



Statistics Department

College of Science and Mathematics

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Statistics Department 2011 Newsletter



A Message from Department Chair Bob Smidt

Hello again. Between the budget crisis and uncertainty of the reaction of the CSU to the crisis, this has been an interesting year. But the most important achievement was the graduation of 18 Statistics majors in June, 2010, another three students in December, followed by a cadre of 14 graduates in June, 2011. Many of you probably remember “back in the days” when the number of graduates would be a single-digit number, and often a small, single-digit number. So the number of students we are now graduating speaks well about the health of the profession of statistics in general and of the department in particular. Additionally, it appears that we will have 18 freshmen and three transfer new majors in fall, 2011, so the major remains healthy and well.

Cal Poly has a new leader, President Jeffery Armstrong. Dr. Armstrong arrived at Poly in February and has made a point of visiting the colleges, meeting a sample of faculty and students from each department. President Armstrong was so impressed with the following excerpt from our most recent program review that he read it out loud to the rest of the people at the meeting: “The Statistics Department at Cal Poly SLO is an example of how collegiality, quality, devotion and hard work can produce a center of excellence that is a beacon to many Statistics departments across the nation.”
[Read the full message from Dr. Smidt](#)

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Statistics Department News



Year End Social 2011 - See the Photos

The end of 2010-2011 academic year was celebrated at the End-of-the-Year Social held at Cuesta Park. About 70 were in attendance including faculty, their families, significant others, statistics students -- majors and minors -- and their guests.

[Read more about the social and see pictures](#)

WNAR Conference

Cal Poly hosted the 2011 WNAR/IMS conference June 19-22, bringing a host of professionals to campus for a series of workshops. WNAR stands for the Western North American Region of the International Biometric Society (the organization that publishes the journal Biometrics). IMS stands for the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (the organization that publishes the Annals of Statistics, among other journals).

[Read about the conference and see pictures](#)

New Actuary Minor - Matt Carlton

In response to increased interest, 2010 graduate Dave Evans and I worked with an advisory panel from the Statistics, Mathematics, and Finance departments to create a minor in Actuarial Preparation. Students can apply to this minor beginning summer 2011. The minor curriculum includes advanced courses in probability and finance, along with a five-course "pack" of economics, finance, and statistics called Validation by Educational Experience. These courses are required by both major national actuarial societies (CAS and SOA) called. Statistics majors with an interest in actuarial careers will find it easy to integrate the minor into their major curriculum.

[Read the actuary article](#)

Statistics Department Donors - Thank You!

We want to thank our generous donors for their continual and new gifts to the department. Private support from our alumni, parents and friends helps the Statistics Department continue to provide an exceptional Learn-by- Doing education for today's students. Click on the link below to see the list of those who gave to the Statistics Department and/or the Joyce Curry-Daly Scholarship for 2010-2011.

[See donors from July 2010 through June 2011](#)

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Alumni News

Alumni Notes

Hank Elgin (B.S., Statistics, '05) is halfway through his first term in grad school at the University of Essex in Colchester in the UK. Laine Thomas (B.S., Statistics, '04) is in grad school at Duke University and loves it.

[Read their notes](#)

Find Us On Facebook

Alumni: Are you on Facebook? The Statistics Department has its own Facebook Page! Visit and "Like" the page to keep up with department news.

[Go to the Statistics Department Facebook Page](#)

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Faculty & Staff Updates, Advice and Articles

'Stay-batical' and MERLOT Award - Beth Chance

I enjoyed a "stay-batical," spending most of my time this year in SLO. This enabled me to work closely with Drs. Roy and McGaughey redeveloping some lab assignments for Stat 217. It was definitely more fun to be in the classroom as a TA than the teacher. I enjoyed updating the applets, learning some new tricks, and seeing them in action.

[Read more about the MERLOT Award](#)

Year in Recap - Jimmy Doi

It has been a wonderful year for me in many respects and it has been a very challenging one too as it has been one of the busiest among the 8 years I've been here. But I'm happy to say that this academic year ends on an especially high note for me because on July 2, I got married. My fiancée, Midori Okugawa, and I exchanged our vows on the island of Maui in the presence of special friends and family. I look forward to introducing this very special lady in my life to everyone in the department.

[Read more about Dr. Doi's year](#)

Visualizing Alumni Locations with R' - Samuel Frame

Now we can visually view the locations of Cal Poly alumni. Thanks to Dr. Samuel Frame's ingenuity and use of R'.

[Read more about where our alumni are located and see the maps](#)



Best News of the Year - Lina Ignatova

Looking back at the past academic year, I can say it has truly been a special one. A lot of my time went into professional development. In particular, I have been working with my co-authors on a paper on exact closed sequential sampling procedures and their applications in industrial sampling, Medicare fraud investigations and election audits. We submitted our work to The American Statistician and I also presented part of this research at JSM in Vancouver and at Cal Poly. The best news for the past year however is on a personal note: In June, I got married to my long time true friend Roland, who became more than a friend last summer.

[Read more from Dr. Ignatova](#)

10 Years at Cal Poly - Ulric Lund

So, this kind of snuck up on me: sometime in spring quarter I realized that I was finishing my 10th year at Cal

Poly. What a milestone! I am so thankful for the career that I have, and the colleagues in the Statistics Department that I share my career with. It was a huge decision to leave my industry job 10 years ago, and move to San Luis Obispo from San Francisco, but it was definitely the right move.

[Read more from Dr. Lund](#)

Career Tips: How to Succeed in Statistics in Industry - Les Pennelly

Being a statistician in industry can be quite rewarding if you follow opportunities for growth. I offer some observations from being in the research arm of the pharmaceutical industry for 34 years.

[Read more about growth in industry](#)

Statistics Department Year in Review - Melody Pietsch

I introduced myself to you in the last newsletter, and now that I have been in the Statistics Department for a full academic year, I can elaborate on my first year. The Statistics Department is seriously the best place I have worked on the Cal Poly campus. It offers not just a job, but more of a sense of family and friendship than anywhere else. It also has a wild new friend.

[Read more and meet the Statistics Office Mascot](#)

Jumping Out of a Plane - Andrew Schaffner

This year was about trying new things for me. Getting right to the title of this article: Yes, I jumped out of a plane. Reckless? Maybe a little bit, but I have no regrets. My second plunge this year was to chair the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee. This job meant giving up 12 units of teaching to serve the university by overseeing the approval of all curricular proposals on campus. It turns out that in many ways, this job has been more frightening than jumping out of the plane.

[More about Dr. Schaffner's jumps](#)

New Additions - Jeff Sklar

I just finished my sixth year in the department, and it ended on a great note as I received tenure and a promotion to associate professor. It was a great feeling (and a bit of a relief) to reach this career milestone, but I know that the hard work will continue. And my wife and I will have another addition to the family.

[Read more about additions](#)



Explorations: Both Professional and Personal - Heather Smith

This past academic year was my 15th at Cal Poly and I spent it on sabbatical, working on several different types of projects. I kept busy on two consulting projects, one in biomedical research and another in genetics. On a personal note, I took two international trips this year, one for professional development and one for pleasure. I took a two week trip

to Slovenia, giving a talk about Cal Poly's Statistical Consulting course at the International Conference on the Teaching of Statistics (ICOTS -8). In April, my husband David, sons Austin and Hadden, and I took a few weeks of vacation on the south end of the southernmost island of New Zealand.

[Read about Dr. Smith's explorations and see pictures](#)

Publications and More - John Walker

The 2010-2011 academic year was a very busy one for me. My statistical consulting work with faculty from other departments produced two publications. I coauthored one paper on the heat stability of skimmed milk in the Journal of Dairy Science with Dr. Phil Tong and Dr. Vandna Sikand of the Dairy Products Technology Center. A paper with Dr. Steven Kane of the School of Education on detecting attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and learning disabilities in college students appeared in the Journal of Learning Disabilities. I will be working on more projects with all of these coauthors this summer.

[read more about publications and activities](#)

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Statistics Student News

COSAM Spring Awards Banquet



Statistics students and faculty enjoyed the annual college awards in May 2011

Spring 2011 Graduates

[See the list of our Spring 2011 graduates](#)

Juliana Fajardo & Max Klingman

The Stats Club booth at Open House 2011 was a success.

[Read why](#)

Alex Herrington

I was able to attend two conferences during my last year in the Statistics Department. I went to the Western Users of SAS Software (WUSS) conference in San Diego and the SAS Global Forum (SGF) conference in Las Vegas.

[Read more about Alex's conference experiences](#)

Diana Shealy

This last April, Alex Herrington and I received scholarships to attend SAS Global Forum in Las Vegas, Nevada. While I cannot speak for Alex, I can say that I thoroughly enjoyed my week at the conference. Throughout my stay at Cal Poly, I have taken the opportunity to attend a variety of conferences and out of all of those conferences, SAS Global Forum was the most exciting and educational.

[Read more about Diana's conference](#)

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Message from the Chair



Hello again. Between the budget crisis and uncertainty of the reaction of the CSU to the crisis, this has been an interesting year. But the most important achievement was the graduation of 18 Statistics majors in June, 2010, another three students in December, followed by a cadre of 14 graduates in June, 2011. Many of you probably remember “back in the days” when the number of graduates would be a single-digit number, and often a small, single-digit number. So the number of students we are now graduating speaks well about the health of the profession of statistics in general and of the department in particular. Additionally, it appears that we will have 18 freshmen and three transfer new majors in fall, 2011, so the major remains healthy and well.

Speaking of graduates, one of our majors, **Tiffany Russell** (actually a double major in Statistics and Business), was recently honored for having the highest GPA among all the College of Science and Math graduating seniors of the 2010-2011 academic year. With her GPA being 4.0, it would be hard for someone to have a higher GPA. All of us who have had Tiffany in class could easily recognize her talents and the efforts she put into her studies; she is one of the students who helps makes it all worthwhile.

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Next fall, Tiffany will enter the graduate program at Stanford.

There was a transition in the department office. **Carol Morris**, who was hired as the administrative coordinator in June, 2005, has retired from Cal Poly after more than five years with the Statistics Department and will now haunt the streets of Los Osos. After personal and family health issues, it is nice that Carol is able to kick back and enjoy life. We wish her well! The department was lucky enough to find an excellent new administrative coordinator, **Melody Pietsch**, who joined us in fall 2010. Melody was working half-time for the Kinesiology Department when Carol retired and we were able to convince her to join us. During her time at Cal Poly, she has worked in all but one of the Cal Poly colleges, so brings a wealth of experience to the position. Sometimes I feel like she is training me rather than I training her (actually a lot more than sometimes). Anyway, Melody is doing a fine job—she will introduce herself later in this newsletter, much of which she produced. There were two major events in the professional lives of our faculty. **John Walker** was promoted to full professor and **Jeff Sklar** was given tenure and promoted to associate professor. These promotions were well-deserved. Congratulations to them both.

A major event for many of us in the department is the “reading” (grading, actually) of the Advanced Placement Statistics exam, being held in Daytona Beach. **Allan Rossman** is in his second year as chief reader and **Beth Chance** is in her second year as assistant chief reader. **Roxy Peck**, a former chief reader will attend as an exam leader, while **Matt Carlton**, **Karen McGaughey**, **John Walker**, **Heather Smith**, and I will show up to do various and sundry.

As you might know, Cal Poly has a new leader, President Jeffery D. Armstrong. Dr. Armstrong arrived at Poly in February and has made a point of visiting the colleges, and meeting a sample of faculty and students from each department. The Stat students and faculty at the meeting did a fine job of explaining the environment and activities of the department; Dean Bailey mentioned the excellent national and international reputation of the department; and President Armstrong was so impressed with the following excerpt from our most recent program review that he read it out loud at the meeting: “The Statistics Department at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo is an example of how collegiality, quality, devotion and hard work can produce a center of excellence that is a beacon to many Statistics Departments across the nation.”

The faculty and students appreciate all who have supported the program financially this year. Your help allows us to support student and faculty activities that are an integral part of who we are and to purchase needed materials that support the department’s function. Thank you!

Please consider emailing me about how you are and what has been going on in your life. I will pass it on to the faculty, who would appreciate the update, and include the information in the next version of this newsletter (who knows—after reading about you, maybe your old friends and classmates will get in touch?).

Have a great year!

Bob Smidt, Department Chair
rsmidt@calpoly.edu





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Home : Year End Social

Year End Social

By Melody Pietsch



The end of the 2010-2011 academic year was celebrated at the End-of-Year Social held at Cuesta Park. About 70 were in attendance including faculty, their families, significant others, statistics students – majors and minors and their guests. We changed it up a little this year and had the event catered by G Brothers BBQ, a San Luis Obispo BBQ restaurant. They provided the BBQ ribs, chicken, tri-tip and sides and desserts were added by those who attended. There was a good mix of food and everyone was full and happy at the end of the evening.

We enjoyed one another's company, had a chance to visit with students, friends, colleagues in a beautiful environment that wasn't distracted by work or academics.

Tradition continued after dinner with awards given to students and the Stat Club giving awards to faculty and staff. How they come up with some of the titles to these awards, I will never know! This was a perfect end to a great, full, challenging year.

Click on the photo above/at left or [click here to view more photos from the social](#).

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» By Melody Pietsch

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Home : 2011 WNAR/IMS Conference at Cal Poly

2011 WNAR/IMS Conference at Cal Poly

By Professor Jimmy Doi



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» By Professor Jimmy Doi

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[Click here for the full scientific schedule](#) and program abstracts.

From the schedule you'll see that there was an impressive array of well-known statisticians included in the program. Researchers from nearby campuses (including Stanford, UC Berkeley and UC Davis) attended. But researchers from other parts of the nation also attended. Some came from the Harvard School of Public Health, The Ohio State University, Johns Hopkins, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research, and the Centers for Disease Control. Surprisingly, several researchers from overseas joined us as well: The University of Auckland, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and National University of Singapore.

Although the WNAR/IMS conference traditionally focuses on research topics in biostatistics, there are many sessions that appeal to a broad audience. The following is a comprehensive list of session titles:

- The Analysis of Complex Data: Nonparametric, Correlated and High Dimensional
- Recent Advances in Adaptive Methods for Clinical Trials



- Survival and Longitudinal Data
- State of the Art Methodology in Causal Analysis
- New Paradigms in Dose-Finding Clinical Trials
- Bayesian Methods
- Using Statistical Modeling and Decision Analysis to Inform Health Policy Making
- High Dimensional Modeling
- Statistical Genetics
- Ethics: White, Black, Gray or Colorful
- Survival Analysis and Longitudinal Models
- Applied and Computational Data Analysis
- Effects of Misspecification in Correlated Data Models
- Advances in Statistical Genetics: in Honor of Professor David Siegmund
- High Dimensional Data



- Models and Designs
- New Developments in R for Displaying Data on the Web
- Advances in Bayesian Computation
- Statistical Methods for High-Throughput Genomic Assays
- Inference Following Selection Procedures and Sequential Stopping Rules
- Inference for Signals and Images
- Recent Advances in Causal Inference
- Bayesian Methods and Data Analysis

Some meeting highlights included the following:

- Social Mixer and Registration (Sunday, June 19)
- Short Course (Sunday, June 19) "Evaluation of Sequential and Adaptive Clinical Trial

Designs" by Scott S. Emerson, M.D. Ph.D., Professor of Biostatistics, University of Washington

- Presidential Invited Speaker (Monday, June 20) , "AIDS: Statistical Science and Public Health" by Ron Brookmeyer, Ph.D., Professor of Biostatistics, UCLA
- New Investigator's Luncheon (Tuesday, June 21) , "Advice Gladly Given but Safety Requires Avoiding Unnecessary Conversation: Guidance to Success in Academics" by Charles McCulloch, Ph.D., Professor and Head, Division of Biostatistics, UC San Francisco
- WNAR Banquet (Tuesday, June 21)

Several Statistics faculty participated in the conference, and 12 of our students served as volunteers for the event. It was a unique learning experience for students and one of their first exposures to a professional statistical conference.





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Donors 2010/2011 (July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011)

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Mr. Reed Elliott
Mr. Edward L. Ellis, Jr.
Mr. Kyle Gasperik
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Mr. and Mrs. Kevin B. Gregory
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Katrina Jackson
Laura J. and Mike L. Patnode
Daniel C. Quinn and Cindy S. Rusler
Wendy T. and Robert Sison
Aaron Shev
Mrs. Laine E. Thomas
Mr. Hagen C. Von Massent

Note: Every effort has been made to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the listing of contributors from July 2010 through June 2011. If you have been omitted from the list, please let us know at statisticsdepartment@calpoly.edu.

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Home : Alumni Notes

Alumni Notes

Hank Elgin

I am halfway through the first term here at the University of Essex in Colchester. I am doing a taught MSc program in Statistics and Econometrics. I did consider Sheffield as I think they have one of the better statistics programs in England. However, if I remember correctly, it is a bit more theoretical and I was looking for an applied program. I am sure things have changed a lot since this university was founded in about 1964.

This term I have an Experimental Designs and a Stochastic Processes lecture along with Econometric Methods and Economics of Financial Markets. Next term I will have Linear Models, Time Series and Empirical Methods of Economics and Finance. It s a 12 month program and I will take exams and write a dissertation with the remaining time.

Colchester is a 50-minute, direct train ride northeast of London so it is quite accessible. I am also only within a couple of hours flight of the rest of Europe. I hope to spend some time in Germany while I am here. Studying there for two years as an undergraduate left a big impression on me and I really enjoyed myself there. I have visited the UK the last two years and have seen different areas thus it has not be a completely new experience. A good friend from California is living west of London at the moment.

Laine Thomas

I graduated last summer and have been at Duke for about a year now. I love it. There is great variety. I do some teaching, research and consulting. We still miss California and always think about moving back. I'm pretty sure we'll give it a good three years before deciding. Duke is a great place to be and Steven has a job at RTI. I hope we can visit you all at Cal Poly sometime in the future. Best wishes!

Alumni: Where are you and what are you up to? Submit a note for the next e-newsletter!

[Connect with the Statistics Alumni Page on Facebook](#)

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Home : Beth Chance

MERLOT award, University of Minnesota and More

By Professor Beth Chance



enjoyed a "stay-batical," spending most of my time this year in San Luis Obispo. This enabled me to work closely with Drs. Roy and McGaughey redeveloping some lab assignments for Stat 217. It was definitely more fun to be in the classroom as a TA than the teacher! I enjoyed updating the applets, learning some new tricks, and seeing them in action.

Our applets won a MERLOT award for online resources, and Dr. Rossman and I will be attending the MERLOT conference in San Jose this summer.

I attended a lot more conferences this year in general and took a few quick trips to visit colleagues at the University of Minnesota and North Carolina State University. Back to wishing we had a few more flights out of SLO!

I also had the pleasure of "team teaching" an online course on how to become a teacher of statistics through the University of Minnesota. Hopefully this experience will help me in offering our first fully online Stat 217 course this summer. This sabbatical also gave me the chance to do a few new things, like taking some Spanish courses and traveling to Peru for "homework!" Now I just need to get prepared for my son Ben to start kindergarten in the fall - how'd that happen?

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» By Professor Beth Chance

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Home : A Recap of 2011: Teaching, Consulting, and a Wedding

A Recap of 2011: Teaching, Consulting, and a Wedding

By Professor Jimmy Doi

This was my eighth year at Cal Poly. In the fall term I had a chance to teach Stat 150 once again but this time I was able to team up with Dr. Soma Roy. One of the key components of this class is to help develop students' written and oral presentation skills. And one of the great joys in teaching this class is to witness some of the incredible improvements our students exhibit. By the end of the quarter, many of our students become very polished and well spoken presenters.

This past winter quarter, I taught the categorical data analysis for the third time and it was an extremely enjoyable experience. My dissertation topic is from categorical data analysis, so this topic is clearly one of my favorites! But I am now scheduled to return to our Stat 330 course (SAS) and I very much



look forward to revamping my course notes to introduce new trends in SAS that have developed over the years.

I have been working on a few consulting projects over the past year and thankfully we are approaching the point where we will be finishing up our manuscripts. With any luck, our submissions to the peer-reviewed journals will be accepted!

One of the biggest projects I worked on this year was serving as the lead local organizer for the 2011 WNAR/IMS Conference held on campus in June. It has been incredibly time consuming to prepare for this event, but thankfully with the help of our administrative coordinator Melody Pietsch and Dr. Soma Roy things fell into place. For more details about the conference, please [read the corresponding article I've written in this newsletter](#).

It has been a wonderful year for me in many respects and it has been a very challenging one too as it has been one of the busiest among the eight years I've been here. But I'm happy to say that this academic year ends on an especially high note for me because on July 2nd, 2011, I got married! My

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» By Professor Jimmy Doi

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fiancée, Midori Okugawa, and I exchanged our vows on the island of Maui in the presence of special friends and family. I look forward to introducing this very special lady in my life to everyone in the department.



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Visualizing Alumni Locations with R

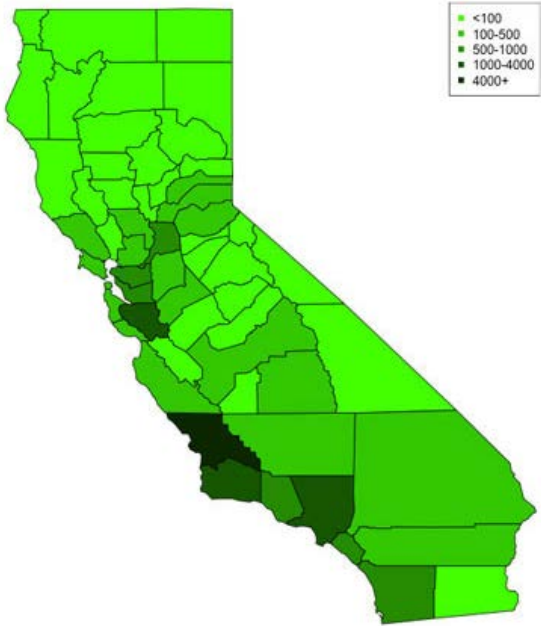
By Samuel Frame

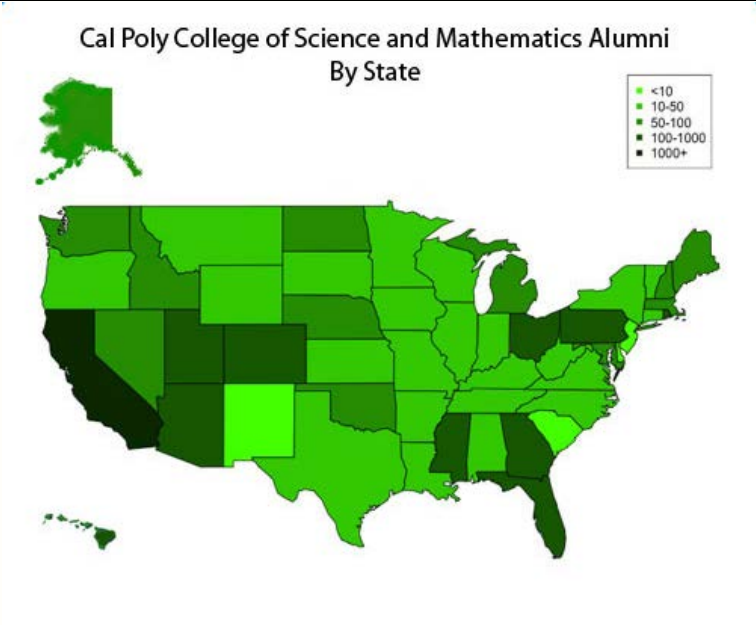
In early April 2011, our wonderful department assistant, Melody Pietsch, was contacted by Teresa Hendrix (content editor, Cal Poly Public Affairs). Teresa wanted to know if we had a student or professor that could take data files and visually express the information on a map. Melody asked the students in the Stat Lab what they suggested and their response was, "Dr. Frame could do it." Truly, I am flattered. Teresa provided me with information on the number of Cal Poly College of Science and Mathematics alumni by California county, state, and country. She desired maps that visually convey the number of alumni in each region, with darker colors of green indicating higher numbers of alumni. Each graph presented a unique challenge I had never encountered. Using skills we teach in our new STAT 331 course, I was able to create maps with the desired properties. Rrrrrrr!

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Cal Poly College of Science and Mathematics Alumni by County





Best News of the Year

By Professor Lina Ignatova



Looking back at the past academic year, I can say it has truly been a special one. A lot of my time went into professional development. In particular, I have been working with my co-authors on a paper on exact closed sequential sampling procedures and their applications in industrial sampling, Medicare fraud investigations and election audits.

We submitted our work to *The American Statistician* and I also presented part of this research at Joint Statistical Meetings in Vancouver and at Cal Poly.

I also got the opportunity to teach our majors in two classes: STAT 426 and 427. These courses were my favorites as a student and I truly enjoyed

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introducing our majors to the more mathematical side of statistical theory. I am looking forward to teaching those classes again.

The best news for the past year, however, is on a personal note: In June, I got married to my long time true friend Roland, who became more than a friend last summer. We had our families visiting us for two weeks helping us with the wedding preparations and this really made it a special experience. Roland and I are really looking forward to our future together.

Originally we planned to stay in San Luis Obispo, even though Roland did not get a job at Cal Poly this year. However, a vital change in our life lead me to take a leave of absence for the upcoming academic year.

Yes, there was an unexpected but very welcome and pleasant surprise – we are expecting an addition to our family. So for the upcoming academic year I intend to continue my work on my research, as time permits, and I am looking forward to rejoining my colleagues and our students of the Statistics Department and I am eagerly awaiting to return to the classroom in fall 2012.





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Home : Ten Years at Cal Poly

Ten Years at Cal Poly

By Professor Ulric Lund

So, this kind of snuck up on me: sometime in spring quarter I realized that I was finishing my 10th year at Cal Poly. What a milestone! I am so thankful for the career that I have, and the colleagues in the Statistics Department who I share my career with. It was a huge decision to leave my industry job 10 years ago and move to San Luis Obispo from San Francisco, but it was definitely the right move. With the supportive coworkers, and wonderful students that have come through our program here, I cannot imagine a better place to work. I look forward to more great years to come.

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Home : A Statistician's Growth in Industry

A Statistician's Growth in Industry

by Les Pennelly

Being a statistician in industry can be quite rewarding if you follow opportunities for growth. I offer some observations from being in the research arm of the pharmaceutical industry for 34 years.

Assuming an individual gets a job in an industry that requires the use of good statistical practice; considerable growth will be accomplished throughout different stages of one's career. This growth may be in terms of industry knowledge, application of one's education to this knowledge, enhancement of the statistical knowledge to apply to difficult problems, improvement in personal relationship skills that make teams work, and development of the character and ethics to stand up for the principles that we were hired for.

In early years, growth in the company/industry is dominated by the change from an academic focused statistical environment to one where you learn how difficult it is to "apply a t-test" to a real problem. And why you will get tremendous satisfaction out of the solution even though it may take a month to do this simple analysis. Your reward may be in the application of an academic concept to a real solution; and perhaps a pat on the back from your manager.

As you learn more about you industry, you may get applied problems with more complicated analyses. The repeated measures analysis of a multi factor, crossover design with interactions/carry-over is not as easy as it is in the classroom. Your reward may be in using some of the education, and associated common sense, that you never dreamed you would ever use.

As you gain more maturity, people come to you and ask hard questions about competing statistical issues such as missing/late data, multiple treatment groups, multiplicity of endpoints, interims data looks, control of alpha, and my favorite: outliers (the most interesting data are the outliers and "tell you more then any other data point"). At this time you solve problems that others cannot do because of the experience mix of statistical and industry knowledge and how they are intertwined at your company. The reward is in knowing that you are doing industry-specific strategic statistical consulting that no one else maybe able to do.

If you handle the advanced consulting with confidence while also exhibiting people skills, you may lead teams to larger successes then you could accomplish on your own. Imagine the sense of pride you get when you show your data management and technical review groups how to prevent study bias, especially when no one had a clue it could be an issue. How rewarding it is to make this impact and be recognized as the expert that everyone wants to work with!

Administrative and/or project management roles follow from the previous success. Sometimes these roles come earlier but early promotions are not good for your long term success. Make sure you are ready to defend your profession when an owner or senior director tells you that the failed study must look

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better and you have to do post hoc analyses to make the data look good. Ethics and character are all you have to fall back on and you do need to take an unpopular stand. But what a tremendous impact. Do it with conviction and with the senior employee characteristics touched on above and you gain respect.

What's next? Plenty, but if you can do all of the above your career journey will be rewarding for years .



Year in Review in the Statistics Office



By

Melody Pietsch

I introduced myself to you in the last newsletter, and now that I have been in the Statistics Department for a full academic year, I can elaborate on my first year

The Statistics Department is seriously the best place I have worked on the Cal Poly campus. It offers not just a job, but more of a sense of family and friendship than anywhere else. Observing the faculty collaboration has been a delightful experience. Everyone takes an interest in each other not only professionally but personally as well. Each person enjoys what he or she does and that is infectious to the students. The students bring an energy, strength, and positive drive to the department. Couple that with faculty who enjoy what they do, like teaching, and spending time with the students and you have a cohesive team that works and plays together very well.

Stat Club has been very busy this year and I have had the privilege of getting to know the officers. They have inventive ideas for events and planned "Shack Nights" each quarter for the faculty, staff and students to socialize together. I look forward to the coming year to get to know the new officers and anticipate an active, exciting year in the department.

Oh yes, there has been the administrative coordinating tasks to do, which keeps me very busy. However, even the mundane daily tasks take on a new dimension when coworkers are so appreciative of any assistance. Not only do I like the work I do, but the office itself has a nice view. While sitting at my computer one day, out of the corner of my eye I saw something move and turned around and was staring into the face of a wild turkey! I had never been

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up close and personal with a turkey - Daily surprises are a norm.

I am so thankful to be working in the Statistics Department and look forward to the coming year to meet new students, get to know current students, and face the many challenges that come with work in academia.



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Home : Jumping Out of a Plane - Overseeing University Curriculum

Jumping Out of a Plane - Overseeing University Curriculum

By Professor Andrew Schaffner

This year was about trying new things for me. Getting right to the title of this article: Yes, I jumped out of a plane. Reckless? Maybe a little bit, but I have no regrets. I joined a few of my BIO faculty friends and took the plunge. Our flight to 13,000 feet was noisy and filled with anticipation as my instructor cinched me tightly to the harness. Above our drop site, wind blasting by the open hatch, we scooted to the opening, and with surprisingly little fear we just fell out and experienced free fall for a very long and very pleasant 60 seconds. As the wind rushed by, small movements of my arms and legs would turn me quickly in different directions so I could take up the fantastic view of the California Coast near Lompoc. It was eerie that I really didn't notice how fast the earth was approaching; how the distant objects were quickly growing closer. Fortunately, my instructor was paying attention to these things and we finished the last five minutes of the ride slowly falling with the parachute to a comfortably soft landing.

My second plunge this year was to chair the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee. This job meant giving up 12 units of teaching to serve the university by overseeing the approval of all curricular proposals on campus. It turns out that in many ways, this job has been more frightening than jumping out of the plane!

In this new role, I have the privilege of ensuring that faculty groups across colleges all communicate and share their curricular ideas with each other; that they consider not only the needs of their department, but also consider how their seemingly internal decisions affect the campus community. I get to be a mediator and help faculty work out their differences. I get to help develop and enforce policy that defines Cal Poly degrees. I get to ensure that students' interests are protected. And, I get to acquire a lot of new managerial skills that I never really paid much attention to in the past. It's been a humbling and growing experience.

What do these two dives into the void have in common? Teamwork and trust. Both have really helped me realize how much I depend on my peers for support, and how rewarding it is to share in the experience of fulfilling common goals.

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New Additions

By Professor Jeff Sklar



I just finished my sixth year in the department, and it ended on a great note as I received tenure and a promotion to associate professor. It was a great feeling (and a bit of a relief) to reach this career milestone, but I know that the hard work will continue.

In addition to teaching courses, I am busy working on projects that I hope will contribute to the statistics discipline, as well as educational policy. I am working with Shonda Kuiper, a statistics professor from Grinnell College in Iowa, to finish a textbook for a second course in statistics, due to be released in January 2012. Guided investigations of real data are used to present and illustrate various statistical techniques and methods. I have been working on this project for four years, and it's great that the book is finally in the last editing and proofreading stages.

Earlier this year I was awarded an Extramural Funding Initiative (EFI) grant to work on a research project to investigate students who change majors at Cal Poly. My research assistant Logan Lossing, a Mathematics and Statistics major, and I will analyze data on the freshmen Cal Poly cohort who entered in fall 2003 using logistic regression and discrete-time survival analysis methods. Our goal will be to determine which students are more likely to change major, and how changing major affects persistence and graduation rates.

My wife, Maria, and I have been adjusting to the roles and responsibilities of being first-time parents, while juggling work and school. This past summer, Maria finished her master's degree in Educational Leadership and Administration. This was an extremely busy year for her, as she was also working full time as an advisor in the College of Engineering.

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Our daughter Yazmin is enrolled in the Orfalea Family and ASI Children's Center, so she is also part of the Cal Poly family and always near us. Finally, we are expecting our second child (a boy) in mid-September. We will definitely have our hands full with two little ones, but we are extremely happy and excited about our new addition.



Explorations Both Personal and Professional

by Professor Heather Smith



This past academic year was my 15th at Cal Poly and I spent it on sabbatical, working on several different types of projects. I kept busy on two consulting projects: one in biomedical research and another in genetics. I began work with Dr. Carlton and Dr. Devore as a co-author on a business statistics textbook. I also collaborated with the San Luis Obispo Unified School District and several of their schools to improve STEM education, especially in the mathematics curriculum.

While not in the classroom each day, I did come to realize how much I miss teaching our great Cal Poly students. I especially missed working with our majors in the Survey Research course, the Consulting course, and on senior projects. I look forward to getting back to all of these activities this year.

As you may already know a new science building is under construction at Cal Poly. In preparation for its completion, the statistics faculty submitted a proposal to Dean Bailey for how our department might use the additional space that will become available in Building 25. We hope to house all of our faculty members in one place, provide more space for our Statistics majors to work collaboratively on coursework and research, and expand our Statistical Consulting service by having space for a consulting office.

On a personal note, I took two international trips this year, one for professional development and one for pleasure. I took a two week trip to Slovenia, giving a talk about Cal Poly's statistical consulting course at the International Conference on the Teaching of Statistics (ICOTS -8). Several other Cal Poly statistics faculty attended this conference and we all had a great time, both working and exploring Slovenia.

In April, my husband David, sons Austin and Hadden, and I took a few weeks

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of vacation in the south end of the south island of New Zealand. Years ago, when I worked for Westat, I consulted at New Zealand Steel, located on the north island. At that time I had opportunities to explore both the north and south islands quite a bit. This time I was excited to take my family with me to visit this fabulous country. We stayed in cottages throughout the region and got to see amazing wildlife and scenery (and of course plenty of sheep).



We started our trip in my favorite New Zealand city, Dunedin, where a highlight was visiting the breeding grounds of the endangered Royal Albatross and the endangered Yellow eyed penguin. We then moved on to Lake Manapouri on the wild west coast. There we took a boat out on Doubtful Sound, a very remote wilderness area. We saw all manner of birds, dolphins, and penguins, but mostly we saw the mammoth fiord that Captain Cook was too afraid to sail into. While at Manapouri we hiked part of the famous Kepler Track, seeing several filming sites from the Lord of the Rings movies.

Onward to Queenstown, my son Austin jumped out of a perfectly good airplane, we all jet boated down the glacier-fed Dart River, watched the crazy bungee jumpers, and visited a few great wineries. From there we meandered over to the Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers, hiking as we went, and taking a scenic flight up to the glacier tops and the peaks of Mt. Cook and Mt. Tasman. These glaciers flow right down to the Tasman Sea, where we also went kayaking.



Our final stop took us through Arthur's Pass National Park to the city of Christchurch, where the oldest part of the city was destroyed by a series of

recent earthquakes. Of course it is sad to see such devastation. We toured the botanical gardens, went punting on the Avon River, and took a boat out into the Pacific Ocean to see endangered Hector dolphins. Then home. The trip was fantastic! I would love to go back and see more of this wonderful country and its people. If you ever plan a trip to New Zealand, let me know and we can talk more about it. Enjoy a few of the pictures.

[Click here to view more of Professor Smith's photos](#)





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Home : Publications and More

Publications and More

by Professor John Walker

The 2010-2011 academic year was a very busy one for me. My statistical consulting work with faculty from other departments produced two publications. I coauthored one paper on the heat stability of skimmed milk in the *Journal of Dairy Science* with Dr. Phil Tong and Dr. Vandna Sikand of the Dairy Products Technology Center. Another paper I coauthored, this time with Dr. Steven Kane of the School of Education, focused on detecting attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and learning disabilities in college students. It appeared in the *Journal of Learning Disabilities*. I will be working on more projects with all of these coauthors this summer.

In the past year, I've worked with two graduate students on their masters' theses: one in Dairy Science involving study of mineral content in milk, and another in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration studying the attitudes of Morro Bay residents towards tourism. I also helped two undergraduate biology students on their senior project which examines the association between moonlight and the nesting frequency of endangered sea turtles in Guatemala. Their data also served as the basis of one project for our STAT 465 Statistical Consulting class. I will be working with these students and Dr. Emily Taylor from the Biology Department this summer to refine our results and write a paper.

In June, I graded AP Statistics exams for the second year in a row. This year about 600 high school and college statistics instructors graded over 140,000 exams over the course of one week in Daytona Beach, Fla. (That may not sound like fun, but it has its moments, and it's very important to all of those students who took the exam!) I was one of eight Cal Poly faculty there. Afterwards, I spent a day at the Kennedy Space Center and saw the Space Shuttle Atlantis sitting on the launch pad awaiting the final flight of the Space Shuttle program.

At the end of the year, I found out that I had been promoted from associate professor to professor. It's nice to be recognized by my colleagues, and I feel very thankful to be part of the Cal Poly Statistics Department. Next year, I will continue my research and consulting work, and I look forward for the first time to teaching our STAT 423 Advanced Design of Experiments course.

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» by Professor John Walker

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Statistics Graduates Spring 2011

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Tyler J. Diestel
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Tiffany Brienne Russell
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Home : Fajardo Open House

Open House Stat Booth a Success

By Juliana Fajardo and Maxwell P. Klingman

The Stat Club sponsored a booth at the 2011 Cal Poly Open House. The main attraction at our booth was a large Plinko board game where anyone could toss the pucks down and get a score, just like The Price Is Right! Various Statistics majors hung out at the booth for the day, where we helped visitors play Plinko, informed people what the Statistics Club does, ate some candy, and of course talked statistics!

We met older Statistics alumni, possible future Cal Poly students, and some current faculty and students. It was a fun day for the Stat Club and a successful Open House!

[Click here to see a slideshow of Open House photos](#) on the Cal Poly News Web. (Requires flash player - [Download Flash player here free](#))

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Home : Herrington WUSS and SGF

Western Users of SAS Software (WUSS) & SAS Global Forum (SGF)

By Alex Herrington

I was able to attend two conferences during my last year in the Statistics Department. I went to the Western Users of SAS Software (WUSS) conference in San Diego and the SAS Global Forum (SGF) conference in Las Vegas. I wanted to write a short paragraph sharing my opinions about the conferences. Both WUSS and SGF were amazing conferences and I would love to go again.

There was a ton to learn, plenty of people to meet, opportunities to find jobs, and other exciting activities. The conferences allow students in the department to get to know each other better and become closer friends. Comparing the two conferences, I enjoyed WUSS more than SGF. I liked WUSS more because it's not as big as SGF. I feel SGF can be overwhelming with all the classes that are offered, and some of the classes are more technical than WUSS. I also found it more difficult to network at SGF. The conference is so large that it can be difficult to see the same people. WUSS is much smaller and is easier to see the same people throughout the day. Another great thing about both conferences is they offer student scholarships to cover the registration fees, and the Statistics Department will pay most of the remaining expenses. Overall, I would say the students should definitely go to WUSS and those who are really into SAS programming, should go to SGF.

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Student News: SAS Global Forum

By Diana Shealy

This last April, Alex Herrington and I received scholarships to attend SAS Global Forum in Las Vegas, Nevada. While I cannot speak for Alex, I can say that I thoroughly enjoyed my week at the conference. Throughout my stay at Cal Poly, I have taken the opportunity to attend a variety of conferences and out of all of those conferences, SAS Global Forum was the most exciting and educational.

SAS Global Forum is grandiose; no other conference I've been to can compare to the scale of the SAS Global Forum. The opening session, which concluded with a 30-minute Cirque du Soleil preview, is almost pure entertainment and lived up to Vegas standards. I believe one of the best points of the conference was the many opportunities to relax, socialize and network at one of the many mixers and kickbacks. One of the main reasons I attend conferences is to network and solidify new friendships, and I enjoyed being able to do so without missing conference talks.

As for the presentations, SAS Global Forum had talks at every skill level. As most here at Cal Poly know, I am minoring in Computer Science, and I am interested in topics that combine both disciplines. At SAS Global Forum, I was able to find presentations that leaned toward computer science more than statistics, including a talk about hash tables in SAS. Before the conference, I had just finished my Data Structures class, which covered hash tables, so it was reassuring that the education I'm getting now will actually be useful in the future.

One phrase that I can think of to sum up the SAS Global Forum is "Southern hospitality." The conference organizers and SAS really wanted to make sure that their employees, clients, and users had a good time and enjoyed themselves. The student scholars were treated with respect and not looked down on. The trip was so positive that it has encouraged me to submit an abstract to WUSS for a travel student scholarship. Who knows? If that experience goes well, I may try for the SGF Travel Student Scholarship for SAS Global Forum 2012 in Orlando, Fla.

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