StatLinks

THE OFFICIAL NEWS FROM THE TEXAS A&M DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS
TO LINK FRIENDS AND FORMER STUDENTS

EDITOR
ANA FERREIRA
ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR I

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MESSAGE FROM THE
DEPARTMENT HEAD

Dear Faculty, Staff, Students, Former Students, and Friends of the Department,

As we approach Winter Break, the Holiday Season, and the start of the Spring 2025 semester, I would like to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated faculty, staff, postdocs, and students for their unwavering commitment to excellence.

As we conclude the Fall 2024 semester, it is a moment to reflect on the events of the past year. The operational challenges we encountered during the integration of our department into the new College of Arts and Sciences—which now houses 18 diverse departments—have largely been resolved. Many of our procedures have been seamlessly adapted, thanks to the hard work and dedication of both the department and the College. We take pride in the fact that the College is the academic heart of Texas A&M University, with over 19,000 current students and more than 850 faculty members. Under its new leadership, the College operates smoothly and effectively, constantly striving to enhance its impact.

In this edition of *StatLinks*, you will find a summary of our notable achievements, including securing external funding, receiving awards, hosting conferences and workshops, publishing impactful research, and fostering collaborative endeavors.

In 2024, our Department welcomed two Tenure-Track Assistant Professors, one APT faculty member, and two new staff members. Several of our faculty and staff earned well-deserved promotions. A particularly noteworthy accomplishment was our success in student recruitment, with stable enrollments across all academic levels, contributing to a vibrant and diverse academic community. We are also currently hosting two Hagler Fellows—Alicia Carriquiry and Jim Berger—who are helping to elevate our national prominence in the field.

Looking ahead to Fall 2025, we anticipate welcoming our first students into the new Bioinformatics Undergraduate Program, a joint academic initiative between our department and the Biology Department. This exciting new program is directed by Dr. Yuchao Jiang.

As we look toward the future, we embrace the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, continuing our pursuit of excellence in statistical research, education, and service to our school and profession. We remain committed to upholding Texas A&M's core values of respect, excellence, leadership, loyalty, integrity, and selfless service.

Wishing you all a joyful and safe holiday season, and a happy and prosperous New Year!

BRANI VIDAKOVIC
H.O. Hartley Chair and Department Head

FACULTY
AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Jesús Arroyo has been awarded an NSF DMS grant of $115,000 for his project, "Collaborative Research: Statistical Network Integration." This prestigious grant highlights his innovative contributions to advancing statistical methodologies for analyzing and integrating complex network data.

Dr. Yuchao Jiang was appointed as a Regular Member of the Cancer and Hematologic Disorders (CHD) Study Section within the NIH's Population Sciences and Epidemiology (PSE) Review Group. His term began on July 1, 2024, and continues through June 30, 2028. The CHD section reviews research on the causes and risk factors of cancer and hematologic disorders, focusing on population health and health equity.

Dr. Runmin Wang has been awarded the Arts & Sciences International Conference Travel Grant, receiving $2,000 to support his travel to the 7th International Conference on Econometrics and Statistics (EcoSta 2024) in Beijing, China, in July 2024. This prestigious grant highlights his active engagement in the global academic community and his contributions to the field of econometrics and statistics.
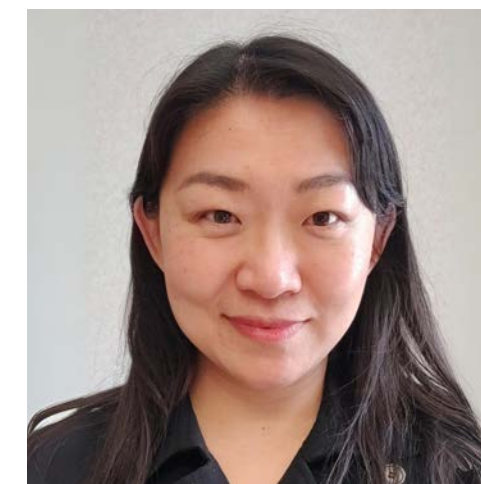
Dr. Ning "Patricia" Ning has been selected to receive a $2,500 award from the ArtSci Support Assistant Professors to Visit Funding Agencies Program. Additionally, Dr. Ning will serve as an Invited Session Organizer for the 2025 Joint Statistical Meeting (JSM) in Nashville, Tennessee. She is going to lead a session on "Innovative Methodologies for Spatiotemporal Modeling and Inference."

ANIRBAN BHATTACHARYA HONORED WITH FACULTY FELLOWSHIP AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Dr. Anirban Bhattacharya has been awarded the Patricia R. Smith and Dr. William B. Smith Faculty Fellowship for Statistics in the College of Arts & Sciences. Effective January 1, 2025, for a three-year term, this fellowship recognizes his exceptional contributions as a researcher and educator in statistics. The award includes annual endowment proceeds of approximately $8,700 to support academic and research endeavors, highlighting Dr. Bhattacharya's ongoing impact on advancing statistical knowledge and education.

In addition to this honor, Dr. Bhattacharya was elected Chair-Elect of the BayesComp section of the International Society for Bayesian Analysis (ISBA), a rapidly growing section focused on Bayesian computation. Furthermore, his NSF grant, Wasserstein-guided Nonparametric Bayes, was recently funded, further emphasizing his leadership in the field.

JAMES O. BERGER NAMED 2024-2025 HAGLER FELLOW

The Department of Statistics at Texas A&M University is proud to welcome James O. Berger as the 2024-2025 Hagler Fellow. Dr. Berger, the Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Statistics at Duke University, is celebrated for his groundbreaking contributions to Bayesian statistical analysis, decision analysis, and uncertainty quantification. His work extends beyond the field of statistics, impacting disciplines such as astronomy, pharmaceutical research, and geoscience.

With a Ph.D. from Cornell University, Dr. Berger's illustrious career includes accolades such as membership in the National Academy of Sciences and the Spanish Real Academia de Ciencias. His honors include the Guggenheim and Sloan Fellowships, the Samuel S. Wilks Memorial Award, and the Arnold Zellner Medal. As an accomplished author, he has written 18 books and over 200 peer-reviewed articles, solidifying his status as a leading figure in the global statistical community.

During his time as a Hagler Fellow, Dr. Berger will collaborate with faculty and students in the Department of Statistics focusing on the foundations of Bayesian statistics and uncertainty quantification in computer modeling. His expertise and mentorship are invaluable, offering unique opportunities to advance the department's research and educational missions. His contributions are expected to leave a lasting impact on the department and the broader Texas A&M research community. We are honored to host him for this distinguished fellowship year.

SCOTT CRAWFORD RECEIVES TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Dr. Scott Crawford was honored with the 2024 Association of Former Students College-Level Teaching Award from the College of Arts & Sciences, recognizing his outstanding teaching excellence and unwavering dedication to fostering student success. This prestigious award celebrates educators who inspire and support their students both inside and outside the classroom. A special celebratory event was held where Dr. Crawford was formally presented with the award plaque

THE 12TH MAN AWARD

Judith Moreno, the Senior Administrative Coordinator II in the Department of Statistics, has been awarded the prestigious 12th Man Award. This annual honor recognizes a faculty or staff member for their long-term contributions to the department, celebrating their dedication, impact, and commitment to fostering excellence. Judith's recognition reflects her exceptional service, her ability to connect with colleagues and students, and her unwavering support for the department's success.

The award was presented during the annual Aggie Reunion, held at the Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM). As part of the celebration, Judith was given a custom 12th Man jersey, symbolizing her integral role within the department and her enduring spirit of teamwork and collaboration.

Judith's contributions as Senior Administrative Coordinator II have been instrumental in ensuring the smooth operation of the department. Her work exemplifies the values of the department and Texas A&M University, making her a deserving recipient of this honor. The 12th Man Award celebrates her remarkable career and enduring legacy within the Department of Statistics.

Judith Moreno (left) and Dr. Brani Vidakovic (right)

NEW STAFF: KACIE PEACOCK

The Department of Statistics is pleased to welcome Kacie Peacock as our new Academic Advisor II. With experience at Auburn University and The Boys & Girls Club, Kacie has a strong background in student development and academic planning. In his role, he will guide undergraduate students in setting career goals, planning their academic paths, and achieving success. Outside of work, Kacie enjoys cooking, playing guitar, and outdoor activities, and he looks forward to supporting our students at Texas A&M.

A SCHOLAR'S LEAP: FROM UNDERGRADUATE TO PH.D.

Chen Yang, now a Statistics Ph.D. student, was honored with the inaugural Su Binghua Distinguished Biostatistics Scholarship on June 26, 2024. This prestigious scholarship, sponsored by Tigermed, recognizes exceptional rising talents in the field of biostatistics across mainland China. Notably, Chen Yang was the only undergraduate recipient selected from a competitive pool of Ph.D. candidates, a testament to the depth of their academic achievements and potential.

The $2,800 scholarship serves as a significant recognition of Chen Yang's contributions to biostatistics, underscoring their commitment to excellence in research. Their unique distinction as the sole undergraduate recipient highlights both their exceptional skills and dedication to advancing the field. This achievement marks Chen Yang as a promising figure in the future of biostatistical research, as they transition into their Ph.D. studies and continue to contribute to the scientific community.

GRADUATE STUDENTS AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Gozde Sert has earned several prestigious awards in 2024, showcasing her outstanding contributions to the field. These include the ASA Section on Bayesian Statistical Science (SBSS) Student Paper Award, the AAAS Statistics Section (U) Student Travel Award, and the IMS International Conference on Statistics and Data Science (ICSDS) Student Paper Award. Additionally, she received the Texas A&M University College of Arts and Sciences Round 1 Doctoral Student Research, Travel, and Professional Development Award.

Daniel Cirkovic has been awarded the Thomas Powell '62 Graduate Fellowship Award by the College of Arts & Sciences. This prestigious fellowship recognizes outstanding academic achievement, dedication to research, and a commitment to advancing the field of statistics, while supporting promising scholars in their pursuit of academic and professional excellence.

Snigdha Das has been honored with the Thomas Powell '62 Graduate Fellowship Award by the College of Arts & Sciences. Snigdha's remarkable achievements and commitment to advancing statistical knowledge have earned her this recognition, highlighting her promise as a future leader in the discipline and celebrating her dedication to impactful research and academic excellence.

Isaac Ray has been honored with the John R. Frackler Jr. Endowed Graduate Student Award from the College of Arts & Sciences. Isaac's contributions exemplify the high standards of excellence celebrated by this distinguished fellowship, highlighting his promise as a leader in statistical research and application and recognizing his dedication to pushing the boundaries of knowledge in the field.

TRAVEL AWARDS

Jacob Andros

JSM 2024
Portland, Oregon

"Robust Distributed Learning of Functional Data through Data Sketching"

Srijato Bhattacharyya

2024 ISBA World Meeting
Venice, Italy

"A Bayesian Spatially Contiguous Partitioning Method with User-Defined Soft Constraints"

Connor Brubaker

JSM 2024
Portland, Oregon

"Frequency Band Analysis for Multiple Stationary Time Series"

Arhit Chakrabarti

2024 ISBA World Meting
Venice, Italy

"Graphical Dirichlet Process for Clustering Non-Exchangeable Grouped Data"

Abhisek Chakraborty

ICASSP 2024
Seoul, South Korea

"Probabilistic Spike Train Inference"

Anirban Chakraborty

ICASSP 2024
Seoul, South Korea

"Scalable Model Based Gaussian Process Clustering"

Trisha Dawn

JSM 2024
Portland, Oregon

"Some Change-point Detection Methods Applicable to High Dimension, Low Sample Size Data"

Samuel Gailliot

2024 ISBA World Meeting
Venice, Italy

"Data Sketching and Stacking: A Confluence of Two Strategies for Predictive Inference in Gaussian Process Regressions with High-Dimensional Features"

Eric Gao

JSM 2024
Portland, Oregon

"Scalable Inference for Assessing Jacobian-Based Neural Granger Causality"

Jhanvi Garg

AISTATS 2024
Valencia, Spain

"Soft-constrained Schrödinger Bridge: A Stochastic Control Approach"

Jaeseon Lee

JSM 2024
Portland, Oregon

"A Bayesian Spatially-clustered Coefficient Model with Temporal Structures for Hepatitis A in South Korea"

Jiyoung Park

NeurIPS 2024
New Orleans, Louisiana

"Minimum Norm Interpolation by Perceptra: Explicit Regularization and Implicit Bias"

Jose Rodriguez-Acosta

SMI 2024
Indianapolis, Indiana

"A Novel Classification Framework Using a Multilayer Network Predictor"

Valeriya Rogovchenko

PSB 2024
Big Island, Hawaii

"Scalar-Function Causal Discovery for Generating Causal Hypotheses with Observational Wearable Device Data"

Bitan Sarkar

ENAR 2024
Baltimore, Maryland

"MR.RGM: An R Package for Fitting Bayesian Multivariate Bidirectional Mendelian Randomization Networks"

Renat Sergazinov

ICLR 2024
Vienna, Austria

"GlucoBench: Curated List of Continuous Glucose Monitoring Datasets with Prediction Benchmarks"

Gozde Sert

JSM 2024
Portland, Oregon

"Bayesian Semi-supervised Inference via a Debiased Modeling Approach"

TEXAS A&M TO LAUNCH BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN BIOINFORMATICS PROGRAM IN FALL 2025

Texas A&M University will launch a Bachelor of Science in Bioinformatics in Fall 2025, adding a dynamic new program to its academic offerings. Developed collaboratively by the Departments of Statistics and Biology, with support from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, this in-person program will provide students with a robust foundation in statistics, biology, genetics, and computer science—skills that are essential in today's rapidly evolving field. Dr. Yuchao Jiang, Associate Professor in the Department of Statistics, was instrumental in establishing the program and will serve as its inaugural Program Director. "Featuring a uniquely designed curriculum, it aims to nurture the next generation of bioinformaticians, quantitative and computational biologists, data scientists, and researchers in various life science, biotechnology, and healthcare settings. We are excited to see this program getting materialized and greatly look forward to welcoming its first cohort in Fall 2025," said Dr. Jiang.

The program's launch addresses the growing need for professionals skilled in interpreting massive biological datasets generated by cutting-edge techniques like next-generation sequencing, proteomics, and metabolomics. Bioinformatics bridges data science and biology, focusing on quantitative methods for analyzing complex biological data—a distinction that sets it apart from computational biology, which applies computational tools to biological research.

The curriculum integrates core courses in biology, statistics, and computer science with advanced bioinformatics training. Students will delve into topics


Dr. Yuchao Jiang, Associate Professor with joint appointments in the Departments of Statistics and Biology

such as genetics, genomics, and molecular biology while honing skills in statistical analysis and computational data handling. This interdisciplinary approach ensures graduates are prepared to address challenges in fields like biotechnology, life sciences, and healthcare, where data-driven insights are increasingly vital.

Graduates will emerge with expertise in both biological sciences and data analysis, ready for careers as bioinformaticians, computational biologists, data scientists, and researchers. They are expected to thrive in diverse professional environments, including research institutions, biotech companies, and healthcare organizations, where the demand for bioinformatics expertise continues to grow.

Requiring 120 credit hours, the Bioinformatics degree provides a comprehensive academic experience. The Department of Statistics will oversee the program in collaboration with other departments to ensure students receive the resources and support needed to excel in this cutting-edge field at the intersection of biology, computation, and statistical science.

NEW DIRECTOR APPOINTED FOR PH.D. PROGRAM
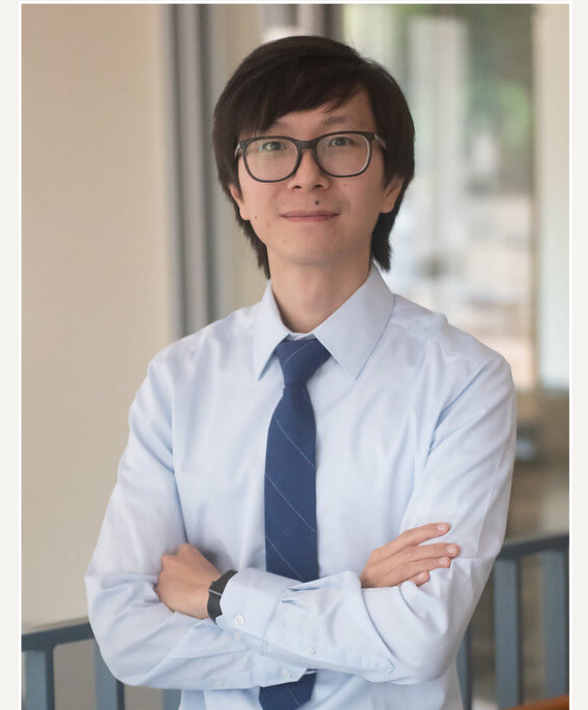
Dr. Raymond Wong, Associate Professor in the Department of Statistics, has been appointed as the new Director of the Ph.D. Program. In this role, Dr. Wong will oversee the strategic direction, curriculum development, and mentorship initiatives within the program. His extensive experience in statistical research and dedication to student success make him well-suited to lead this pivotal aspect of the department.

With a strong commitment to advancing the academic and professional growth of doctoral candidates, Dr. Wong brings both expertise and vision to the position. His leadership will play a key role in cultivating an environment of rigorous scholarship and innovation, helping to prepare the next generation of leaders in the field of statistics.

SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE: TEXAS A&M GRADUATE ESTABLISHES FACULTY FELLOWSHIP IN HONOR OF MENTOR

Nearly 55 years ago, Dr. Ersen Arseven made a pivotal decision to pursue his Ph.D. in statistics at Texas A&M University. This choice sparked a long-standing connection to the university that continues today. Over the last 20 years, Dr. Arseven has contributed significantly to Texas A&M's future by supporting both faculty and students through various endowments. His most recent initiative, the Patricia R. Smith and Dr. William B. Smith Faculty Fellowship, celebrates the enduring importance of faculty-student relationships by investing in faculty excellence in Texas A&M's Department of Statistics.

Throughout his career, Dr. Arseven has been a problem-solver, a quality that has been key to his success as a statistician and consultant in Nyack, New York. Keeping a close watch on statistical trends, he remains particularly engaged with Texas A&M's Department of Statistics, which he considers his academic home. Recently, Dr. Arseven noticed a concerning trend: faculty members who had been integral to Texas A&M were being drawn away to other institutions. When he discovered that resource constraints were a primary reason, he felt compelled to act.

In response, Dr. Arseven established the Patricia R. Smith and Dr. William B. Smith Faculty Fellowship for Statistics. This fellowship not only honors Dr. William B. Smith, a prominent Texas A&M statistician and mentor, but also aims to provide long-term support for faculty in their teaching, research, and professional development. Dr. Smith, an influential figure in the department, earned both his master's and Ph.D. from Texas A&M and served as department head for nearly a decade. His contributions to the field and commitment to students left a legacy that Dr. Arseven deeply respects and wanted to help continue.

Dr. Arseven recalls how Dr. Smith's wife, Patricia, helped forge a connection between him and Dr. Smith beyond the classroom. While Dr. Smith was a demanding professor who kept a professional distance, the two became friends over time, bonding over their love for Texas A&M and the field of statistics. Patricia played an integral role in supporting her husband's students and was a friend and "guardian angel" to many, including Dr. Arseven and his late wife, Susan.

Dr. Arseven's endowment not only supports future faculty but also stands as a tribute to the unique connections and lasting mentorship he experienced at Texas A&M. Through this initiative, Dr. Arseven hopes to ensure that Texas A&M retains exceptional faculty who will continue to shape the futures of students, just as Dr. Smith did for him and countless others.

Professor Emeritus of Statistics Dr. William B. Smith '60 with his wife Patricia R. Smith

Dr. Ersen Arseven '74 (left) and Dr. William B. Smith '60 (right)

Smith, receiving his 2011 American Statistical Association Founders Award

FALL

2024

EVENTS

AUGUST | SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER

NOVEMBER | DECEMBER

FALL 2024 COLLOQUIUMS

PEPA RAMÍREZ-COBO

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS AND OPERATIONAL RESEARCH, UNIVERSIDAD DE CÁDIZ

"Empirical Bayes Fairness in Linear Regression"

DONGLIN ZENG

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF BIOSTATISTICS, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"Learning Optimal Dynamic Treatment Regimes under Short- and Long-Term Risk Constraints"

JIASHUN JIN

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

"The Statistical Triangle"

CHRISTIAN GENEST

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS, MCGILL UNIVERSITY

"Bayesian Hierarchical Modeling of Spatial Extremes"

MICHAEL GALLAUGHER

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

"Clustering Skewed Spatial Data via Mixtures of Regressions"

JAMES BERGER

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR EMERITUS, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICAL SCIENCE, DUKE UNIVERSITY

"Counterexamples in Statistics that Can Alter One's Statistical Philosophy"

RUI TUO

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

"Asymptotic Theory for Linear Functionals of Kernel Ridge Regression"
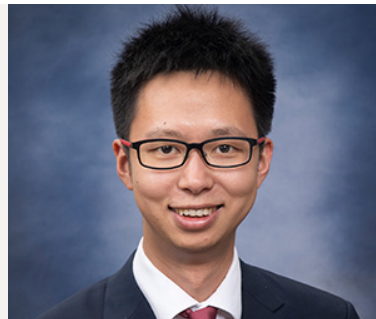
ANAND VIDYASHANKAR

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

"Hellinger Distance Differential Privacy"

PAUL PARKER

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - SANTA CRUZ

"Spatially Selected and Dependent Random Effects for Small Area Estimation with Application to Rent Burden"

FREDERI VIENS

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, RICE UNIVERSITY

"Exact and Asymptotic Distribution Theory for Yule's Correlation Statistic, with Applications"

STATISTICS FORMER STUDENT NETWORK
WEBINARS

SOUTIR BANDYOPADHYAY

"High-Resolution Long-term Weather Data for Energy"

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
APPLIED MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS
COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES**

KRISTIN P. LENNOX

"Mathemagic! A Defense of Statistics in the Age of Data Science"

**SENIOR MANAGING SCIENTIST
EXPONENT**

EUN SUG PARK

"Air Pollution Forensics and Health Effects Evaluation"

**SENIOR RESEARCH SCIENTIST
TEXAS A&M TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE
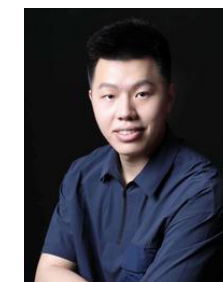DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS**

STAT CAFE

SHUANGJIE ZHANG

Sparse Bayesian Group Factor Model for Feature Interactions in Multiple Count Tables Data
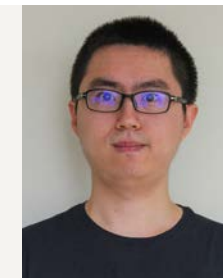
QIYUAN WANG

Detecting Stellar Flares with Conditional Volatility

ANTHONY LI

Segmenting Watermarked Texts From Language Models

XIYU PENG

Decoding Spatial Tissue Architecture: A Scalable Bayesian Topic Model for Multiplexed Imaging Analysis

YESEUL JEON

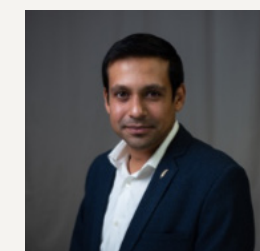A Bayesian Convolutional Neural Network-based Generalized Linear Model

ABHISHEK ROY

The Symbiotic Relationship of Statistics and Optimization: Insights and Future
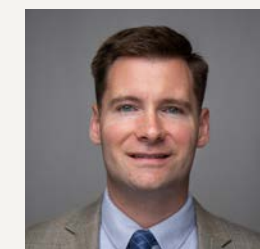
WORKFLOW WORKSHOP

ABHISHEK CHAKRABORTTY

Causal Inference for Treatment Effects from Observational Data: An Overview

SCOTT BRUCE

Arseven Statistics Department Computing Cluster

ZORICH'S RELIABILITY WORKSHOP

On Friday, September 27, Texas A&M University hosted the 2024 Zorich's Reliability Workshop, an event that brought together students, faculty, and professionals to explore the latest in reliability engineering and statistics. Organized through a partnership between the Department of Statistics and the Department of Industrial & Systems Engineering, the workshop was made possible by the sponsorship of John Zorich, a statistics former student and prominent supporter of reliability studies.

The workshop provided a unique platform for attendees to discuss critical advancements and applications in reliability. A lineup of expert speakers and interactive sessions allowed participants to deepen their understanding of the topic. Students had the chance to network with field professionals, gaining insight into real-world applications and challenges.

In addition to the sessions and discussions, students were invited to present their research in a poster session, which of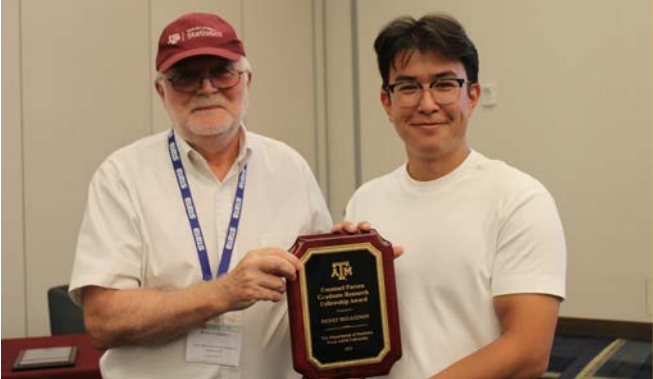fered them the opportunity to showcase their findings and gain valuable feedback from both peers and industry experts. This interactive experience enabled students to practice presenting complex data, sharpening their communication skills while highlighting their contributions to the field.

This collaborative event highlighted Texas A&M's commitment to interdisciplinary learning, particularly the integration of statistical techniques with engineering principles. The support from Zorich underscored the importance of reliability engineering in today's data-driven landscape, fostering academic growth and professional readiness in a highly relevant field.

Dr. Brani Vidakovic (left), John Zorich (middle), and Karen Cochran (right)

The 7th Annual Symposium on Cancer Research: Basic Science to Bioinformatics, took place on October 11, 2024. Drawing researchers, students, and faculty to explore the latest advancements in cancer research. The event was organized through a collaboration between the Department of Statistics and the Department of Biology, with sponsorship from the Institute for Applied Mathematics and Computational Science (IAMCS). This symposium aimed to bridge foundational research in cancer biology with cutting-edge bioinformatics approaches, underscoring Texas A&M's commitment to interdisciplinary studies in health sciences.

Throughout the day, participants engaged with expert speakers covering topics from molecular mechanisms driving cancer progression to innovations in data-driven research methods. Presentations explored the application of bioinformatics and computational tools in unraveling complex cancer biology, highlighting the transformative role of data analysis in personalized medicine and targeted cancer therapies. Attendees had the opportunity to discuss the implications of these approaches in developing more effective diagnostic methods and treatment strategies, making the symposium a valuable learning experience for all involved.

The symposium also provided a platform for students to showcase their research through a lively data blitz session, where they delivered rapid-fire presentations on their projects, giving them a chance to communicate their findings concisely to a diverse audience. The event also included a poster session, allowing students to engage in deeper discussions about their work, network with peers and faculty, and receive valuable feedback from experienced researchers in both biology and bioinformatics. These sessions were designed to foster critical thinking and communication skills while encouraging students to broaden their professional networks.

The 7th Annual Symposium on Cancer Research helped equip students and researchers with the knowledge and resources needed to address complex challenges in oncology, inspiring future advances in both basic science and computational approaches to cancer research.

2024 AGGIE REUNION

The Department of Statistics hosted its annual Aggie Reunion on August 5, 2024, during the Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) in Portland, Oregon. This much-anticipated event brought together former students, faculty, and current students from the Department of Statistics, offering a wonderful chance to reconnect, share memories, and celebrate the department's accomplishments over the past year.

Amid a warm and lively atmosphere, attendees enjoyed the opportunity to mingle with old friends and build new connections. A highlight of the evening was the department's awards presentation, where select individuals were recognized for their outstanding achievements and contributions. These awards underscored the department's commitment to excellence and acknowledged the remarkable work and dedication of both faculty and students.

In addition to the awards, the evening allowed guests to reflect on the department's growth and recent successes. Faculty and alumni shared updates on new research milestones, student initiatives, and plans for the future, emphasizing the department's influential role in the field of statistics.

The annual Aggie Reunion at JSM remains a treasured tradition, celebrating the tight-knit Texas A&M statistics community and its ongoing impact on the broader world of statistics. Looking ahead, the department eagerly anticipates another year of achievement and the chance to reunite again at JSM next year.

CHRISTIAN GENEST WINS PARZEN PRIZE

Dr. Christian Genest, renowned for his groundbreaking work in copula modeling and extreme-value theory, has been awarded the Emanuel and Carol Parzen Prize for Statistical Innovation by Texas A&M University's Department of Statistics. This prize celebrates statisticians who excel in bridging rigorous research with practical applications, embodying Professor Parzen's vision for the field.

Genest's contributions extend beyond research; he has served as President of the Statistical Society of Canada and Director of the Institut des Sciences Mathématiques du Québec. With nearly 200 publications and numerous international presentations, he has received top honors, including Canada's Gold Medal in Statistics and the CRM-Fields-PIMS Prize.

AMANDA HERING RECEIVES H.O. HARTLEY AWARD

Dr. Amanda Hering has been honored with the H.O. Hartley Award, an esteemed annual recognition given by Texas A&M University's Department of Statistics to former students who have made outstanding contributions to the field. This award celebrates individuals who continue the department's legacy of impactful research and innovation in statistics.

As a distinguished former student, Dr. Hering has advanced the field through her research in environmental statistics and water resource management, earning her a reputation for blending rigorous statistical methods with practical applications. Her receipt of the H.O. Hartley Award highlights her dedication to pushing the boundaries of statistical science and her influence on both industry and academia.

STATA SOCIAL

The annual STATA Social took place this fall, welcoming faculty, students, and Stata employees for a relaxed evening of networking on Stata's office grounds. StataCorp, renowned for its statistical software widely used in academic and professional settings, plays a pivotal role in advancing data analysis and research across disciplines. Set in a casual environment, the event provided an ideal setting for attendees to connect over shared interests in data and statistics.

The STATA Social continues to be a favorite fall tradition, fostering connections between academia and industry in an informal, enjoyable to future gatherings that build on these relationships and open doors for future partnerships.

PH.D. WELCOME PARTY

The Department of Statistics hosted its annual Ph.D. Welcome Party at the start of the semester, an event organized by Dr. Brani Vidakovic to welcome new Ph.D. students into the department. Dr. Vidakovic, along with current students, gathered to meet the incoming cohort, offering a warm and supportive environment as they embark on their academic journey. The event allowed new students to ease their transition into the program and set the stage for productive mentorship and collaboration.

For both new and returning students, the welcome party was a valuable opportunity to connect, exchange ideas, and establish relationships that will be integral to their experience in the program.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES CELEBRATES FACULTY PROMOTIONS

The College of Arts and Sciences recently hosted a celebratory dinner to honor the achievements of newly promoted faculty members. Held in an intimate setting, the event recognized Dr. Scott Crawford, promoted to Instructional Full Professor, Dr. Irma Hernandez-Magallanes, promoted to Instructional Associate Professor, and Dr. Mohamed Aburweis, also promoted to Instructional Associate Professor. Although unable to attend, Dr. Alan Dabney was celebrated in absentia for his promotion to Full Professor. These promotions, effective September 1, 2024, reflect the dedication and exceptional contributions of these faculty members to research, teaching, and service, significantly enhancing the department's academic impact.

Among those in attendance was Dr. Brani Vidakovic, who joined the honorees in celebrating this important career milestone. The evening provided an opportunity for colleagues to acknowledge the accomplishments of these faculty members and to look ahead to the ways they will continue to shape their disciplines. The event underscored a shared sense of pride and excitement for the future as the newly promoted professors embrace their new roles and responsibilities within the academic community.

STUDENT EVENTS

PH.D. QUALIFYING EXAM

The Ph.D. Qualifying Exam was held on May 20 & 22, 2024. The comprehensive exam covers information & topics in the 5 core courses that are taken during the first year of study. Students were treated with breakfast and lunch on the day of the exams to keep them focused and energized. We applaud all their hard work & efforts!

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL CELEBRATION

On September 17, 2024, the Department of Statistics' Departmental Climate Committee hosted a Mid-Autumn Festival luncheon. The Mid-Autumn, or Moon Cake Festival, is a traditional holiday celebrated in the Chinese culture, where families and friends come together to eat a great meal and honor the moon.

NEW MS STUDENT ORIENTATION

The new MS student orientation was held on August 14, 2024. Students from our MS in Statistical Data Science, 3+2 and MS in Data Science programs gathered for a delicious breakfast, and to learn the ins and outs of our department, and different master's programs.

ASA NEW MEMBERSHIP LUNCH

On October 14, 2024, the Department of Statistics' Climate Committee hosted its annual ASA New Membership Lunch. First-year graduate students were invited to join the American Statistical Association with their first-year membership covered by the department. Students also learned about the organization's reputation and member benefits.

NEW PH.D. STUDENT ORIENTATION

The new Ph.D. student orientation was held on August 13, 2024. Students were treated to a delicious breakfast while learning the ends and outs of our department & graduate program. A lunch with the faculty was also held during this event for students to get to know the faculty, and to learn about the different research opportunities available in the department.

SGSA GAME NIGHT

On September 27, 2024, SGSA hosted a game night for Statistics graduate students to unwind and socialize. The event was a fantastic opportunity for them to take a break from their rigorous academic schedules and connect with their peers!

SPOOKY FUN AT THE HALLOWEEN BBQ

This semester's Halloween BBQ, hosted by the SGSA, brought together students, faculty, and their families for an evening of fun and festivities. Held on Sunday, October 27, at Pavilion A of Tiffany Park, the event combined the spirit of Halloween with the joy of gathering outdoors. Guests enjoyed delicious BBQ while participating in ghoulish games and other activities in a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere.

Tiffany Park provided the perfect setting for the celebration, offering volleyball and basketball courts, playgrounds for children, and pet-friendly spaces. Many attendees embraced the Halloween spirit by donning creative costumes, adding a festive flair to the evening. From spooky laughter to friendly sports and great food, the Halloween BBQ was a memorable celebration for all!

STAT Q&A PANEL

On October 17, 2024, the STAT Ambassadors hosted a STAT Q&A Panel to expose our undergraduate Statistics majors to our department's graduate program opportunities, as well as opportunities available within our undergraduate program.

The event provided a welcoming and interactive platform for students to ask questions and gain valuable insights about their academic and career paths. Topics ranged from course selections and research opportunities to tips for transitioning into graduate studies. Attendees left the session better informed and inspired, with a deeper understanding of the resources and support available within the Department of Statistics. Our program directors, staff and students did an amazing job at highlighting our programs and sharing their experiences.


UNDERGRADUATE CAPSTONE POSTER SESSION

The Department of Statistics recently hosted the Undergraduate Capstone Poster Session, featuring the work of students enrolled in STAT 482, the undergraduate capstone course. This annual event provides a platform for students to present their projects and research to the department, highlighting their skills and accomplishments as they near the completion of their undergraduate studies.

Each poster reflected the culmination of the students' learning and their application of statistical methods to real-world problems. Projects spanned a variety of topics, including data analysis, predictive modeling, and innovative approaches to statistical challenges. Faculty, staff, and graduate students engaged with the presenters, offering feedback, asking questions, and gaining insight into

the diverse range of interests and expertise among the undergraduate cohort.

The Capstone Poster Session not only celebrated the achievements of the STAT 482 students but also underscored the department's commitment to hands-on learning and practical experience. Events like this help prepare students for future careers or advanced studies by fostering communication, critical thinking, and analytical skills. The department commends the participants for their hard work and creativity and looks forward to seeing how these students will continue to apply their statistical knowledge in the years ahead.
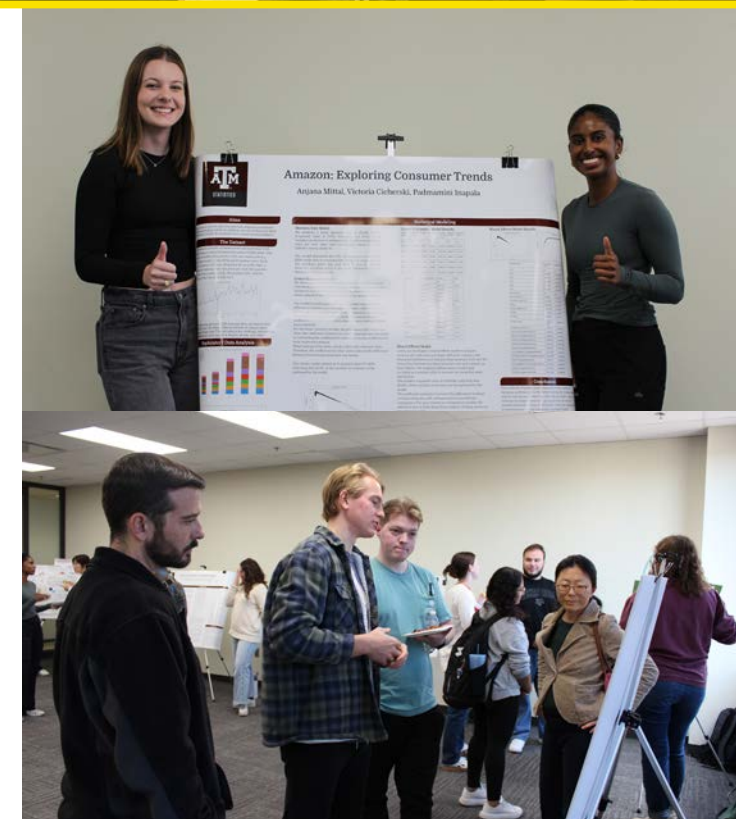
THANKSGIVING POTLUCK BRINGS DEPARTMENT TOGETHER

On November 22, the Department of Statistics hosted its annual Thanksgiving Potluck, bringing faculty, staff, and students together for a shared meal and camaraderie. This year's celebration featured a catered Thanksgiving feast with traditional holiday dishes, complemented by meals contributed by attendees. The potluck highlighted the diversity and generosity within the department, with contributions ranging from classic holiday staples to unique international dishes.

The event provided an excellent opportunity for members of the department to connect in a relaxed, festive setting. Faculty and students exchanged stories and experiences, while staff members joined in the celebration, fostering a sense of unity and gratitude. The Thanksgiving Potluck served not only as a reminder of the department's vibrant community but also as a chance to strengthen relationships and celebrate the season together.

HOLIDAY PARTY

The Department of Statistics celebrated the end of the year with a festive Holiday Party on December 6 at Casa do Brasil. Faculty and staff gathered to enjoy a delicious Brazilian steakhouse-style dinner, marking the occasion with good food and great company. The evening provided a welcome opportunity to unwind, share stories, and celebrate the achievements of 2024 in a cheerful and elegant setting.

Beyond the meal, the party highlighted the strong sense of community within the department. The event was a chance for colleagues to connect outside of work and express appreciation for each other's contributions throughout the year. As the semester came to a close, the Holiday Party left everyone in high spirits and ready to welcome the new year.

TAMU DATATHON

The Texas A&M University Datathon (TAMU Datathon) is an annual data science hackathon that brings students from across the nation and the world to Texas A&M University for a weekend of learning and competition. Since its inception in Fall 2019, the event has provided a platform for students to tackle real-world data science challenges, interact with industry leaders, and explore opportunities in this rapidly growing field. Entirely free to attend, the Datathon focuses on fostering student participation and growth, with involvement from both undergraduate and graduate students.

The most recent TAMU Datathon took place on November 9–10, 2024, attracting hundreds of participants and representatives from leading companies like Capital One and Baker Hughes. The Department of Statistics has been integral to the event's success, offering financial support, logistical assistance, and mentorship. Dr. Darren Homrighausen, a faculty member in the department, has served as the faculty mentor since the Datathon's launch, guiding its mission to educate and inspire the next generation of data scientists.

FALL 2024 GRADUATES

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Victoria E. Cicherski | Padmamini Inapala | Christina Yumin Kim | Anjana K. Mittal | Mai Khanh Ngoc Nguyen | Alyssa Jordan Nugent | Haleigh Jo Shoemake Tyler J. Vance

MS ON-CAMPUS STUDENTS

Matthew Palmer | Tobi Oladunjoye | Prince Tibadiya | Allan Santizo Flores| Emma Thompson

MS DISTANCE STUDENTS

Dhivya Addula | Jeffrey Althoff | Stella Bazaldua| Corinne Brooks| Matthew Byrom | Laura Carvajal | Szu-Ying Chen | Ryan Culpepper | Evan Dimarzio | Townsend Douglas | Emanuela Ene | Shaheen Eshghipour | Hunter Graham | Kathleen Hoyl | Laser Kaplan | Shreejesh Karimkoliku-zhiyil | Ahmed Madi | Jacob Marsh | Darnel Allen | Cecilia Mitchell | Enrique Ortizmata | Blake Peterman | Gina Salerni| Joseph Tang | Eric Wagner | Yu-An Wu | Xiao Wang | Bingwen Liu

PHD STUDENTS

Renat Sergazinov

WE ARE HIRING

TENURED: PROFESSOR AND DEPARTMENT HEAD

Qualified applicants should submit a cover letter that includes a discussion of their leadership philosophy and administrative experience and a personal statement to include philosophy and plans for teaching, research, and service. They should also submit a curriculum vitae and the names and contact information for three references in their on-line application through: tx.ag/deptheadposition.

FULL PROFESSOR

Interested applicants should include a cover letter, current Curriculum Vitae (CV), a personal statement to include philosophy and plans for research, teaching and service, as applicable, and at least three (confidential) professional references. To apply, please visit tx.ag/fullprofessorposition.

ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL TRACK FACULTY (NON-TENURE): INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT FELLOW (TAMIDS)

Successful applicants must have a doctorate in Statistics, Data Science, or related field and previous experience in teaching at the undergraduate level is required. Interested applicants should send a cover letter, current CV, contact information for three (3) references, and a personal statement to include philosophy and plans for research, teaching and service, as applicable. To apply, please visit tx.ag/TAMIDSposition.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

Interested applicants should include a cover letter, current Curriculum Vitae (CV), a personal statement to include philosophy and plans for research, teaching and service, as applicable, and at least three (confidential) professional references. To apply, please visit tx.ag/asstprofessorposition.

FOR JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT WWW.TX.AG/STATHIRING

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:
UPCOMING EVENTS

FEB 21
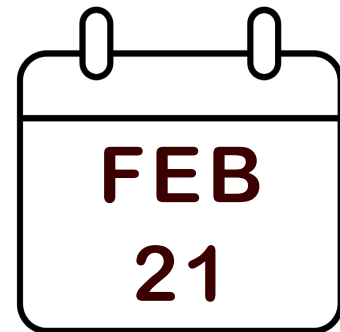
11:30-12:20 p.m.
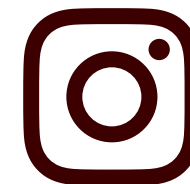Colloquium: Paromita Dubey

MAR 19

11:00-12:00 p.m.
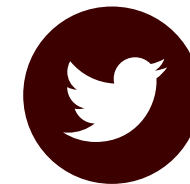SFSN Webinar: Wei (Auston) Wei

APR 24-25

All Day
Bayesian Workshop

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