AND THE OPPORTUNITIES CONTINUE…

In my last newsletter I wrote of ways in which we planned to address challenges that we now face as a consequence of the ongoing renaissance in Statistics. The number of undergraduate students that we serve, both majors and non-majors, is still on an upward trajectory and there seems no end in sight. Our fall undergraduate enrollments have increased an average of 6% per year for the past five years, with an 8% increase over last fall. Last year I wrote that we had about 200 undergraduate majors, which I thought was pretty big for us and perhaps (hopefully?) near a local maximum. Well, we now have about 300 Statistics majors, and have launched a number of initiatives in response to this and other growth trends related to data science generally.

We did a major revision of our undergraduate curriculum, establishing two new Statistics degrees – a BA and a BS – within CLA (http://www.stat.umn.edu/ugrad), five new courses, an internship program, the outreach program Statistics in the Community, and an advisory council. We are committed to founding a world-class undergrad program without taking from our graduate programs. We are a principal participant in a new joint MS degree in Data Science, are cooperating on a 4+1 MS degree in Biostatistics, are developing a joint MS with Actuarial Science and have other initiatives waiting. Portions of these new programs are being introduced this year, but they will not be in full swing until next year when resource demands will be in play.

All of our initiatives seem to fit nicely within our Dean’s Roadmap, a branding initiative for the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) that is intended to spotlight his plans and encourage others to adapt. Clever branding is popular these days and we will probably have to get aboard that bandwagon this year. Our fall undergraduate enrollments have increased 30% over the past five years, although our budget for teaching assistants and graduate instructors has increased only 13%. That being the case, we have many opportunities to grow as we recover the shortfall.
INTERNSHIPS

This past year Lynn Lin gave $100,000 to support students participating in our new undergraduate internship program. Thank you, Lynn! Lynn's contribution was just what we needed to launch that new initiative, which is being ably managed by Barb Kuzmak. Barb placed many interns this past year and is developing cooperative arrangements with organizations around the country. Aaron Rendahl manages our consulting (http://www.stat.umn.edu/consulting) and graduate internships. In acknowledgement of Lynn's continuing support of our programs we have dedicated our consulting center as the Lynn Y.S. Lin Consulting Center.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

About half of our Advisory Council -- Steve Eick, Nathan Hubbell, Shefali Mehta, Bret Musser, Larry Thibodeau and Pat Whitcomb (http://www.stat.umn.edu/people/advisory.html) -- met with us on November 13 to discuss our programs. They offered many helpful and provocative suggestions, and we are now in the process of absorbing that information and planning accordingly. The meeting of the Council was a great success for us and we look forward to our Council meeting next year.

The timing of the Council meeting was fortunate because the Dean recently announced that we will be transitioning to a three-year budget cycle, which means that within the next couple of months we may have to come up with a vision for the School that could set boundaries at a critical time in our development.

STATISTICS IN THE COMMUNITY (STATCOM):

Our StatCom chapter (http://www.stat.umn.edu/statcom) is managed and staffed by graduate students with the goal of furnishing free statistical help to non-profit organizations. Each StatCom student has a faculty mentor, but it's the students who run the show. They now have several interesting projects and were recently featured on our collegiate web site (http://cla.umn.edu/news-events/story/stories-numbers). Chunli Li and Brandon Whited received the Director's Award for their outstanding service as the founding officers of StatCom. Internships and StatCom are the primary ways in which our students can gain experience in statistical practice.

STATISTICS CLUB

The Statistics Club is becoming a valuable resource for student to network, share ideas and gain experience outside the classroom. Last year the Club sent for the first time a team to the annual Midwest Undergraduate Data Analytics Competition in Winona, Minnesota. While they didn't win, they did find the experience to be valuable and are looking forward to participating again this year.

FACULTY NEWS

This past year Hui Zou was acknowledged as Scholar of the College and an IMS Fellow, Adam Rothman received NSF's CAREER award and Lan Wang received a well-earned promotion to Full Professor - Congratulations, Hui, Adam and Lan!
We have a new assistant professor, **Lan Liu**. Lan received her degree from Biostatistics at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and then took a postdoctoral research fellowship at Harvard Biostatistics. Lan’s research interest lies in causal inference, missing data analysis and doubly robust inference. In particular, previous methods for causal inference have relied on assumptions that may not hold in the context of modern complex studies or in the presence of social interaction. One of her goals is to develop and apply novel methods to evaluate causal effects in such complex settings.

We are again searching for an assistant professor, so with a little luck I’ll be introducing another new faculty member next year.

**Galin Jones** will be stepping down as Director of Graduate Studies at the end of this academic year. Galin has been an excellent DGS: his leadership and vision will be missed and I relied heavily on his counsel during my first year as Director. **Yuhong Yang** is our DGS-elect.

**Adam Rothman** is our new Director of Undergraduate Studies, replacing **Sandy Weisberg** who has about a year left on his phased retirement schedule. Adam will have Sandy’s assistance until he retires.

**Marta Shore** will be leaving us at the end of this semester to take a position with the State of Minnesota. She will be missed and we wish her well. We are now searching for a new teaching specialist to fill the position.

**STAFF NEWS**

**Taryn Verley** replaced **Alice Young** who left the School at the end of February to take up a position with the Center for BioEthics. Taryn came to us from Feminist Studies. Taryn writes: “I am thrilled to be joining the team in Statistics! I began my career at the University last August with the Feminist Studies department as the DGS Assistant and Executive Office Administrative Assistant, and look forward to learning and contributing to the School of Statistics this spring. I grew up in St. Cloud, MN and moved to Virginia and Jersey before I came back home to be closer to my family. I’m currently working towards an MFA in Playwriting and spend my free time between working in theaters around the Metro and camping/kayaking.”

**FELLOWSHIP AND AWARDS**

This past year the School held its second annual ceremony to honor the recipients and donors of fellowships and awards. Highlights from the ceremony are listed at the end of this letter. We are fortunate to have alumni who lend their support through endowments and other contributions. Your support of the School is needed and appreciated. It helps keep us strong and moving toward a department for the 21st century. Thank you!

If you wish to contribute you can send a check directly to the school, or you can make your contribution online ([www.stat.umn.edu/gift/](http://www.stat.umn.edu/gift/)). Gifts that target the general infrastructure for training in statistical practice -- internships, Statistics in the Community, Statistics Club, consulting -- would be particularly appropriate at this time, as these efforts receive little support from CLA. Infrastructure gifts can be given [HERE](http://www.stat.umn.edu/gift/).
In closing, in this time of change I am often reassured by remembering the nice things about statistics:

“Them ideas is so original and soothing. I think statistics are just as lovely as they can be.” – O. Henry: *The Handbook of Hymen.*

Wishing you all Happy Holidays,

Dennis Cook, Professor and Director
School of Statistics
Ph.D STUDENT AWARDS

BERNARD W. LINDGREN GRADUATE TEACHING AWARD

Award Recipients:

- Adam Maidman - $500
- Meng-Hsuan Wu - $500

The Bernard W. Lindgren Graduate Student Teaching Award was established in 2013 by Dr. Lindgren’s daughters and friends to honor his memory. The award supports graduate students in the School of Statistics who have demonstrated an enthusiasm for teaching undergraduate students. Until his retirement from the School in 2002, Dr. Lindgren continued to display an admirable dedication to helping students and developing the statistics program. This award reflects Dr. Lindgren’s own passion towards helping his graduate students grow and develop.

LYNN LIN FELLOWSHIP IN STATISTICS

Award Recipients:

- Ming Gao - $2,500
- Sijia Liang - $2,500
- Adam Maidman - $2,500

In 2008, Dr. Lynn Lin established the Lynn Lin Fellowship in Statistics in order to support students studying in the School of Statistics who intend to pursue careers in applied statistics. Dr. Lin developed the revolutionary BASES system, a predictive model which analyzes the potential volume of a new product before it goes on the market. His statistical model has at least 65% of the market share, and Dr. Lin himself continues to use his depth of experience in both statistical analysis and business through his publications, teaching, and consulting work.

Adam Maidman and Sijia Liang with the DGS, Galin Jones.
MARTIN-BUEHLER FELLOWSHIP IN STATISTICS

Award Recipient:

- Dootika Vats - $2,000
- Boxiang Wang - $2,000

Thomas and Martha Martin established the Martin-Buehler Fellowship in Statistics to honor the memory of their son-in-law, Robert “Bob” Buehler, a highly regarded professor who worked in the School of Statistics. Created in 2008, this fellowship supports those who shared Dr. Buehler’s enthusiasm about his field, providing tuition support and/or a stipend to promising students working towards a graduate degree in Statistics.

STATISTICS ALUMNI FELLOWSHIP

Award Recipient:

- Dootika Vats - $32,168

Alumni of the School of Statistics established the Statistics Alumni Fellowship in 1993 and benefitted generations of graduate students in Statistics.
MASTER STUDENT AWARDS

DR. LAWRENCE THIBODEAU FELLOWSHIP IN STATISTICAL CONSULTING

Award Recipients:

- Yin-Ting Chou - $2,500
- Jeffrey Moulton - $500
- Kedong Chen - $500
- Li Zhong - $500
- Ujjal Kumar Mukherjee - $500
- Jiuwu Jin - $500

Established in 2013, the Dr. Lawrence Thibodeau Fellowship in Statistical Consulting supports graduate students in the School of Statistics while they complete a statistical consulting project. Before he graduated from the School of Statistics in 1977, Dr. Thibodeau himself worked on a statistical consulting project for the Medical School. He created this fellowship in order to encourage graduate students to approach consulting projects as opportunities to learn instead of simply as work to complete.

JOHN N. QUIRING FELLOWSHIP IN STATISTICS

Award Recipients:

- Kaiyu Wang - $625
- Jingxiang Li - $625
- Jung Koo Kang - $625
- Xihuan Zeng - $625

Established in 2013, the John N. Quiring Fellowship in Statistics gives an annual gift to a graduate student working in the School of Statistics at the University of Minnesota. While a graduate student in Statistics at the University of Minnesota, Quiring discovered his fascination with the relationship between statistics and computers, and used this passion to consult with institutions such as SuperValu and the Bureau of Mines. As both founder and Chief Science Officer of QST Consulting, Dr. Quiring continues to develop the research capabilities of his company and works to communicate the results of that research to both the scientific and consumer communities.
Patrick “Pat” Whitcomb and Patty Napier created the Patrick Whitcomb & Patty Napier Fellowship in Statistics in 2008 to support the School of Statistics. Pat Whitcomb graduated from the University of Minnesota with a B.S. and later an M.S. in Chemical Engineering and went on to form the company Stat-Ease, which provides statistical software, training, and consulting services. Patty Napier is also closely tied to the University of Minnesota, having graduated with a Spanish B.A. from the College of Liberal Arts before going on to work in various offices at the University for 36 years.

**Award Recipient:**
- Qiao Gu - $500

*Whitcomb & Napier fellowship recipient, Qiao Gu, along with School of Statistics DGS, Galin Jones.*

*Award recipients at the Fellowship award ceremony.*