent H. Baker Endowed Chair in Biological Statistics. These students will likely do research in Bioinformatics.

The Allience Program - July 9-13, 2007

The Statistics Department administered by Co-DIRECTOR’s Dean Isaacson and Alicia Carrigy [not pictured] mentored five interns as part of the Alliance Program here at ISU this summer. The five statistics interns representing the Alliance for the Production of African American Ph.D.s in the Mathematical Sciences are:

Annie Lee (Univ. of Northern Iowa) worked with Dr. Karin Dorman on ‘Mathematical modeling of the immune response in psoriasis’.

Sade Stevens (Bethylle Cookman College) worked with Dr. Derrick Rollins on ‘Modeling glucose response in Type II diabetes in normal adults’.

Derek Blythe (Langston Univ.) worked with Dr. Peter Sherman on ‘Bemoulli Random Processes with application to the Quantum Random Walk’.

Ralph Culver (Langston Univ.) worked with Dr. Karin Dorman on ‘Accessing recombination rates in HIV’.

Shamika Nikia Young (Texas Southern Univ.) worked with Dr. Fred Lorenz on ‘The effects of elderly parents on the well being of their adult children’.

The statistics profession and show that statisticians can make positive contributions. STATCOM offers statistical advice and expertise free of charge to governmental and nonprofit groups in the local community. We feel that pro bono statistics is a great way for us as statisticians to help meet societal needs. In addition to receiving free services, the community benefits by using statistically sound methods for decision-making. We must thank all of our volunteers including jenifer Hackett and Jessica Chapman for leading the way in getting this program started and to Jon Hubbs and David Rockoff for putting the website together. We must also thank the Statistics Department for donating a room specifically for STATCOM use and the LAS College for their monetary contribution toward the development of STATCOM.

This year also brought some changes with the move to Wilson Hall. Special thanks go out to the staff who made a huge effort to keep the move running smoothly. We are also very grateful to the large number of graduate students who volunteered their time during the move. Ted and Kathy did more than anyone could expect to move computer and office equipment and get it running again. The temporary “Snedecor” wouldn’t be the same without the help of all involved.

There are many other people who need to be thanked for their hard work this year. Thanks to our officers Jessica Chapman, president; Jon Hobbs, treasurer; Emily Berg, secretary; Karl Paedernik, social chair and Dan Nordman as faculty representative. Were also would like to thank Lucas Beverlin, intramural coordinator; Adam Pintar, recycling; Amy Hoeksema for remembering all of our birthdays and to the Reading Room for donating books to sell on Amazon as a way of adding money to our treasury. Also, I send a thank you and apology to the many people who have helped with STAT-ers events this year that I have forgotten to mention. All of your hard work is appreciated.

Statistics Undergraduates – Making the Grades

The undergraduate program is currently built up to about 50 statistics majors. Approximately one third of the statistics majors earned the Dean’s List honor. Students make the Dean’s List by earning a GPA of at least a 3.50 for a minimum of 12 graded credit hours. The department is very grateful to alumni sponsors for strengthening our undergraduate program by promoting careers in statistics and providing financial support for scholarships that reward academic excellence and help students with real financial need.

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Hae Sung Kim

Student News

New Graduate Students – Fall 2007

On Friday, August 10, 2007, professors Dean Isaacson, Alicia Carrigy and Mar Kaiser welcomed 26 new M.S. and Ph.D. graduate students to the Statistics Department. Of the 26 new graduate students, 20 students plan to pursue a Ph.D. in statistics. Two of the 20 Ph.D. students are RTG fellows, two are AGEP fellows, and two are Baker fellows.

The RTG (Research Training Group) grant is in its second year. This NSF sponsored RTG grant supports Ph.D. students who have an interest in the application of statistics to the physical sciences. Under this grant the department has partnerships with Los Alamos National Labs, Alcatel-Lucent, formerly Lucent Technologies), National Institute of Standards and Technology and the National Center for Atmospheric Research. The two RTG fellows are expected to spend some of their research time at one of these agencies or with a research center on campus.

The AGEP (Alliance for Graduate Education and the Profession) fellows are supported by an NSF grant which supports Ph.D. students who come from under-represented groups. For the fall of 2007 we have two African American students starting their Ph.D. program as AGEP fellows.

The Baker fellows are supported by Dr. Nettleton, who holds the Laurence H. Baker Endowed Chair in Biological Statistics. These students will likely do research in Bioinformatics.

Student News
Fall 2007 Graduate Student Awards

Vera David Graduate Fellowship in Statistics
Award – Cherie Alf & Bridget Lavelle
This fellowship is in memory of past director and head H.A. David’s late wife, Vera, is given to a female student who has just completed her first year of graduate studies. The Vera David Graduate Fellowship is awarded to top female graduate students for the second year of study.

Holly C. & E. Beth Fryer Award in Statistics
– Emily Berg & Adam Pintar
This is awarded to a top graduate student for the third year of study with intention to complete the Ph.D. program. Scholarship recipients are selected by the Honors and Awards Committee, in consultation with the department chair. The winner is chosen each year from among those graduate students who have completed Stat 643 during the immediately preceding spring semester. Criteria include grades received in statistics and related courses, performance in assistantship duties and other information providing insight into the likelihood that the student will make career contributions to the statistics profession.

Oscar Kempthorne Award – Patrick Chapin
This is a memorial fund established to honor Oscar Kempthorne, former ISU statistics faculty member. He joined the Iowa State College statistics faculty in 1947 and retired in 1989. This award is given annually to a promising graduate student in the Department of Statistics at ISU. Although Dr. Kempthorne was recognized internationally for his contributions to statistics, he was most passionate about his students and his teaching. Throughout his professional life and into his retirement, he derived considerable pleasure in learning of the accomplishments of former students.

Spring 2008 Graduate Student Awards

T.A. Bancroft Award – Long Qu
The Bancroft Award was first given in 1972. The award honors Ted A. Bancroft, who was former head and director (1950-1972). It is presented to a doctoral student with declared minors in statistics or joint majors in statistics and another field. Candidates include co-majors who took the written exam the previous year and minors recommended by their minor professor. The winner is selected by the Honors and Awards Committee on the basis of a vote by the faculty.

Herta & H. T. David Scholarship – Krista Olsen, Christopher Ryan
This fellowship is in memory of past director and a monetary award.

Dan Mowrey Consulting Excellence Award – Man Yu Yum
The Dan Mowrey Consulting Award is given to a graduate student who holds a consulting assistantship. It is given for excellence in consulting. The award was first given in 1988-89. It is sponsored by Dan Mowrey (Ph.D. 1980 under Dr. Paul Hinri) who now works for Eli Lilly.

George W. Snedecor Graduate Statistics Award – Emily Berg
The Snedecor Award was first given in 1954. It honors George W. Snedecor, the founder and first director of the Statistical Laboratory (1933-1947). It is awarded to the most outstanding Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Statistics. Candidates for the award include Ph.D. students who complete the Ph.D. written exam during the previous year. The winner is selected by the Honors and Awards Committee on the basis of a vote by the faculty.

Hupert Bevlin, Kim Mueller and Chengyong Tang
This award honors Ted A. Bancroft who was former head and director (1970-1991). It is presented to a doctoral student with declared minors in statistics or joint majors in statistics and another field. Candidates include co-majors who took the written exam the previous year and minors recommended by their minor professor. The winner is selected by the Honors and Awards Committee on the basis of a vote by the faculty.

Alumni / Department Sponsored Scholarships
Undergraduate:
GlaxoSmithKline Industrial Scholarship – Vivien Tse
Graduate:
Procter & Gamble Undergraduate Statistics Scholarship – Vivien Tse
Undergraduate:
Corporate / Industrial Sponsored Scholarships

Herta & H. T. David Scholarship – Krista Olsen, Christopher Ryan
Scott Kangable Scholarship – Matthew Lambert
Schillofeller Family Scholarship – Christopher Kielion, Emma Tegels
George W. Snedecor Undergraduate Statistics Award – Christopher Ryan
Statistics Department Scholarship – Yi Li, Shannon Shultz
Graduate:
Charlie Sampson Legacy Fund for Excellence in Statistics – Mark McKelvey, John Riddles
Miller Fellowship – Karl Paizemok, Jennifer (Fairchild) Brescoach

Teaching Excellence Award – (l-r) James Abbey, Lucas Beverlin, Kim Mueller and Chengyong Tang
The Teaching Excellence Award is given to the top ten percent of teaching assistants at ISU. The award consists of a certificate, a letter from the President of ISU, a cord to be worn at graduation and a monetary award.

Corporate / Industrial Sponsored Scholarships
Undergraduate:
GlaxoSmithKline Industrial Scholarship – Sam Shultz

Alumni / Department Sponsored Scholarships
Undergraduate:
Herta & H. T. David Scholarship – Krista Olsen, Christopher Ryan
Scott Kangable Scholarship – Matthew Lambert
Schillofeller Family Scholarship – Christopher Kielion, Emma Tegels
George W. Snedecor Undergraduate Statistics Award – Christopher Ryan
Statistics Department Scholarship – Yi Li, Shannon Shultz
Graduate:
Charlie Sampson Legacy Fund for Excellence in Statistics – Mark McKelvey, John Riddles
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Banking’s little secrets

Iowa State alumnus
Terrance Svejda has transferred his accumulated banking knowledge into a successful consulting firm.

If you’re in the market for a new car you can conduct research on the model you want in Consumer Reports or any variety of other methods. Same with electronic purchases. But if you are a community banker there is no Consumer Reports for you.

That’s where Terrance Svejda and SVEJDA DA and Company come in. The Iowa State graduate (’69 math; ’72 M.S. statistics) operates the consulting firm and provides the nation’s smaller banking institutions with valuable information.

“We’re a profit enhancement consulting firm for the banks,” Svejda said. “We find ways for them to not only increase their income but to decrease their expenses.

“That fits in with how they like to do business.”

There are several ways community banks can either increase income or decrease expenses. That can be through ATM charges, check providers, data processing and telecommunications contracts.

Svejda says the vendors provide banks many of these services. Community banks rarely have employees on staff expert in many of these services.

“Community banks are charged for debit card transactions. Svejda says a banking conglomerate might pay as little as two cents per transaction. A community bank’s fee could range from 16-23 cents per transaction.

“We provide the services to go to a vendor and get reduced pricing back on our market experience,” Svejda says. “This could save up to $100,000 a year for a community bank and it’s all based on market information we can provide.”

Svejda says there are approximately 9000 independent banks across the country and 95% of these would be termed “community banks.” SVEJDA DA and Company has provided services to approximately 1000 such community banks since the consulting firm was established in 1986.

The firm moved to Orlando three years later because a majority of their clients were based in Florida.

But SVEJDA DA and Company has consulted with community banks in 35 states and three foreign countries and has long-standing relationships with banking associations not only in Florida but Georgia, Texas and Illinois.

After Svejda finished his master’s degree in statistics at Iowa State, he moved to St. Paul where he attended law school and worked at First National Bank. It was there that he first realized the need to offer specialized profit enhancement consulting services to community banks.

Svejda says his Iowa State degrees in mathematics and statistics, as well as the law degree all fit well into his consulting firm.

“I may not use calculus much anymore but I do use a lot of basic math and algebra,” he says. “And virtually everything we do has a statistical aspect to it. If I didn’t have these degrees, plus my law degree, I would be severely handicapped in my job.”

And it’s a job that Svejda plans to continue for a while.

“It’s something I really enjoy doing,” he says. “I like solving puzzles and in a lot of ways we’re doing is like solving a puzzle.”

BENKESEBER, ABIGAIL (M.S. 1946 Math) & ROBERT (PhD 1974 Chem) Below is Abigail’s reply after she received a “Thank You” letter for a contribution that she and her husband made to the department. In the letter it was remembered that while Abigail was at ISU as an RA, she had requested some of her salary be withheld to buy war bonds (research associates at that time were paid $2,400 per year). This is Abigail’s response:

“My comments brought back many fond memories. Indeed we did work in Snedecor Hall, sharing the top floor with the radio station. Of course, it hadn’t been given that name as yet as George Sneedor was very much alive and active in those days. What a delightful man he was. After Bob and I were married and located at Purdue U (Indiana’s land grant college) the Snedecors drove to West Lafayette to visit us. (All of our visits with Prof. Henry Gilman were at Chemical Society meetings.) Of all the memories, two stand out: at my oral exam Prof. Cochran in his distinct Scotch burr, interrogated after a question by another member of the committee, “Now, Abigail, don’t let us lead you down the primrose path” and the other, that sad day in April 1945 as I walked down the hall past the radio station, hearing the announcement that our President, Franklin Roosevelt, was dead. Yes those years (1943 to 1948) changed my life.” — Abbie

FEDERER, WALTER T. (PhD 1948) “I saw your Alumni news item in the last statNEWS and decided to update you on my doings.

“My new book “Variations on split plot and split block experiment designs” was published in January 2007. It is co-authored with Freedom King, a colleague here at Cornell. It is published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Since my retirement in 1988, I have been actively engaged in statistical research and actively participate in the Department of Biological Statistics and Computational Biology’s statistical consulting program. This Spring I gave three short courses on “Experiment Design and Computer Software”. A present research effort is in extending the sum-of-squares array generation technique of Projection Geometry that I developed and that was first published in 2006. Four papers have been or will be published on the sum-of-squares geometry. The other major effort is with two colleagues here at Cornell (J. Booth and M. Wells) and one at SAS Institute (R. D. Wolferling). We are concerned with covariance analyses in the presence of random blocking effects and related computer software to obtain the correct analyses, especially for non-orthogonal designs.

My wife Edna and I sold our house and moved into an apartment three years ago. After years in social work, Edna keeps very occupied with several church and civic groups including the Red Hatters. Our travel has become limited owing to back problems. Golf continues to be a huge interest of mine. I play most weekday mornings and am in a Senior Golf league.

Editor’s Note: The Department of Statistics was saddened to learn of Dr. Federer’s death on April 14, 2008. Professor emeritus Federer founded Cornell’s Biometrics Unit in the Department of Plant Breeding in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in 1948 soon after he joined the Cornell faculty and he served as its director for 33 years. The unit was later renamed the Department of Biometrics and since 2001 has been called the Department of Biological Statistics and Computational Biology. He received his BS in agronomy at Colorado State University (1939), his MS in plant breeding at Kansas State University (1941), and his PhD in mathematical statistics at Iowa State University (1948).

LOVE, TANZY (MS 2002, PhD 2005) & DIETZ, ZACH (MS 1998, PhD 2003) On July 7, 2007 on Lewis Smith Lake in Alabama, Tanzy married Zach Dietz. Just prior to the wedding, Tanzy was in attending Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh, PA) and Zach is an assistant professor of mathematics at Allegheny College (Clinton, NY). They hope that Tanzy finds a good position in New York next fall and they’ll get to live in the same city for the first time since Ames.

MA, HAJUIN (MS 2003) Letter to Dean Isaacson: “…I just finished my PhD at the Division of Biostatistics at the University of Minnesota. I am now working as a senior biostatistician at Amgen. I have just started this job. But I’ve met several ISU graduates here. When I look back, I feel very fortunate that I could get admitted into the distinguished ISU statistical program when I planned for my career change…I was lucky that I could learn and receive help from many extra professors and classmates. Although I moved to the biostatistics program of UMN based on family considerations, I am always grateful to ISU for giving me the good opportunity, the solid training and the great starting point of my career. The days that I spent in Snedecor Hall became part of my dearest memories. I wish that our department keep growing and delivering more well-trained statisticians…I would like to take this opportunity to send my warmest greetings to you and other professors of the department.”

NAYERI, Majid (PhD 1981, Statistics & Industrial Engineering) along with his brother, Hamid Nayeri, from Bondoukhi, visited Dean Isaacson and the department on February 28, 2007. Majid has been working as a faculty member in Iran since his graduation. (Photo l-r: Majid Nayeri, Dean Isaacson & Majid’s Brother, Hamid)

RABE, Kari (MS 2000) No one would have blamed Kari Rabe for singing “Hallelujah” after she solved the final word puzzle - “Youth Chorus” - to win a total of $60,850 on the Wheel of Fortune television game show. Rabe, a biostatistician in cancer research at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, was just a child when she first began watching Wheel of Fortune with her grandmother years ago. When the...
opportunity to audition for the show arose, she jumped at the chance - appearing on "Wheel of Fortune" was, after all, one of her "life goals." After several auditions and interviews, Rabe received a call to be a contestant on one of six shows taped February 10, 2006. (The show aired May 31, 2006.)

"It's just very different [being on the show] because you have a lot of different things to be thinking about versus sitting at home on your couch watching it," she told Rochester television station KTRC of the experience. [Article was taken with permission from Luther Alumni Magazine.]

Dear Alumni,

Kari did her undergraduate work at Luther (BA in Mathematics) and received her MS (Statistics) from ISU. She is currently a biostatistician at the Mayo Clinic.

SCHUCKERS, MICHAEL (PhD 1999) "I am currently an associate professor of statistics at St. Lawrence University in northern New York just outside the Adirondacks. My wife, Stephanie – we got engaged at Ladoga in 1996 – and I have three wonderful children: Daniel, 7; Christopher, 4; and Gabriella, 2.

The picture here is from our sabbatical last spring in Italy. I have been at St. Lawrence since 2002. We have a thriving Computer Science and Statistics Department, St. Lawrence Center, Associate Professor of Statistics, Mathematics, and was guided by excellent mentors."

WIESE, DANIEL (BS 1958) Cedar Rapids, IA, December 20, 2007 – Dan Wiese, of Cedar Rapids, has been selected to be included in biographical directories published by Marquis Who's Who, the leading biographical reference publisher of the highest achievers and contributors from across the country and around the world.

Wiese has been selected for inclusion in 2008 editions of both 'Who's Who in America' and 'Who's Who in the World'. Wiese has been included in previous editions of these directories, along with other Marquis publications including 'Who's Who in Finance and Business', 'Who's Who in the Midwest', 'Who's Who in Advertising' and 'Who's Who in Media and Communications'.

Wiese is President of Dan Wiese Marketing Research of Cedar Rapids. He is a 1958 graduate of Iowa State College, where he majored in statistics.

Beginning with the first edition of 'Who's Who in America' published in 1899, Marquis 'Who's Who' has been chronicling the lives of the most accomplished individuals and innovators from every significant field of endeavor – including business, politics, medicine, science, law, education, art, religion and entertainment. Its directories provide essential biographical information for thousands of researchers, journalists, librarians and executive search firms around the world.

ZHANG, JUN (MS 2001) "I agree with what many graduate students have repeatedly advised me: Dr. Koehler's class is always full of audience and materials. His lecture notes are always up-to-date and thick, and students have to work very hard on assignments and exams. After graduation, students usually realize the real value of the practical techniques they have learnt from Dr. Koehler and regret they did not spend enough time on them. I feel lucky to be among those students."

Many thanks to the following recent contributors to the ISU Foundation!

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Symanzik, Juergen (PhD 1996) "These photos were taken at JSM in Seattle in 2006 (3 days before Alex’s first birthday). Di Cook (left photo) is holding Alex; Natasha, Alex, and Juergen (center); and Ken Koehler (not realizing that his badge might be ripped off by Alex very soon (right photo).

Note that Alex is statistically significant – and Debby Swayne, Di’s co-author on the GGobi book, already taught him how to draw tickets out of a box, and of course, the crackers were delicious at the Iowa State Social - so Alex (and Natasha and me) are looking forward to the next one in Denver!"

How you can help…

Many of you have remembered us in the past with contributions that allow us to provide our current students the same quality of education you received. We thank you and hope that you will continue to help us “Create, Share and Apply Knowledge”.

If you desire to make a donation to ISU, please consider designating it to the Department of Statistics. If your company offers matching gifts, please make arrangements for your company’s matching contribution.

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