The New Snedecor

Statistics students, faculty and staff will enjoy a remodeled building this May.
Ken Koehler, chair
Editor: Sherri Martinez
Design: Sheena Lara

*statTimes* is published for the alumni, friends, students and faculty of the Department of Statistics at Iowa State University, an academic department in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

**STATISTICS ALUMNI**, the department wants to hear about your personal and career news for future newsletters. Your submissions/photos can be sent to:
Sherri Martinez, Editor
1121 Snedecor Hall
Ames, IA 50011-1210
OR
email: StatTimes@iastate.edu

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Greetings from the chair

It was great to see so many alumni at our gathering at the Joint Statistical Meetings in Denver last August. There were approximately 50 faculty and graduate students who attended from Ames. We are already looking forward to seeing you again at JSM 2009 in Washington, DC.

It is truly a wonderful time to be part of the Statistics program at Iowa State University. The most recent review by U.S. News and World Report ranked our graduate program fifth in the nation. Fall 2008 we welcomed some excellent new faculty. The conference on statistics in biology that we hosted in October was truly outstanding. The undergraduate program continues to set record enrollments with over 60 majors and co-majors. Finally, we are getting close to moving into a completely renovated Snedecor Hall.

If you had been in Snedecor Hall last June, there would have been no walls or windows. The exterior of the building remains largely unchanged, but the interior is completely new. New heating, cooling, plumbing, electrical, and telecommunication systems have been installed. Getting new equipment into the basement required digging up part of the parking lot on the east side of the building and removing part of the basement wall. The third floor is nearly finished, most of the new windows have been installed, most of the interior walls have been constructed on the first and second floors, but there is still some work to be done. The east stairwell was removed to provide more classroom and office space and a new elevator has been installed. We are in the process of selecting furniture, telecommunication and audio/visual equipment for offices, classrooms and conference rooms, and making final adjustments to the design of instructional computer networks. We plan to move in the first part of May.

We are planning an alumni and friends gathering in Ames June 3-5. You’ll be invited to wander through the newly remodeled Snedecor Hall; it will not be like anything you remember. In addition to rededicating Snedecor Hall, we will hold a conference to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Statistical Laboratory and the 60th anniversary of the Department of Statistics. On June 4 there will be a dinner to mark Dean Isaacson’s retirement and honor him for the many outstanding contributions he has made to our program during his distinguished career.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement. I hope you enjoy this newsletter and look forward to seeing you this June.

Ken Koehler
Chair & Director
love it and partly because I felt it would help me in my future career by teaching me to speak without fear before an audience. At one particular picnic, Dr. Snedecor came up to me and said I saw you in the last play our drama department did. I don’t remember which one he was referring to as I was in several. I mumbled something like Thank you. I hope you enjoyed it. (After all I was speaking to the legendary Dr. Snedecor.) Since my grades weren’t outstanding, I expected him to continue ‘Perhaps if you devoted more time to statistics and less to drama, your grades would be better.’ Instead, he said something to the effect I think your involvement with drama is great. More of our statistics students should have an outlet like that. I don’t know how I responded, but I still remember my astonishment and euphoria after our brief chat. He was quite a man and I am so proud to have been at ISU when he was there.”

LOVE-DIETZ, Tanzy Love (MS 2002, PhD 2005) and Zach Dietz (MS 1998, PhD 2003) Tanzy updated the department in July 2008 of a new home address for the department database because they had just purchased a new home in Clinton, NY. Tanzy took a one-year position at the University of Rochester, Dept. of Biostat. and Comp. Bio. and Zach started his second year of tenure-track in the Math Dept at Hamilton College in Clinton.

MAXSON, Melanie (MS 2004) After working almost 2.5 years as a statistician and process control engineer Melanie has gotten back to what she enjoys, which is teaching. She is teaching math and stats at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma, and also is the director of the math lab on campus. She recently got married (October 5, 2007) to John Devine, who is currently deployed in Iraq. She plans to work on getting her teaching certificate so she can teach at a local high school/college. Melanie mentioned that she is listed on Facebook has found a lot of alums that way. Melanie’s photo was taken at Penang, Malaysia while she worked there at Intel.

PANTULA, Sastry (PhD F1982) Pantula, head of NC State Department of Statistics and director of the Institute of Statistics, has been elected as the 105th president of the American Statistical Association. Pantula will serve as ASA president beginning Jan 1, 2010 and will serve as president elect this coming year. The 2008 election featured the highest voter turnout in ASA history. A 2002 fellow of the ASA, Pantula received the Young Statistician Award from the
International Indian Statistical Association in 2002 and the D.D. Mason Faculty Award in 2001. He is a member of the NCSU Academy of Outstanding Teachers, Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Xi, Gamma Sigma Delta and Mu Sigma Rho. He received his PhD in statistics from ISU, and master's and bachelor's degrees in statistics from the Indian Statistical Institute in Calcutta, India. He became the statistics department head at NC State in 2002. (Copy taken from Scope, Summer 2008)

PAUL, Matt (MS 2008) Matt recently informed the department that he had accepted a position at Borders. He writes “I am working as an analyst in the corporate office in Ann Arbor. The group that I work with handles a variety of merchandising and inventory issues. They do not have many statistical procedures in place but are excited to have me bring some new ideas and expertise into the group. I hope everything is well in Iowa. It started snowing today in Michigan, so I’m preparing for another Midwest winter.”

SPLITSTONE, Douglas (MS 1967) After a little encouragement to submit an update for the alumni section of the department newsletter, Doug wrote this... “I'd be happy to send a write up summarizing what I've been doing since 1967. I'll try and keep it to a few paragraphs, forty years are hard to compress into a paragraph or two. For the last 15 years I've been an independent consultant (Splitstone & Associates, Murrysville, PA) working out of a home office. I also have written a book with my friend and colleague Mike Ginevan. Currently, CRC Press is interested in a revision. Please, give my regards to anyone who might remember me from 40 years ago.” Photo of Doug on magazine cover (Self-Employed America, Jan/Feb 2001). http://www.stat.iastate.edu/StatTimes/pdf-links/2009/DougSplitstone.pdf

After a successful first year, Statistics in the Community (STATCOM) continues to expand student participation and its clientele. The 2007-08 student executive committee members were all co-authors on an Iowa State STATCOM contributed poster at the 2008 Joint Statistical Meetings. The ISU team joined five other STATCOM network members presenting posters in the same session. Currently the executive committee, which coordinates initial contact with clients and facilitates team formation, includes Tim Bancroft, Nick Beyler, Jon Hobbs (Director), Mark McKelvey, Anna Peterson and David Rockoff. By the summer of 2008, several funding proposals had secured support for a research assistantship for the STATCOM student director position for two years, with support from the Department of Statistics, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the office of the provost and Iowa State University Extension. The student director will coordinate the efforts of the executive committee and pursue future funding possibilities. The support from Iowa State Extension has provided new advertising opportunities through Extension Community Economic Development, including an entry on its Program Builder website and an article in its Community Matters newsletter.

In addition to the promotion through Extension, which reaches potential clients across Iowa, we continue to receive referrals from faculty and through previous STATCOM clients. The fall began with several new projects on the table that are now gaining momentum. Some executive committee members are working with Iowans for Voting Integrity to communicate the statistical ideas involved in post-election audits as Iowa looks to pass election audit legislation. One team is working with the Ames Public Library on developing a facilities use and program satisfaction survey, and the project presents some unique implementation challenges. Another team is working with the Iowa Ombudsman office on some data from the Iowa Lottery. In addition, work continues on a survey of volunteers in the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and on predicting peak demand for the City of Ames Electric Services.

As the upcoming year progresses, STATCOM will work to meet a number of new challenges. These include the development of policies for handling referrals from Iowa State Extension, the formation of a P-12 outreach program and the recruiting of student team members as the project load increases. Jon Hobbs, Director.
NEW FACULTY

Jae-Kwang Kim (right), Associate Professor, CSSM, PhD, ISU 2000. Research Interests: Survey sampling, missing data analysis. Previous Position: Yonsei University.

Alyson Wilson (middle), Associate Professor, PhD, Duke University 1995. Research Interests: Bayesian methods; reliability; statistics in defense; data and information integration. Previous Position: Project Leader and Director of Graduate and Undergraduate Student Programs, Statistical Sciences Group, Los Alamos.

Vivekananda (Vivek) Roy (left), Assistant Professor, PhD, University of Florida 2008. Research Interests: Convergence rates of Markov chain Monte Carlo algorithms; perfect sampling algorithms; asymptotics; Bayesian methods in ecological and environmental studies.

IN MEMORIAM


Dorothy Hotchkiss died on November 30, 2008 in Ames. Dorothy was the wife of Donald Hotchkiss, Professor Emeritus (Don taught for the department for 30 years, retiring July 1, 1990). Dorothy worked at the Registrar's Office for 15 years. (Obituary -- http://www.stat.iastate.edu/StatTimes/pdf-links/2009/DorothyHotchkiss.pdf)

HONORS & AWARDS

Amy Froelich
Associate Professor (With Tenure)

Mack Shelley
Director of the Public Policy and Administration Program in the Department of Political Science

Our departmental booth included a poster about the undergraduate statistics program, plus posters of student-led projects on the randomness of the shuffle feature on the iPod and the analysis of movie data. To entice students to our booth, the department held a drawing for a $10 gift card to iTunes, won by Rachel Stanley, a freshman Pre-Med major from Ankeny. Special thanks to undergraduate statistics majors Jason Crowley (joint with Economics) and Chris Kielion (joint with Finance) for working with us at the booth, and to Denise Riker for setting up the booth.

LAS MAJOR FAIR

On September 26th, Professors Amy Froelich and Ulrike Genschel represented the department at the LAS Major Fair in the Sun Room of the Memorial Union. The Major Fair allows current and prospective ISU students to explore opportunities in different majors and minors across campus. Academic advisors from many departments and personnel from career services offices throughout campus were available to provide information and answer questions about academic issues for ISU students.
The Iowa State University leadership team of the new National Science Foundation Engineering Research Center for Biorenewable Chemicals includes, front row, left to right, Tonia McCarley, Adah Leshem-Ackerman, Basil Nikolau Jackie Shanks and, back row, Derrick Rollins, David Oliver, Brent Shanks and Raj Raman. Not pictured is Jill Euken.

The National Science Foundation has awarded Iowa State University and its research partners an $18.5 million grant to establish the NSF Engineering Research Center for Biorenewable Chemicals based at Iowa State. The center's focus will be to develop catalysts that promote the chemical reactions that can efficiently produce biorenewable chemicals. The center is also expected to create university and industry partnerships that promote innovation, transform engineered systems, advance technology and produce engineering graduates who can creatively contribute in a global economy.

SAVE THE DATE!

We’re Celebrating 75 Years!

June 3-5, 2009 will be the time to be in Ames, catching up with old friends and meeting new colleagues. The Department of Statistics and Statistical Laboratory will host the conference Celebrating 75 Years of Statistics at Iowa State. The conference will celebrate the 75th birthday of Statistical Laboratory and the collaborative tradition that continues to define our statistical community. We will also mark the completion of the Snedecor Hall remodeling project, with a tour for those who wish to explore our newly transformed academic home. And we will honor our longtime colleague, mentor and friend, Dean Isaacson, with a banquet and roast on the occasion of his retirement.

An exciting program on emerging topics in statistics will be the center piece of the conference. Plenary talks will be delivered by Chris Skinner on survey statistics, Deborah Nolan on statistics education, Vijay Nair on statistics in engineering, Diane Lambert on high dimensional data, Peter Hall on statistical theory, and David Dunson on biological statistics. Invited sessions are also being organized by ISU alumni and friends on an array of topics, including Bayesian model selection, spatial statistics, bootstrap methods, Bayesian sampling, order statistics, and experimental design, to name a few. In the near future, we will be issuing a call for contributed posters to be presented as part of a mixer following the tour of Snedecor Hall.

We’ll keep you posted as more details about housing and conference activities become available. The latest information is always available at www.stat.iastate.edu.

NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS – 2008

2008 welcomed 30 new MS and PhD graduate students to the Statistics Department. Of the 30 new graduate students, 20 students plan to pursue a PhD in statistics.
The Department of Statistics at Iowa State University hosted an IMS co-sponsored conference on statistics in biology in the fall of 2008. The conference featured a series of talks and posters on statistical theory, methods, and applications motivated by problems from the biological sciences.

Special invited sessions include talks by James Booth, Cornell University, Brad Efron, Stanford University, Xihong Lin, Harvard University, Charles McCulloch, University of California, San Francisco, Michael Newton, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Kathryn Roeder, Carnegie Mellon University, Terry Speed, University of California, Berkeley and Marvin Zelen, Harvard University.

Stanford University’s Bradley Efron offered surprising theoretical ideas using everyday statistics in a talk, “Learning from the Experience of Others.” The talk was the Laurence H. Baker Lecture and was intended for a general audience.

Committee members included: Dan Nettleton, Laurence H. Baker Endowed Chair & Ken Koehler (Department chair and director of the statistical laboratory) (pictured Left, Koehler and Nettleton), Alicia Carriquiry, Philip Dixon, Ulrike Genschel, Peng Liu, Ranjan Maitra, and Yongzhao Shao.

Bud Meador stopped by the department on August 26th, 2008. He visited with several staff members and was happy to see some familiar faces in the department. Bud was instrumental in leading the department through many hardware and software changes that included transitioning from the mainframe to individual Unix workstations to personal computers. He also supervised staff and many graduate students (up to 16 simultaneously) on software development projects, while providing excellent internal support to department faculty, staff and students. He was the SAS expert on campus and still does some SAS programming in retirement. Many of us remember going to Bud with our computer questions. It was fun to see him again. He and wife, Dorothy, reside in Bella Vista, Arkansas. (Contributed by Kathy Shelley)

The 2008 George Zyskind Memorial Lecture was presented on September 29, 2008 by R. Dennis Cook, Professor in the School of Statistics, University of Minnesota. The title of Professor Cook’s talk was “Likelihood-based Sufficient Dimension Reduction for Regression.”
NEW BIRTHS IN THE DEPARTMENT

De-COOK- BUTLER, Rhonda DeCook (MS 2002, PhD 2006), Howard Butler (MS 2001, Interdisciplinary, ISU) Meet Thomas Ronald Butler who was born on Wednesday March 19th at 4:15 pm. Thomas weighed 6 lb. 0 oz. and was 19” long.

LOVE-DIETZ, Tanzy Love (MS 2002, PhD 2005) and Zach Dietz (MS 1998, PhD 2003) announced to the department that they had their baby on October 4th at 8:24pm. “Her name is Azalea Bell Chapman Dietz and she’s happy and healthy, as am I. Zach is very excited to be a dad and we’re enjoying getting to know Azalea. Hope you’re all well.”

TIMM-SUAREZ, Sarah Timm (MS 2002) and Manuel Suarez (MS 2002) sent a baby announcement to the department specifying that they had added on to their house by Two Feet! Maria Victoria Suarez was born May 12, 2008.

VACA TRIGO, Iliana (Current graduate student) announced to the department that on June 1st at 11:18 a.m., a daughter, Tais (Greek for “the most beautiful”) was born. She weighed 6 lbs, 15 oz and measured 19” in length. “She is healthy and really cute.”

WRIGHT, Kevin (PhD 1999) & Deanne (Reber) (MS 1996, PhD 1999) are parents again! Talia Peach Wright was born August 21, 2008.

Vera David Graduate Fellowship in Statistics Award – Yu Qiu
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 – Steve Lund & Patrick Chapin
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 June 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 – Sixia Chen
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.
You won’t recognize the new Snedecor Hall.

The building that houses the Department of Statistics and the Statistical Laboratory has been gutted and the new Snedecor is taking shape. Walls, interior doors, windows, plumbing fixtures and even some carpet already are in place, and changes take place daily.

The building is a hub of activity for plumbers, carpenters and others in the building trades. Next fall they will be replaced by students, faculty and staff.

Snedecor was emptied in December 2007 for the $9 million renovation, to be completed in late spring. Statistics Department staff and several faculty members are currently housed in the lower floors of Wilson Hall, the western twin of the Towers Residence Halls, south of campus. Other faculty members are housed elsewhere on campus. Snedecor classes have been moved to other ISU buildings.

The Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology, which had been in Snedecor, moved to and will remain at the ISU Research Park.

Upon completion, the Statistics Department will return to the Works Progress Administration building that opened in 1939. First known as the Service Building, the structure saw a south-side addition 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 completely new interior will create a larger and improved computer lab, a bigger general classroom, more graduate students offices, additional conference rooms and more functional space for visitors and students.

“We had no space to house a visitor or a post doc,” said Ken Koehler, University Professor and chair of statistics. “Now we will have space for three.”

Koehler said the remodeled building will aid in attracting top students and faculty and help the department better serve the university community. Snedecor has always been a busy facility. Statistics faculty and staff assist many people on campus to design surveys and experiments and analyze results.

HONOR ROLL

Many thanks to the following recent contributors to the statistics department!

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