



Newsletter

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Statistics

A Newsletter for Friends of the
Western Michigan University Department of Statistics



**Magdalena
Niewiadomska-
Bugaj**

Letter from the Chair

It is hard to believe that another academic year already passed and it is again time to send you our newsletter. This has been a very productive year – many things have happened.

Probably the most visible change is our remodeled Statistical Computing Lab, which we split into two rooms. After many years of dedicated work by Dr. McKean, the new Statistical Consulting Center has a new director—Dr. Jeff Terpstra. The second room, the Statistical Computing Lab, is available to our graduate students for their work and study needs. Thanks to the support of the College of Arts and Sciences, both rooms have new furniture and big screens, making group work at the computers possible. Our Computing Lab is also used for tutoring in the mornings, which is not the ideal situation, but we hope to find additional space at some point. Right now there is no better solution since comprehensive tutoring for our introductory statistics courses has become an important part of departmental instruction.

On April 16, the Department of Statistics celebrated its second Students' Award Day. We closed the 2009-2010 academic year with this event, featuring a very interesting talk by Lincoln (Haolai) Jiang on his consulting work at the Graduate College. This was followed by lunch for faculty and students. Five awards were given this year to four students: Robert McNutt was awarded the best TA award; together with Casey Jelsma, Katie Nelson, and Yusuf Bilgic, he was also awarded the Departmental Colloquium award.

On April 8, 2011, we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the department—WMU Statistics Day. More details will follow, but please mark this in your calendar today. We will feature three distinguished speakers: Dr. Michael Stoline, whom you all know very well, Dr. Tom Hettmansperger from Penn State University, Dr. Noel Croessie from The Ohio State University, and Dr. George Milliken. We also are planning a poster session for our guests and alumni, a poster competition for university students, and more.

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Gathering at the Statistics Consulting Center (SCC) Open House in 2009 are, (from left) Dr. Susan Stapleton, associate dean, College of Arts and Sciences; Dr. Magdalena Niewiadomska-Bugaj, department chair; Dr. Alex Enyedi, associate dean, College of Arts and Sciences; and Dr. Jeff Terpstra, director, SCC.

Faculty News



Jeff Terpstra

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jeff Terpstra and I am the newest faculty member in the Department of Statistics here at Western Michigan University (WMU). I am a native “Michigander” having been born and raised in Allendale, Michigan. I graduated from Grand Valley State University in 1991 with a B.S. degree in Mathematics and continued my education right here at WMU, where I earned both an M.S. (1993) and Ph.D. (1997) degree in Statistics. In 1997, I accepted a position in the Department of Statistics at North Dakota State University (NDSU) and then was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to return home to the “balmy” winters of Michigan in 2009.

During my tenure at NDSU and WMU I have taught several courses in statistics; both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. My primary interests in teaching include mathematical statistics, nonparametric statistics, and time series analysis.

In regard to research, my general areas of interest include robust and nonparametric statistics. More specifically, I am actively conducting research in robust and nonparametric methodology for time series analysis, ranked set sampling, and order restricted inference problems. I have also advised a number of M.S. and Ph.D. graduate students in statistical research.

Some of my other educational endeavors include distance education, technology enhanced learning, and statistical methods for educational research. While at NDSU I was actively involved in interdisciplinary research pertaining to the areas of virtual environments and animations for the purpose of enhancing learning in the STEM disciplines. On a more personal note, I enjoy watching baseball games and playing lots of golf when I am not playing with numbers.

Lastly, I am currently the acting director of the Statistical Consulting Center here at WMU. So, if you feel you may need some assistance with your statistical projects or perhaps just want to explore some collaborative possibilities please feel free to contact me. I would love to hear from you!

Course Spotlight

Business Statistics 2160 Course Introduces Clicker Technology



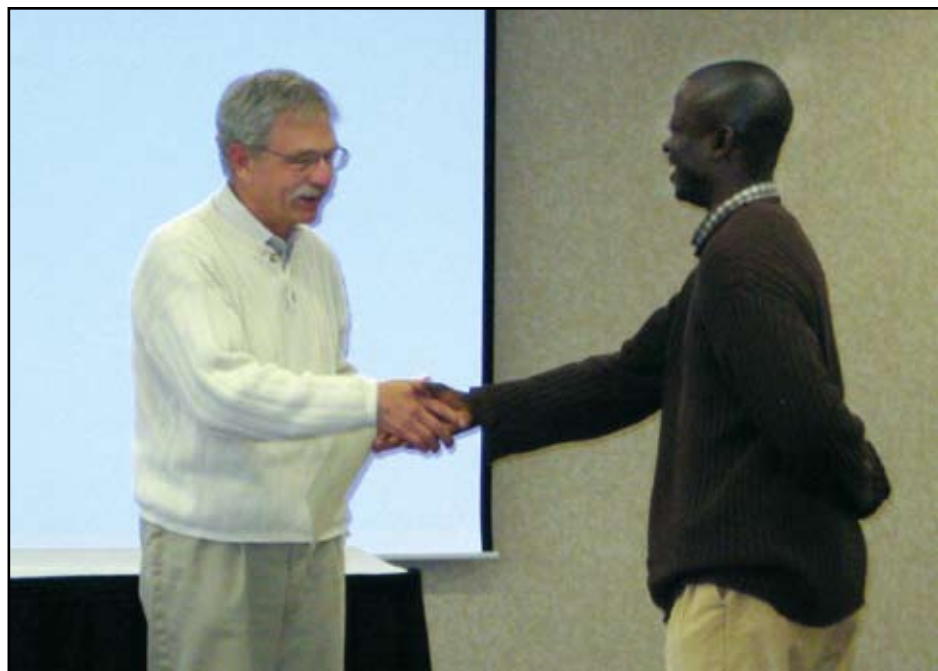
Mr. Loren Heun, director of Statistics 2160

Because we are always trying to improve how we teach Business Statistics (Stat 2160), we introduced clicker technology to all Stat 2160 sections this past semester. The model we are using is that the instructor asks at least one multiple-choice question per session. This keeps the class engaged because points are given for the correct answer and participation.

We are beginning to realize that this is also a great tool for review because it gives immediate feedback. It provides a bargraph of voting and lets the instructors know whether the students got the instructor's point or not. If the students did not succeed, the instructors can magnify the point with more examples or more data. This has proven to be an exciting way to teach statistics.

The on-line homework system is working well. Minor bugs are being fixed as they occur. The exam database system is being used to generate exams. More stories are being added to both systems this summer. The Department of Statistics would like to thank all those who worked on these systems including our new addition, Casey Jelsema

Clicker technology "keeps the class engaged because points are given for the correct answer and participation."



Mr. Loren Heun, director of Statistics 2160 presenting the 2009 Best Teaching Assistant award to Olu Awosoga.

Student Spotlight

Robert McNutt

Snow and statistics are two of my favorite “discoveries” while living in Michigan for the past eleven years. As a transplanted southerner by most comparisons, raised and educated in places like North Carolina, Kentucky and Virginia, I am quite pleased to find myself in a state where ice fishing and X-country skiing are among popular past times. Those who have detected my slight accent have been polite enough not to make fun of it.

I currently am finishing my M.S. in Statistics here at Western Michigan University (WMU) and am planning to continue on towards my Ph.D. starting in fall 2010. My educational path to statistics could best be described not as a random walk, but more of a convergent series, oscillating between the applied in engineering (B.S., University of Louisville), the “hybrid” in physics (M.S., Louisville) to the theoretical in math (M.S., University of Virginia), and finally settling back down to a kind of “limit” in statistics. Before becoming a graduate assistant in the Department of Statistics at WMU, my employment history included power plant engineer, patent examiner, baker and bartender.

My longest and most recent oc-

cupation, for better than 10 years, was as a stay-at-home father to my two wonderful children, Aidan and Maeve. When my youngest started half-day kindergarten, I was hard pressed to come up with a new excuse for an untidy house, so I returned to school at Western.

During my prior educational and professional pursuits, I had made use of statistics in various forms, from sampling and testing boiler flue gas to experimentally estimating the mass of elementary particles. However, somehow I never got around to taking an actual course in the subject. Not having a clear idea of what I might eventually do, but with the thought of employability, I enrolled in Dr. Bugaj’s introductory statistics course in fall 2007. I was “hooked” early in the course, surprised and intrigued by the ability to “formally” answer questions based on information extracted from data. By the end of the course I was preparing my application for admission to the graduate program for fall 2008, smitten with this newly discovered discipline. As the spouse of a WMU Mathematics professor, Dr. Terrell Hodge, I was well acquainted with the campus and many



of the faculty in the Department of Mathematics, but becoming a student, at my age, was a different experience, indeed. Balancing schoolwork and family have proven to be a formidable challenge.

I can honestly say I have thoroughly enjoyed every class I have taken at WMU; each one offering yet more ways to manage, model and make sense of data through statistics. My professors each have brought their own experiences and enthusiasm for the subject to the classroom. I also have had the privilege of teaching an introductory statistics course for the last two semesters, where I have, under the tutelage of Professor of Statistics Dr. Gerald Sievers, simultaneously conveyed and reinforced my own understanding of basic statistics. Never has the seemingly absurd proposition “if you want to learn something, teach it” been more clear. With a great deal of support from family, faculty, staff and students, as well as a good deal of sweat, I have remained on track to complete my master’s degree at the end of the spring semester. I look forward to the new knowledge and challenges that await me in the Doctoral program.

Casey Jelsema

I like this corner of the Great Lakes State; I was born and raised here, and am slowly being set loose. My name is Casey Jelsema, and I currently am pursuing a Ph.D. in Statistics from Western Michigan University (WMU). Right now, I could not imagine myself doing anything else, but looking back, I’m not certain exactly how I came to this point in my life.

I attended high school near Grand Rapids, Mich., at a place called South Christian High School. There, my trusty TI-83 was used for a little bit of math and a lot of Tetris; something I suspect is true of many high school students. I took all the advanced math classes, and somehow graduated barely knowing about this strange idea called, “statistics.”

After high school, I made my way to nearby Grand Valley State University, where, after several semester, I settled into a math major—due in part to how many math courses



I already had taken. From there it was a small step to realize a statistics minor would not be much for work, and after just one or two semesters (the beginning of my first senior year) I decided to instead major in statistics and minor in math. In addition to becoming president of GVSU’s Math and Stats Club, the statistics department at GVSU led to several opportunities to apply my newfound skills in roles ranging from assistant consultant/SAS programmer to primary consultant.

After discussions with my professors at GVSU, I decided to pursue graduate school following graduation, eventually choosing Western Michigan University—where I currently am enrolled in the Ph.D. program. Thus far, the faculty and fellow students have been extremely welcoming; I have found myself enjoying life in Kalamazoo as a grad student, and am looking forward to my next semesters at WMU.

Photo Gallery



Best TA award for 2010, presented to Robert McNutt (left) by Loren Huen.



Associate Dean Dr. Alex Enyedi demonstrates his artistic talents and his admiration for statistics at the Statistical Computing Lab.



2010 Student Appreciation Luncheon speaker, master's student Haolai Jiang.

Departmental Colloquia and departmental service award recipients:
Robert McNutt, Casey Jelsema, Katie Nelson and Yusuf Bilgic.



Dr. Michael Stoline (left) and Dr. Daniel Mihalko, first chair of the Department of Statistics, share a laugh.



Associate Dean Dr. Susan Stapleton showing that statistics CAN be fun.

Thank you to our Donors

Our department could not offer the breadth or depth of opportunities to our faculty and students for professional development were it not for those donors who support our department. We are truly thankful and appreciative of your continued support.

Dr. Rebecca C. Scherzer
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 Mr. Dallas E. Johnson
 Dr. Michael Stoline

Mr. Thomas M. Quealy
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 Dr. Royal J. Weaver
 Mrs. Demetra V. Collia and Mr. Steven M. Koning
 Dr. Magdalena Niewiadomska-Bugaj

Alumni Achievement Award Recipients



Diana Cucos Department of Statistics Alumni Achievement Award recipient for 2008.

Diana Cucos, 2009 Alumni Achievement Award Recipient

Dr. Diana Cucos graduated from Western Michigan University with a Ph.D. in Statistics. Her thesis advisor was Professor Joe McKean. Prior to her studies at WMU, she was awarded a B.S., with a double major in Mathematics and Computer Science from the University of Bucharest, Romania.

While in Kalamazoo, she worked for two years as a statistician at the Kalamazoo Center for Medical Studies. Cucos started her clinical biostatistician career at Statprobe, a privately owned company in Ann Arbor, Mich. Statprobe was later acquired by i3, an Ingenix company; a wholly-owned subsidiary of United Health Group.

At i3 Statprobe, Cucos was the lead statistician on more than 100 trials, and has successfully led three drug submissions.

Cucos's management career started in 2005, managing two teams of biostatisticians (in Ann Arbor, Mich. and Columbus, Ohio). Since then, her responsibilities have grown to leading all biostatisticians in the Americas to her current role as senior director, Global Biostatistics and Statistical Programming. Her group of more than 100 biostatisticians and statistical programmers are located throughout the U.S. and in Canada, Mexico, U.K., Germany, and India.

Cucos's life outside of work is just as busy and fulfilling. She and her husband have two wonderful children and are trying to always make time for their hobbies. Their family's favorite pastime is playing tennis.

Barbara McKinney 2010 Alumni Achievement Award Recipient

Barbara McKinney earned her M.S. in Biostatistics from WMU in '79. Her studies focused primarily on statistics and mathematics.

After graduation, McKinney was offered the position of assistant director of Modular Math at WMU, where she taught courses, supervised graduate students teaching the courses, and assisted with the development of the new course, Math 109.

After serving as assistant to the chair of the department, McKinney began working on the implementation of WMU's online student information system, Banner. McKinney has served as the Registrar at Western Michigan University since fall 2004.

McKinney also has worked with several textbook publishing companies reviewing and critiquing new textbooks in math and statistics, and also writing supplementary materials like study guides.

She has been involved in MACRAO (Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers), and other professional committees both on and off campus.



FRIDAY • SEPTEMBER 24 • 11 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

Join us for Major Excitement

More than 1,000 students visited 36 information stations during the fourth annual *Major Excitement* event, sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences on Sept. 17, 2009. A repeat of the event is planned for Friday, Sept. 24, 2010 and YOU'RE INVITED.

The event provides students with a great opportunity to explore as many majors as they find interesting with visiting alumni, faculty, graduate students, advising and more.

Visiting alumni help students make personal connections and get advice on which courses and programs are most valuable to their chosen profession

Faculty, chairs and graduate students meet with upwards of 3,000 first-year students during the event to advise and share stories.

To RSVP for the Sept. 23 event, or more for more information, call Dorilee Schieble, CLU, ChFC, at (269) 387-4399 or email to: dorilee.schieble@wmich.edu



Statistics alumna and WMU registrar Barbara McKinney does double duty at the 2009 Major Excitement event, sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences. This year's event will be held September 24, 2010 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and alumni are invited to attend.



Alumni Information Update

We want to hear from you!

Our strong suit is our alumni. In each issue, we will focus on YOU, So PLEASE consider yourself selected for upcoming issues. We enjoy receiving your announcements: marriages, job changes, presentations, promotions, advanced degrees, etc. All you need to do is fill out any portion of the form below (with a picture, if possible to cheryl.peters@wmich.edu, or mail to Newsletter Editor, Department of Statistics, 1903 West Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5278.

Name _____

Home address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone _____ Email _____

Employer _____ Job title _____

Work address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

If alumni, degree and year: _____

Tell us more about yourself, and/or what you would like to see in future newsletters:

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Check us out on the web at: www.wmich.edu/statistics

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Give online at www.wmich.edu/foundation/gift
(Indicate Department of Statistics in the College of Arts and Sciences)

Yes, I want to support the WMU Department of Statistics!

In a time when state funding is increasingly restricted, the support we receive from friends and alumni is vitally important. Such funds are used to take advantage of new or unbudgeted opportunities in order to enhance the teaching or the research of the department, or to assist students in achieving their educational and professional goals.

Thank you for considering a gift to the WMU Department of Statistics.

The WMU Foundation processes all gifts that come to the University and forwards 100 percent to the department. Michigan residents: Remember that 50 percent of your gift to a Michigan University is returned to you as a tax credit on your state income tax (up to \$200 for a single filer; \$400 for joint filers).

I support the WMU Department of Statistics with the following gift:

\$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 \$_____ Other

I would like to become a special donor to the
WMU Department of Statistics with a gift of \$_____

My gift is to be paid via:

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Name: _____

Phone Number: (_____) _____



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College of Arts and Sciences
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