SMU | DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICAL SCIENCE

2015

DEPARTMENTAL REPORT

I started off the most recent Departmental Report saying "This is an exciting time at SMU" and mentioned the fact that SMU was celebrating its Centennial. In fact, we still are! It's a 5-year celebration that started in 2011 with the 100th anniversary of its founding and continues through 2015 which marks the 100th anniversary of the opening of the doors. Don't get the wrong impression – we have been getting some work done around here too.

As far as the Statistical Science Department goes, the last few years have been not only exciting, but also exhilarating and exhausting. It doesn't hurt that we're living in the age of Big Data! Since the previous report we started a new MS in Applied Statistics and Data Analytics (MASDA) degree program and began offering a Ph.D. in Biostatistics in cooperation with UT Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW). New faculty members include Dan Heitjan (who has a joint appointment with our department and the Department of Clinical Science at UTSW), assistant professor Cornelis Potgieter, as well as three new full-time lecturers (Steve Robertson, Alan Elliott, and Bivin Sadler – who are all graduates of our program). Each of the new degree programs and new faculty are discussed in more detail later in this Report. In 2014and 2015 we conferred 9 Ph.D., 17 MASDA, and 12 B.S. degrees in Statistical Science. In fact, we conferred 20 Ph.D. degrees in the years 2012-2014. That may be a 3-year record! Our undergraduate Statistical Science program is really growing. The 8 BS graduates in May 2015 doubled the previous high. Speaking of growing, our first-year MASDA class for the 2014/15 academic year had 25 students.

As you may already know, we have initiated the Schucany Scholar lecture series in honor of Bill. This past year the Schucany Scholar was Brad Efron. Brad spent a couple of days on campus, spoke to the North Texas ASA chapter on Thursday night, and gave a seminar presentation in the department on Friday afternoon. The event was a great success and more details are given later in this report.

About every 10 years, each department at SMU undergoes an external review, and 2012 was our year. The Provost appointed an external committee composed of statistics faculty members from Duke, Cornell, and Texas A&M and an internal committee made up of non-statistics faculty members at SMU, to review our department and give evaluations and recommendations. After reviewing self-study material developed by the department and interviewing all faculty members, each committee submitted a report to the Provost. Without going into details, these reports were quite complimentary and suggested that the university should devote more resources to the Department (which of course we favor). Among other things, the Provost's written response to the committees said, "I agree with the assessment of the various review committees, both internal and external, that Statistical Science is a very strong department and is on the move." It's good to be appreciated!

In addition to the initiatives listed earlier, we are involved in a new online Data Science master's degree program that is offered jointly through the Statistical Science and Computer Science Departments along with support from the Economics Department and The Center for Creative Computation in Meadows School of the Arts. Monnie McGee serves as Program Director for the degree program which began in the Spring 2015 semester. The degree program is offered using the third-party online resources of 2U. During the inaugural semester Monnie taught a course in Experimental Statistics (STAT 5371). Filming (sounds impressive) was done during the Fall 2014 semester, and she has already finished filming STAT 5372 which is being offered for the first time this summer. Lynne Stokes will be filming her STAT 5370 Survey Sampling course in August, and the course is scheduled to be offered in the Spring 2016 semester. Each course has an "asynchronous" lecture component and then weekly "synchronous" sections in which students interact a live session instructor using Adobe Connect.

Jim Hess (Ph.D., 1977), who recently retired as VP-Operations Services at the S&P 500 company Leggett & Platt, is visiting this year in the department assisting with the consulting center (helping develop a client base, assisting with the consulting course, assisting with resume writing and interview skills of the MASDA students, etc.) His insights and contributions have been very helpful! We may just try to keep him!!

NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

DAN HEITJAN (Ph.D., University of Chicago, 1985) joined our department January 1, 2015 as a tenured, full professor. Dan has a joint appointment between our department and the Department of Clinical Sciences at UT Southwestern Medical Center. We are extremely pleased that Dan has joined us, and his hiring is a key step in the development of our new PhD program in Biostatistics which is being offered in cooperation with UT Southwestern. Dan will serve as the director of that program and will be the driving force in the development and direction of the new program. Dan has served on the faculty and has been a tenured full professor at Columbia, Department of Biostatistics (2001-2002) and University of Pennsylvania, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology (2002-2014). Dan is a widely respected biostatistical scholar. He is a fellow of both the American Statistical Association (ASA) and The Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS), has published over 170 journal articles, has been the PI on 7 grants, three of which were NIH R01 grants, and in 2013 was the president of the Eastern North American Region (ENAR), International Biometric Society.

CORNELIS POTGIETER (Ph.D., University of Johannesburg, 2009) joined the department as a tenure-track assistant professor in the Fall 2012 semester. Cornelis (Nelis) served a 2-year post-doc under Ray Carroll at Texas A&M before coming to SMU. He has a variety of research interests including spatio-temporal statistics, measurement error models, and semi-parametric estimation, and is off to a good start with several papers published, accepted, or in progress. He came to us highly recommended. His dissertation advisor, Fred Lombard, at the University of Johannesburg, describes him as "by far the best student I have ever had the pleasure of being associated with." Additionally, Peter Hall from Australia, who is one of the premier statisticians in the world has done collaborative work with Cornelis and says, "I have come to admire his high level of creativity, strong motivation, and remarkable persistence as a researcher." Nelis is doing an outstanding job in the classroom, and in his two years at SMU he has taught STAT 1301 (Intro Stat), STAT 2301 (Business Statistics), STAT 4340 (Statistics for Engineers and Scientists), and STAT 5385 (Nonparametrics). We're very pleased to have Nelis on our faculty!

STEVE ROBERTSON (Ph.D., SMU, 2008) joined the faculty in the Fall 2013 semester as a senior lecturer and advisor/recruiter for the MASDA program. Yes, this is "the" Steve Robertson who many of you may have known as a graduate student here at SMU. He was a graduate student in our department from 1997-1999 and then came back and finished up his PhD in 2008. Steve has held positions at CitiBank, Shelton School, and Fanny Mae before coming back to SMU to pursue his true vocational love (teaching). Steve is doing an outstanding job, both teaching undergraduates as well as directing and teaching in the new MASDA program.

ALAN ELLIOTT (MAS, SMU, 1976; MBA, UT Arlington, 1991) joined the faculty in January 2013 after working for over 30 years as a consulting statistician at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas. He has joined our faculty as senior lecturer and Director of the Statistical Consulting Center. Alan is doing an outstanding job running the consulting center, teaching the consulting class, and teaching classes in SAS. Alan is a multi-talented guy. He has 38 refereed publications and has authored books on subjects as diverse as SAS and SPSS, US history, and the History of Oak Cliff to name a few. We are very pleased to have Alan on our faculty to revive the old "Stat Lab" and to share his extensive consulting and SAS expertise with our students.

BIVIN SADLER (Ph.D., SMU, 2014) joined the faculty in the Fall 2014 semester as a lecturer. Bivin is a versatile character who had to choose between a career in statistics or coaching beach volleyball. He worked as a volunteer coach with the SMU women's volleyball team during the 2014/15 academic year in addition to his teaching load in our department. During his career as a graduate student here at SMU, he worked extensively as a tutor in the Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center (ALEC) and earned a reputation as an outstanding and very popular tutor and teacher. We are very pleased to have Bivin join our faculty. In addition to teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in our department, he will be working with Dr. McGee to develop and teach Stat courses in the new online Data Science Master's degree program.

NEW GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

PH.D. IN BIOSTATISTICS

We're very excited about the fact that beginning in the Fall 2014 semester our department is partnering with the Department of Clinical Sciences at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas (UTSW) to offer a Ph.D. program in Biostatistics. This degree has been "in the works" for several years, and during the past year, officials from SMU and UTSW signed a Memorandum of Understanding that creates the new degree program. In the initial stages, the degree will be conferred by SMU, but students in this program will take courses at both SMU and UTSW. Four new students will enter the program each fall (beginning with Fall 2014). The first year of coursework will be taken at SMU along with the first year students in the Statistical Science Ph.D. program. During the second year students will take some of our courses along with courses taught by UTSW faculty. During the third and fourth years, students will work with researchers at UTSW under the joint supervision of UTSW and SMU faculty mentors.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN APPLIED STATISTICS & DATA ANALYTICS (MASDA)

The Department of Statistical Science now offers an applied master's degree that will prepare students for a career in the exciting field of applied statistics and data analytics, i.e. "big data". The new Master of Science in Applied Statistics and Data Analytics (MASDA) program provides training in such areas as statistical data analysis, big data analytics, database management, the use of SAS and other statistical software, and data mining. The MASDA program has a curriculum that allows students to graduate in 18-24 months. The degree program features in-depth SAS training, and nearly all of the MASDA graduates pass the first two SAS Certification exams before leaving the program. In May 2013, our first three graduates of the degree received their diplomas. In May 2014 and 2015 we had 10 and 7 MASDA graduates, respectively. As mentioned in the introduction, we have 25 first year MASDA students in the program this fall. One interesting aspect of the MASDA program is that we provide a 4+1 option for our undergraduate BS majors. Two of our four May 2014 B.S. graduates in Statistical Science entered the 4+1 program and graduated with the MASDA degree in May 2015.

The MASDA program, through an arrangement with the dean's office, allows the Department to share the tuition revenue. This revenue has allowed us to hire senior lecturers and help fund such events as the Schucany Scholar series. If you know of anyone who would be interested in such a degree program, please let us know.

BILL SCHUCANY SCHOLAR

As I'm sure you all remember, Bill has always loved a good seminar, and always has insightful comments or questions for the speaker. Not surprisingly, even after his retirement, Bill has continued to regularly attend the Friday seminars. When Bill retired a few years ago, the faculty decided that a good way to honor Bill was by introducing a Bill Schucany Scholar Lecture series.

The idea of the Schucany Scholar program is to bring a high-profile speaker to spend a few days on campus giving lectures and interacting with faculty and students. I think you'll agree with us that we hit a home-run when Brad Efron, Max H. Stein Professor of Statistics and Biostatistics at Stanford, graciously accepted our invitation to be the inaugural Schucany Scholar. Brad is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and he received the National Medal of Science for his contributions to the discipline, notably his innovation of the bootstrap resampling technique.

Professor Efron gave two public lectures during his SMU visit:

LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHERS
Thursday, Feb. 27 at the North Texas ASA Chapter meeting. This was a talk intended for a general audience.

FREQUENTIST ACCURACY OF BAYESIAN ESTIMATES
Friday, Feb. 28 as the 3:00 seminar.

Both talks were excellent and well received, and the attendance at each lecture exceeded 100. The lecture series is designed to be an annual event. Schucany's former students provided much of the funding for the first year, which was supplemented with departmental funds. We welcome one-time or ongoing gifts to support the lecture program.

FACULTY AWARDS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FACULTY PERSONAL TIDBITS

Lynne Stokes has received three major awards since publication of the previous newsletter:

The 2013 Dedman Family Distinguished Professor
This award recognizes an outstanding faculty member in Dedman College each year.

United Methodist Scholar/Teacher of the Year
This is a university-wide award given to a faculty member each year. Lynne was the recipient in 2011.

ASA Founders Award
The ASA honored Lynne in 2014 with this award, which is the highest honor the ASA gives to its members for service to the profession.

Dan Heitjan, our newest faculty member, has an outstanding reputation in the statistics/ biostatistics community. Evidence of this is the fact that he has been elected by his peers as a *Fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS) in 2012* and as the *2013 President of the Eastern North American Region (ENAR) of the International Biometric Society.*

Monnie McGee was the recipient of the inaugural *SMU Excellence in Mentoring Award* (2012), given by the Provost's Office to a faculty member who has displayed outstanding skills in mentoring undergraduate students. This year at the faculty breakfast before the Spring Commencement, Monnie was awarded the *Thomas W. Tunks Distinguished University Citizen award*. She has been appointed to the regional Advisory Board of ENAR and as ASA representative to an AAAS section. Monnie is the program director of the online MS in Data Science program at SMU.

Tony Ng and **Sherry Wang** both have been promoted to full professor!! We're very excited about this. Although we have hired faculty members at the full professor level in recent years, this is the first time a Statistical Science faculty member has been promoted to full professor since Wayne Woodward was promoted in the late 1980's. (Yikes!) This promotion (and others expected to follow) speak volumes about the quality of the younger faculty members and consequently the future of the department. Both Sherry and Tony are extremely deserving. We heard reports that all our colleagues who reviewed their dossiers were impressed. Obviously, we're pleased and proud that they are members of our department! Congratulations Tony and Sherry!!

Ron Butler's prestige in the statistical community is evidenced by the fact that he has received continual (extremely difficult to obtain) NSF funding since 1989. That's 26 years which includes 8 grants!

Cornelis Potgieter was awarded the *Herbert Sichel medal,* which is given annually by the South African Statistical Association for the best paper published by a South African author in a peer-reviewed journal. Nelis was an invited participant at the 16th meeting of the IMS conference for new researchers in statistics and probability at Harvard.

Ian Harris and Steve Robertson are recent winners of *The Extra Mile Award,* which is presented by the SMU Disability Accommodations and Success Strategies (DASS) for faculty members who display graciousness and sensitivity to students with learning differences.

Tony Ng was appointed as a *Fellow of the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute* for the academic year 2015-2016 and will participate in the seminar, "Law and Statistics." (Lynne Stokes is a co-coordinator of this seminar series.)

Alan Elliott and Tony Ng were awarded SAS Faculty Scholarships to attend the SAS Global Forums in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

Jing Cao and Cornelis Potgieter served as President of the North Texas Chapter of the American Statistical Association in 2013/14 and 2014/15, respectively. Jing also continues to serve as the departmental representative to the Southern Regional Council on Statistics (SRCOS).

RON BUTLER The worst and the best news regarding our faculty are that Ron suffered a heart attack early in the Fall 2013 semester. The doctors were quite pessimistic about his recovery, but he fooled everyone by making a full recovery with no detectable damage to his heart, which is something that no one quite understands. He is now back to full speed and healthier than ever.

JING CAO Jing and her husband Song met in graduate school. Jing is an associate professor of statistics here at SMU, and Song is an associate professor of biostatistics at UT Southwestern. In their spare time, they like to visit national parks. So far they have collected more than 30 national park magnets.

ALAN ELLIOTT Alan and E'Lynne are proud grandparents of their first grandchild, Corley Annette, born in July, 2014. Alan recently received a proclamation from the Dallas County Commissioner's Court for his work in preserving Dallas history through a series of books he co-authored about Oak Cliff (he's a proud Oak Cliff native). Alan is also the Executive Director of the non-profit agency, Baby Moses Dallas, which promotes the Texas Safe-Haven (Baby Moses) Law designed to protect infants from injury or death by allowing mothers in crisis to hand over a child at a hospital or fire station without fear of prosecution for child abandonment.

DICK GUNST Dick and Ann welcomed their first grandchild, Luke, in December of 2013. Debbie, a special education teacher, still lives in Dallas and was married in March. After tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, Mark is out of the Air Force and is a trauma surgeon in Phoenix. Keith (treasurer of an oil drilling firm), Jeff (principal in an equity firm) and his wife Brooke and son Luke, Karen (paralegal) and her husband Chris, and Ron (project manager for an oil service firm) who is now out of the Marine Corps after two tours in Afghanistan, all live in Houston. For the first time in many years, all the family was able to get together for a vacation last May on Galveston Island.

IAN HARRIS Ian continues to coach soccer, and helps coach his younger two children (Michael, now 14 and Fiona, now 9). Ian keeps detailed statistics on their games, Michael is closing in on 500 goals, and Fiona recently passed 100 goals. After much analysis he has concluded that their goal scoring distributions are not Poisson! Ian's own soccer playing days seem to be over, but he is still an active runner, running in several track meets last summer. His wife Susan recently took a full time job at SMU, as an academic advisor, and his eldest daughter Claire (now 16) is doing very well academically, recently being elected to the National Honor Society.

DAN HEITJAN Dan and his wife Jina, who moved to Dallas from Malvern, PA in December 2014, are adjusting

DEPARTMENTAL POSITIONS

CHAIR Wayne Woodward

UNDERGRADUATE ADVISOR Ian Harris

MASDA ADVISOR AND RECRUITING COORDINATOR Steve Robertson

PhD IN STATISTICAL SCIENCE ADVISOR Lynne Stokes

PHD IN STATISTICAL SCIENCE RECRUITING COORDINATOR Jing Cao

PHD IN BIOSTATISTICS ADVISOR AND RECRUITING COORDINATOR Dan Heitjan

SEMINAR CHAIR Dick Gunst

Note: The above simply lists some of the more recognizable departmental positions. Our department is very special in that everyone contributes in a variety of ways from service on departmental committees to developing and grading Basic and Super Test Exams, etc. This is a special place!

to their new lives as warm-weather, apartment-dwelling, non-commuting empty-nesters. What to do with all that free time. Could golf be the answer?

JIM HESS Jim retired as a corporate VP from Leggett & Platt in December 2012. Jim and Sue have four grown children and eight grandchildren. They enjoy traveling, visiting their children and grandchildren, and spending a year in Dallas. Jim is very much enjoying his visiting position this year and being a part of the Department again some forty years later.

MONNIE MCGEE Monnie spends most of her time outside SMU taking her two kids to their various activities. Her teen daughter is active in band (first chair flute in her middle school band), springboard diving and track. In fact, she is the newly crowned seventh grade district champion in the triple jump (32 feet, 9.5 inches)! Monnie's son is 11, and plays basketball, soccer, and runs track. Monnie and Stephen are still wondering which one of them passed on the speed genes! In August of 2015, Monnie and Stephen will be married 20 years and will have been in Dallas for 13 years. Monnie practices yoga and runs to keep herself sane and fit.

TONY NG Tony and his wife, Sheron Ng, are parents of two children. Their son and daughter, Brighten and Salin, are 6 and 3 years old now. Tony is a travel buff. He has traveled to more than 20 countries, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey and United Kingdom, in the past decade.

CORNELIS POTGIETER Nelis loves to cook, and is glad that there are many cooking classes offered in and around Dallas. Most recently, he completed a knife skills class, hoping this will help improve his technical abilities in the kitchen. This past January, he taught a J-term course (8 day semester in January) at the SMU-in-Taos campus, located in Taos, NM. While there, he tried skiing for the first time in his life. After two days of lessons, he is undoubtedly near professional level.

STEVE ROBERTSON Steve has taken on a new task this academic school year by serving as a Faculty Affiliate at Crum Residential Hall. This program was designed for faculty members to interact with students on an informal ba-

sis, and visit their residence hall for student events, move-in day, etc. Steve devotes some weekend time to teaching an adult Special Friends ministry class at his church. His 3 year old daughter Ellie also keeps him busy. He spends his summers playing golf and fishing in the mountains.

BIVIN SADLER As mentioned in Bivin's earlier bio, his "other" passion is volleyball. In addition to serving as Volunteer Assistant Coach for the SMU women's volleyball team this year, he coached college sand volleyball hopefuls during this past summer and has coached/trained one of the two Olympic Sand Volleyball Players from Venezuela. He hopes to play some competitive sand volleyball this summer. He is also newly engaged and getting married in June 2016!

LYNNE STOKES Lynne has recently graduated from her three-year stint taking Turkish cooking classes and has now moved on to taking weekly cooking classes at Dallas's only Hare Krishna temple, Kalanchandji's. She is hoping to learn some new vegetarian cooking ideas so she can feed her daughter Laurel better when she comes to visit. Laurel is on the brink (hopefully) of finishing her Ph.D. at University of Manitoba in Conservation Biology, and intends to go somewhere (anywhere) warmer than Winnipeg. (Laurel takes after Lynne's husband, Dan, who is a Wildlife Biologist).

SHERRY WANG Sherry is a proud mom of two children, Stacy who is thirteen years old and Stella who is two and a half years old. Not surprisingly, Stacy is a very bright and talented young lady. For example in the 2014 UIL competitions, she won 1st place in mathematics, 2nd place in number sense, 1st place in editorial writing, and 3rd place in impromptu speaking. She is also an accomplished pianist having won awards in numerous competitions. Recently she has been elected to the National Junior Honor Society.

WAYNE WOODWARD Wayne and Beverly are fortunate that Angie and Barry's families both live in the Dallas area (along with their 6 grandchildren). Angie is an RN at Parkland Hospital in the Women's ER while Barry is a software engineer at Samsung Electronics America. Angie's oldest son is autistic (and very special to the entire family). Wayne, Beverly, and Angie started and still play a prominent role in the Special Needs program at their church. Wayne and Beverly have been married for 47 wonderful years!

Ron Butler has ongoing funding from the National Science foundation for his project "Saddlepoint and Bootstrap Accuracy with Applications to General Systems." The first part of this work considers some novel approaches devised to explain the accuracy of saddlepoint approximations. This addresses a long standing problem that has defied mathematical explanation by researchers. The second part of this work considers applications of saddlepoint approximations in complex stochastic systems which are also used to implement bootstrap inference for various performance criteria in such systems. Practical examples of such systems range from: modeling chronic diseases in multi-state survival models to the computation of gauge functions in physics. He has ongoing work in applied mathematics which develops saddlepoint approximations for various types of matrix- and vector-argument hypergeometric functions that commonly arise in the physical sciences.

Jing Cao's main research interest is Bayesian methodologies and their applications, which includes gene set enrichment analysis, statistical inference of ranking data, and data mining in electronic medical record data. Working with researchers from UT Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW), she has been awarded an NIH research grant on high-throughput data analysis. The research on modeling rank data has several applications, such as providing more accurate ranking results, evaluating judge performance, and comparing different ranking designs. She continues to work with her colleague, Prof. Lynne Stokes, on different projects, including grant review, wine tasting, and fellowship-election in IEEE. As for data mining in electronic medical record data, she has been collaborating with researchers from UTSW and Parkland Hospital to design a system for data management and analysis. There are several challenges in this area, such as missing data, high-dimension of data, and existence of different correlation structures. The research team has been awarded a four-year NSF grant on this topic.

Dick Gunst and graduate students who conduct dissertation research under his direction continue to develop innovative spatial statistical modeling theory and applications. Two recent research projects advanced the spatial modeling and analysis of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) data. One project focused on the identification and accommodation of severe spikes (outliers) that are common in fMRI data. A second project developed parameterizations of hemodynamic response functions (HRFs) that are widely used to characterize the responses to brain activations. A third research project developed extensions of statistical point process methods in order to determine whether rock locations from an anthropological excavation were non-random and formed a spatial pattern that could be a rock foundation of a prehistoric circular house structure. Ongoing research is focusing on developing methods for group comparisons of fMRI data using features of fitted HRFs and extensions of the point process methods for pattern identification.

Ian Harris is conducting joint research with Ron Butler on saddlepoint and Laplace approximations. One part of this work is on approximations to special functions. These functions are important in multivariate applications, and accurate approximations are needed to be able to calculate p-values in a reasonable amount of time. A second part of the work with Ron Butler is on approximating the distribution of ratios of quadratic forms in unbalanced mixed models. This work has applications for inference on the intraclass correlation and other functions of variance components. In addition Ian is engaged in research on probabilistic number theory, related to densities of random integers and the Goldbach hypothesis.

Monnie McGee is conducting research with colleagues in SMU's computer science and engineering department on taxonomic classification of meta-genomic data. She also continues her work on the analysis of various types of high throughput biological assays, including Gene Expression Microarray Data and biological pathway analysis. She is also working on post-normalization analysis of flow cytometry data. Flow Cytometers sort cells into various subpopulations according to markers placed on the cells. The most recent cytometers can sort according to more than twenty such markers. Most of the research on these data has been concentrated in "gating" the subpopulations of cells into like clusters. Dr. McGee's research deals with populations that have already been gated, where the issues are now matching groups of cells across patient samples (both within the same treatment and between treatments) and determining the statistical significance of different patterns of group representation across treatments.

Tony Ng continues his collaboration with researchers in Asia, Europe and North America to work on three different but inter-related areas in statistical science: (i) reliability, lifetime data analysis and industrial engineering; (ii) biostatistics, bioinformatics and epidemiology; and (iii) statistical inference. These areas of research have numerous applications in both industrial and medical studies. Recently, he has developed a general framework of statistical inference for the component lifetime distributions when only the system lifetimes are observed with known system structure. His research project "Statistical Inference from System-Based Reliability Experiment" is funded by Simons Foundation Collaboration Grants for Mathematicians from 2013 – 2018.

Cornelis Potgieter's research currently focuses on the areas of location-scale families of distributions and applications of empirical characteristic functions. Two relevant projects are the use of characteristic functions to efficiently estimate parameters in two-sample problems when the marginal distributions are not specified, and the use of skew-symmetric distributions to find semiparametric deconvolution density estimators in measurement error problems. Cornelis continues to work with collaborators in South Africa and here in Texas. He is also supervising two PhD students. One of these PhD candidates is working on problems relating to parameter estimation in stable distributions exploiting location-scale family properties present in these, while the second candidate is working on nonparametric parameter estimation in a latent variable model with application to personality trait research. Recently, Cornelis was also awarded the Herbert Sichel which is awarded for the best peer-reviewed statistics paper published by a South African author. The medal was awarded for a joint project with Fred Lombard (University of Johannesburg) for a paper entitled "A multivariate rank test for comparing mass size distributions".

Lynne Stokes has research projects in both survey methods and educational statistics. Her survey methods work focuses on method for mitigating non-sampling errors in dual frame surveys. This work is supported by NOAA and is related to improving their on-going data collection program for U.S. marine fisheries. Her project in educational statistics is to develop methods for optimizing adaptive testing methods for large scale assessments, whose goal is to estimate means scores for population subgroups rather than for individual students. These two projects are related in that they both utilize measurement error models. She continues her work on ranked set sampling applications, jointly with Sherry Wang.

Sherry Wang's research focuses on development of statistical and computational methods for preprocessing, modeling and analyzing large-scale "omics" data, which intensively involves Bayesian hierarchical modeling, spatial modeling, meta-analysis and integrative analysis. She continues to collaborate with the Quantitative Biomedical Research Center (QBRC), UTSW, where she currently holds an adjunct faculty position, on solving challenging statistical issues that arise with Big Data in various biomedical applications. In addition, she has been working with Lynne Stokes and Johan Lim (Seoul National University) in developing theories and methodologies for the use of ranked set sampling with multi-stage designs, to help improve inference in educational experiments and research.

Wayne Woodward continues to work in the area of time series analysis. The book, Applied Time Series Analysis by Woodward, Gray, and Elliott was published in 2012 by CRC Press/Chapman&Hall. A second edition of this book based on the use of R for computations is in the works. Wayne and Alan Elliott have recently published a second edition of the book IBM SPSS by Example (Sage) and are going through the galley proofs of a second edition of the book SAS Essentials (Wiley). He continues to work on the development of time deformation models for analyzing data exhibiting time varying frequency (TVF) behavior. His recent graduate students Tracy Xu, Wenkai Bao, and Paul Chen have extended the work on TVF analysis to develop techniques for filtering long-memory data, for dealing with "long-memory TVF" behavior, and developing stationarizing transformations for TVF data using nonparametric methods, respectively. Yixun (Penelope) Xing is currently working in the area of detecting cyclic long-memory behavior.

This listing of publications is not the entire listing for this time frame.

RON BUTLER

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ALAN ELLIOTT

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ck's new office

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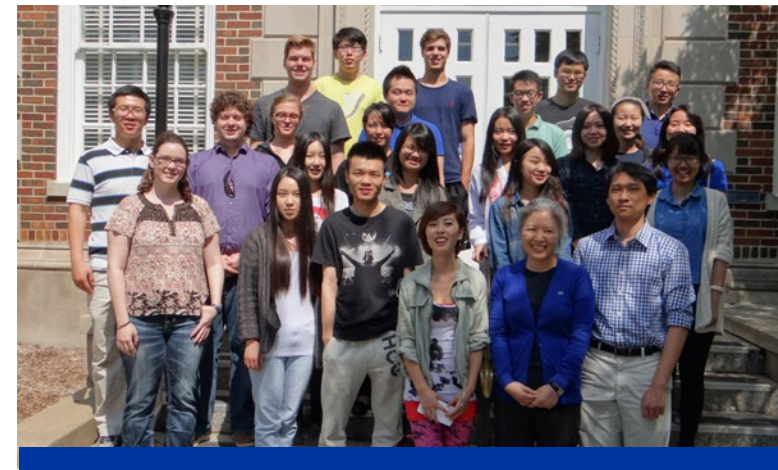
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An Introduction to Queueing Theory. Narayan has just finished what he claims will be the final version of this book.

MASDA STUDENTS

Gunes Alkan	Kangyi Xu
Gong Bai	Yan Xu
Kyoo Ha Cha	Yihan Xu
Robert Farrow	Ziyuan Xu
Teresa Gleason	Yuzhi Yan
Hua (Emily) Guo	Rui Yang
Ailin Huang	Shen Yin
Lingyu Kong	Yi Zheng
Haichen Liu	Yifan Zhong
Olivia Mason	Ali Alshaikh
Zhu Mei	Yinan Luo
Ricky Mouser	Baolong Shu
Yvette Niyomugaba	Yusun Xia
Kelsey Redman	Jiadong Yang
Lu Wang	Judith Gallego de Ozak
Qian Wang	Beibei Hu
John Weng	

PH.D. STUDENTS

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Priyangi Bulathsinhala	Ranil Samaratunga
Andrew Clarage	Xiangwen Shang
Heng Cui	Robert Sickorez
Mahesh Fernando	Charles South
Yu Lan	MuMu Wang
Lie (Nathan) Li	Ben Williams
Xue (Lily) Li	Yin Xi
Dateng Li	Yixun (Penelope) Xing
Bingchen Li	Yandan Yang
Wentao Lu	Xiaojie Zhu
Ryan McShane	
Andrew Mitzel	
Amy Nussbaum	

PHD BIOSTATISTICS STUDENTS

Zhiyun (Sunnie) Ge
Gaoxing Jia
Zhengyang Zhou

STUDENT AWARDS

As we're sure you remember, several student awards are given each year:

The Paul Minton Award is given to the first year student with the best overall performance in the first year.

There are typically two **Scheuren Awards** given each year for outstanding performance in the theory and methods portions of the first year curriculum.

The John Walsh Award is given to the student with the most outstanding performance on the PhD Qualifying Exam (Super Test).

Below are listed the winners of these awards for the past few years. Two names appearing for the Minton and Walsh awards indicates that the award was shared between the two students. Blank cells indicate that this particular award was not given that year.

	MINTON AWARD	WALSH AWARD	SCHEUREN AWARD
2015	Dateng Li	Mumu Wang	Gaoxiang Jia – methods Zhengyang Zhou - theory
2014	Xue (Lily) Li	Chelsea Allen Charles South	Yu Lan - theory Mumu Wang - methods
2013	Chelsea Allen Charles South		
2012	Yuhang (Charles) Liu	Ou (Chris) Bai	Amy Nussbaum - methods Daisy Yang - theory
2011	Jian Zhang	Bivin Sadler	Ou (Chris) Bai

TEAM COMPETITIONS

In the most recent Report we were pleased to announce that a team of our graduate students (under the supervision of Tony Ng) finished first place (out of 20+ teams from universities across the country) in the 2011 American Statistical Association: Quality and Productivity Student Competition).

Our students have entered several recent data analysis competitions. In the following (MASDA) and (PhD, Stat) indicate the student is in the MASDA program or in the Statistical Science PhD program, respectively. Some teams also included members from Economics and Computer Science.

- **2014 Capital One Graduate Student Statistical Modeling Competition** (2nd place out of 20+ teams) Team members: Ali Alshaikh (MASDA), Xue Li (PhD, Stat), Andrew Mitzel (PhD, Stat), Rui Yang (MASDA) (led by Tony Ng)
- **2014 SAS Data Mining Shootout Competition** (Honorable Mention – top 6 out of 60+ teams). Team members: Erik Hille (Economics), Xue Li (PhD, Stat), Yinan Luo (MASDA)), Manini Ojha (Economics), Marie Vasek (Computer Science), Zhangxin Xue (PhD, Stat) (led by Tom Fomby and Tony Ng)
- **2013 SAS Data Mining Shootout Competition** (Second place out of 60+ teams). Team members: Xusheng Chen (MASDA), Ruiyang Hu (Economics), Shuling Liu (PhD, Stat), Ying Meng (MASDA), Yibin Xu (PhD, Stat), Yixiang Zhang (Economics) (led by Tom Fomby and Tony Ng)
- We have two teams which are currently entered in the **2015 SAS Data Mining Shootout competition**. (led by Tony Ng and Alan Elliott)

STAT BOWL

Possibly the most valued accomplishment a graduate student in our department can achieve is to be a member of a winning STAT bowl team. (Or maybe that's a slight exaggeration.) However, we continue the enjoyable tradition of having an annual STAT Bowl competition at our spring Student Appreciation Luncheon. Ian Harris is founding (and current) Master of Ceremonies of the competition. The winning STAT Bowl teams for 2013-2015 are given below:

2013 – GRYFFINDOR

Bingchen Liu

Charles (East) Liu

Amy Nussbaum

Spike Shang

2014 – SOMETHING CLEVER

Lily Li

Andrew Mitzel

Rob Sickorez

Vicky Xue

2015 – BASIC PASSERS

Dateng Li

Ryan McShane

Ben Williamson

Zhengyang Zhou

RECENT GRADUATES

One measure by which to judge a graduate program is the employability of its graduates. Our graduates have had great success finding jobs (mostly in the US). Below is a list of recent graduates and their employers. (If you need statisticians/data analysts at your place of employment, please let us know. As we're sure you know, SMU graduates are the BEST!)

NAME	YEAR	EMPLOYER
PhD		
Yang, Daisy	2015	Javelin
Chen, Paul	2014	Capital One
Bao, Wenkai	2014	Sabre Holdings
Bai, Chris	2014	Pepsico
Zhu, Sylvia	2014	Sabre Holdings
Zhang, Jian	2104	SUNY Downstate Medical Center
Sadler, Bivin	2014	Southern Methodist University
Lou, Ying	2014	Eli Lily, China
Hu, Yalan	2013	GM Finance
Turner, Jacob	2013	Baylor Medical Center at Dallas
Hu, Xiaowen	2013	Colorado State University
Jayalath, Kalanka	2013	Stephen F. Austin University
Al-Rawashdi, Aymen	2013	Yarmouk University, Jordan
Liu, Mengya	2013	PPD - Austin
Lin, Dong	2013	Capital One
Bhagavatheeswaran, P.	2012	Bristol-Myers Squibb
Koh, Ohn Jo	2012	Zum Internet
Luo, Michael	2012	JP Morgan Chase
Stovall, Holly	2012	Tarrant County Junior College
Wang, Ke	2012	eBay
Zang, Miao	2012	PPD - Austin

NAME	YEAR	EMPLOYER
MS		
Liu, Charles	2014	PhD program, Florida State
Xu, Yibin	2014	Capital One
Rodgers, Jennifer	2013	Buxton
Zhu, Sunny	2012	GroupM
Loiben, Ari	2011	Lewis & Ellis Actuarial
MASDA		
Alshaikh, Ali	2015	Saudi Aramco
Mouser, Ricky	2015	Self-employed in professional sports data analytics
Chen, Olivia	2014	Proctor and Gamble
Chen, Thomas	2014	Baylor Health Care
Ma, Jerry	2014	Data Analyst job in China
Meng, Merlin	2014	ORM Technology
Qian, Annie	2014	Littler Mendelson, PC
Tu, Jian	2014	SMU Dean's office
Wallace, Nicole	2014	General Motors Finance
Wood, Robert	2014	AgilityDocs
Zhou, Qi	2014	Ph.D. program, Baylor University
He, Shuang	2014	Publishers Clearinghouse
Huang, Shepherd	2013	Dell
Shi, Mingjie	2013	John Deere
Yang, Lucia	2013	Experis

ALUMNI NEWS

UT SOUTHWESTERN CONNECTION

The largest employer of our graduates is UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. The following alums are employed at UTSW and are making us proud:

- Joan Reisch, PhD 1974
- Don McIntire, PhD 1977
- Beverly (Adams) Huet, MS 1984
- Tom Carmody, PhD 1985
- Abu Minhajuddin, PhD 2003
- Julia Kozlitina, PhD 2008

GARY JONES, MS 1966 Gary is president of the Ovilla, Texas Economic Development Corporation and he has two three year old grandsons (and another one on the way) that keep him and his wife very busy.

WILLIAM FRAWLEY, PHD 1972 Is still kicking!

JERRELL STRACENER, PHD 1973 Jerrell is a Professor of Practice in the SMU EMIS Department of the Lyle School of Engineering. He is the Founding Director of the Systems Engineering Program.

EDWARD R. (EDD) MANSFIELD, PH.D. 1975 Edd retired as Professor of Statistics from the University of Alabama, College of Commerce and Business Administration (CBA) after 39 years of service. Edd taught many courses at various levels over the years and served on lots of dissertation committees. He was the department head for Management Science, Information Systems, and Statistics for seven years. But the greatest privilege was to have the opportunity teach thousands of students for so many years. On a personal note, Edd has fond memories of intramural football, basketball, volleyball, softball, badminton, hall ball (ask Bill Frawley), hand ball, and especially the Friday Forum which helped the group bond together. Edd expressed his appreciation for the positive influence that the SMU faculty and fellow students have had on his life. He singled out Bob Mason as the reason he came to SMU and Paul Minton as simply a great man!

JOE MCWILLIAMS, MS 1976 Joe received his PhD in the Mathematics Department here at SMU and recently retired as professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Stephen F Austin after a serious motorcycle accident.

GEORGE WOODWARD, MS 1976 George obtained his doctorate in Counseling Psychology after several years farming cotton in West Texas. He is now in private practice in Lubbock. George and Becky have two sons, Andy and Joel, and the two new granddaughters.

DON MCINTIRE, PHD 1977 Beth and Don are proud grandparents now, four times over. Cole is three and Owen brand new at two months. They are the children of their son Mason and his wife Lisa. Their daughter, Meredith and her husband Jon, have two as well (2 ½ and 8 months). All family members live in the Dallas area, so they get to see them often. Beth retired from teaching in 2013 and is enjoying the time to herself. Don is still employed at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Life's good.

PAULA ROBERSON, BS 1979 Paula was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in November 2014. Her first grandchild, Ayla Noelle Thomas, was born this past October.

SHIRLENE PEARSON, PHD 1979 Shirlene retired from SMU on Feb. 27, 2015. She has accepted a position as an adjunct professor in our department in the Fall 2015 semester to teach STAT 5304 for our MASDA program.

ROBERT HENDERSON, PHD 1982 Daughter Valerie married Ryan Cox last September. Ryan's sister Lindsay married Kyle Bosworth a year earlier in Arlington, TX. They now live in San Antonio, but the unusual thing is that Dick Gunst is Kyle's uncle. So now Dick and Bob are at least very indirectly related by marriage :-). Go figure … it truly is a small world.

LAURA NORIEGA (THOMAS), MS 1985 Laura is planning to stay in education one more year, and is taking a Professional Development program in Data Analysis at UT/Austin. After finishing the program in March, 2016 she is planning to re-enter the workforce as a statistician/data analyst.

KELLY CUNNINGHAM, PHD 1987 Kelly retired last year from his faculty position in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Stephen F. Austin University.

OLIVIA CARRILLO, PHD 1989 Olivia is on the faculty at the University of Monterrey, Mexico. Her two daughters live in monterrey and her eldest daughter (Karen) studies in at The university of Monterrey (which is the most prestigious private university in Mexico and Latin America). Karen is waiting for admission from Victoria University in Melbourne Australia, to go for one semester in an exchange program (next semester). The youngest (Denisse) is finishing high school and the school is affiliated with the university. Denisse just visited China (Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong) for two weeks along with a large group of students from her school. Olivia is teaching two English classes!

CHARLOTTE GREGG-HASE, MS 1991 Charlotte works at Citi Mortgage as a Senior Vice President of Decision Management. Her two older kids are in college and her youngest is a freshman in High School.

PRABIR MAJUMBDER, PHD 1996 Prabir joined the Advanced Analytics division of Dell's Information Capital and Data Science team in January.

GREG MILLER, PHD 1996 Greg is a professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Stephen F Austin. The Miller family has 3 children ages 16, 8, and 7. Greg has a full-time teaching appointment at SFA and in December started his own company, East Texas Statistical Services. Most of his clients are in health care and nursing.

DARCIE DELZELL, PHD 2008 Darcie had been promoted to Associate Professor of Mathematics at Wheaton College.

ELIZABETH MCCLELLAN (RIBBLE), PHD 2010 Elizabeth (Buffy) is finishing her second year at Metropolitan State University (MSU) of Denver and was nominated by the MSU Denver Chapter of the Golden Key International Honor Society for a Teaching in Excellence Award (winner TBD) and is a finalist for the MSU Denver Faculty Senate Excellence in Teaching Award (winner TBD). She continues to visit the Netherlands twice a year, where she is invited to teach a course she developed called "Basic Course in R" and continues to do research as the lead statistician for a project in the Center for Translational Molecular Medicine.

JOEL O'HAIR, PHD 2010 Joel has a new position as "Data Science and Advanced Analytics Specialist" within IBM Corporate Headquarters and another son (making 3).

OHN JO KOH, PHD 2012 Ohn Jo is employed by Zm Internet, an internet search engine company in Seoul, South Korea, as a statistician/data scientist.

LONG (MICHAEL) LUO, PHD 2012 Michael is now with JP Morgan Chase.

JENNIFER RODGERS (SONNTAG), MS 2013 Jennifer got married in February! She is an analyst at Buxton, moving her way up in the ranks.

AYMEN AL-RAWASHDEH, PHD 2013 Aymen has returned to Jordan and is teaching in the Department of Mathematics at Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan.

SYLVIA ZHU, PHD 2014 2014 was a big year for Sylvia. She graduated and got her first job at Sabre Airline Solutions as a senior operation analyst. She also got her first pet, a 7 year-old dachshund (Snickers).

SHA HE, MASDA 2014 Sha is now a statistical analyst at Javelin Marketing Group in Irving, Texas. Their main client is AT&T and she is building time series models for them.

RETIRED FACULTY

Bill Schucany supervises the Schucany Scholarship program. He is a frequent attender at seminars and Friday Forum.

Buddy Gray still lives in McKinney and about once/month makes the trip to the department to have lunch with Wayne and talk about research.

Narayan Bhat has an office in the north wing of Heroy and comes to SMU several times/week. He has been working on a book revision that has just been completed.

Campbell Read also has an office in the north wing of the Heroy building. He continues as an Associate Editor of the Encyclopedia of Statistical Sciences.

Kap continues to live a couple of blocks from campus, and he stops by the department (infrequently).

John Boyer recently retired from Kansas State University. He splits his time between Manhattan, KS and Nebraska.

DEATHS

As our program gets older (we've been offering MS degrees since 1963) an unfortunate byproduct is that an increasing number of our alums have passed away. We are saddened to inform you that the following alums (and Carol Schucany) have passed away since the previous Report and will certainly be missed. Links to known obituaries are given below.

Roberto Alanis, MS 1968

Tom Bratcher, PhD 1969 http://www.lawsonfuneralhome.net/sitemaker/sites/lawson0/obit.cgi?user=796725BratcherPhD

Bill Parr, PhD 1978 http://www.ceibs.edu/faculty_c/notice/obituary_en.html

Hildy Lindsey, MS 1980 http://www.clementsfuneralservice.com/memsol.cgi?user_id=1196551

Carol Schucany http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dallasmorningnews/obituary.aspx?pid=165908883

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