



# Statistics Department

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## Statistics Department 2012 Newsletter



### A Message from Department Chair Bob Smidt

Hello again and welcome to a new year! I'd like to pause for a moment to honor Jim Daly, the first Statistics Department chair, who passed away in December 2011. He fought the good fight, going through what appeared to be successful esophageal cancer surgery. The cancer returned, though, and Jim was unable to fight off the disease. Jim was one of the finest individuals I ever met and a great friend; he is sorely missed.

The department has also undergone some personnel changes, including the subtraction of five faculty members and the addition of four.

[Read more about Jim Daly, the history of the department and personnel changes](#)

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## Faculty & Staff Updates

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### Statistics Department News



#### Year End Social 2011 — See the Photos

The end of the 2011-12 academic year was celebrated at the End-of-the-Year Social held at Cuesta Park. About 70 people attended including faculty, their families, significant others, statistics students -- majors and minors -- and their guests.

[Read more about the social](#)

#### Statistics Department Donors — Thank You!

We want to thank our generous donors for their continued 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 2011-12.

[See donors from July 2011 through June 2012](#)



Computers for Kids is Statistically Significant for One Adult — Andrew Schaffner [back to top](#) ↑

**New Faculty**  
**Statistics Department Welcomes Four New Faculty Members**  
Read more about each of them below!



[Peter Chi](#)



[Gary Hughes](#)



[Gail Potter](#)



[Kevin Ross](#)



at you're up to!

Statistics Department has its own Facebook page. Visit and  
partment news.  
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What secrets does this flyer from

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the 1980's hold?

Computing has opened up the world to statistics, but I only recently realized it was statistics that opened up the world of computing to me. Sure, I'm a Cal Poly alumnus (B.S., Mathematics, 1992, with a statistics minor) and have been a faculty member for more than 15 years now, but it turns out that my ties to the Statistics Department are even deeper than I knew, dating back to 1981 when I was 10 years old. The following story is a tribute to a former Cal Poly statistician who I just learned was influential in my life — Joyce Curry Daly.

[Read more about Schaffner's unearthed history with the Statistics Department](#)

**Grading 153,000 Exams with 615 Friends — Alan Rossman**

This past June marked the end of my third year in the role of chief reader for the Advanced Placement program in statistics. My primary responsibility is to coordinate and oversee the grading of approximately 153,000 exams. Fortunately, I shared this task with 615 other statistics teachers from around the country who gathered in Kansas City, Mo. on June 10-16, 2012. One of the great things about this process is that I was able to rely on many Cal Poly colleagues to fill important roles and to make the experience enjoyable.

[Read more about Rossman's involvement with the AP Statistics Exam](#)

**Professional Projects — Matt Carlton**

Several professional projects kept me busy last year. For a start, I helped coordinate and analyze the data for Cal Poly's Freshman Success Program, which we designed three years ago. It helps students who are put on academic probation in their first quarter. Year after year, our research shows that FSP benefits these freshmen in both academic and non-academic ways. Statistics majors Huey Dodson, Tempus Fugitt, and Ryan Allison helped analyze and report on the data.

[Read more about Carlton's projects](#)

**Year in Reflection 2011 — Jimmy Doi**



The Doi Family

In fall 2011, I had the pleasure of co-teaching Introduction to Statistical Investigation once again with Dr. Soma Roy and also had some personal changes in my life.

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



**Saying Goodbye — Lina Ignatova**

Only a year ago I left Cal Poly and all of you with a strong wish to be back in San Luis Obispo. The four years we worked together in this beautiful California town were very important to me, and I was happy to start my family there.

[Read more from Ignatova](#)

**Personal and Professional News — Jeff Sklar**



The Sklar kids

This past year, my research assistant Logan Lossing and I were busy working on an Extramural Funding Initiative project that investigated the impact of changing major on persistence and graduation of Cal Poly students. In addition, there were big changes to the Sklar household, as a new member was added just prior to the beginning of the 2011-12 academic year.

[Read more about Sklar's year](#)

**Learning Something New — Beth Chance**

In the fall, I took a course in program level evaluation from the University of Illinois, Chicago. It was a master's level course, and I got to experience the fun of applying to the program.

[Read more about Chance's return to student life](#)

**Four Years at Cal Poly — Soma Roy**



Dr. Roy's beautiful photo of Glacier National Park

Even after four years, I still feel brand new to both Cal Poly and San Luis Obispo in many ways. I still find it challenging to locate rooms in what remains of Building 52. I am still surprised when the temperatures fall to near freezing (OK, that's an exaggeration) after sundown. I still haven't entered Bubble Gum



Alley and probably never will. But in other ways, I feel at home.

[Read Roy's reflection on her time so far at Cal Poly](#)

**Year in Review and FLASH — Karen McGaughey**

I just finished my seventh year at Cal Poly and was granted tenure and a promotion to associate professor! In addition to accomplishing this milestone, I spent the year working with colleagues in Kinesiology, Library Science and Mathematics on several consulting projects. I was also involved with the FLASH College Health Study. The Statistics Department has now been involved with FLASH four years in a row.

[Read more about McGaughey's year and involvement with FLASH](#)

**Personal Update — Steve Rein**

During spring 2012, I was voted chair of the Academic Senate at Cal Poly for the 2012-13 academic year. As the term started July 1, I've already done some work in this new role. That will only increase as Cal Poly considers a few challenging questions in this next year including budget woes and whether we'll switch to semesters from quarters.

[Read more about Rein's Involvement with the Academic Senate](#)

**Now What? — Ulric Lund**

In summer 2012, I was promoted to full professor. With no more advancements to work toward, I am finally free to follow my heart, cash in my academic freedom card and focus my attention on my one true passion: writing poetry.

[Find out more about Lund's dabbling in "Statistical Poetry"](#)

**Personal Highlights — Andrew Schaffner**

Somehow I had this idea in my head that with each additional year of experience, my work at Cal Poly was supposed to get easier and easier. I'm not sure where that misguided vision came from! This past year was one of the busiest for me: I continued serving as the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee Chair, partnered with Suzanne Phelan (KINE) as Co-investigator on two NIH grants, and taught what seems like several new courses as we transition from Minitab to JMP.

[Read more about Schaffner's busy 2011 activities](#)

**Stuff Happens: the Year in Review — Bob Smidt**



Bob Smidt and his wife, Yvonne

It has been a busy year. In addition to serving as department chair, I served on



several university committees and acted as the department's liaison to the third annual Pacific Coast Statisticians and Pharmacometricians Innovation Conference held at Cal Poly in June 2012. Off campus, I continue to consult for the Advanced Placement statistics program. On a personal note, there were several noteworthy incidents.

[Read more about Smidt's year](#)

**Statistics After Retirement — Jay Devore**

Jay Devore finished teaching his last classes at Cal Poly in March 2011, but he has not divorced himself from statistical activities.

[Read more about Devore's post-retirement activities](#)

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**Statistics Student News**



Cal Poly faculty members, students and alums at WUSS 2011

**2011-12 Graduates**

[See the list of 2011-12 Graduates](#)

**Stat 440 Interview Series — Katie Eng and Sasha Kravets**

[Read about the wonderful opportunity for students in Stat 440](#)

**Stat Club 2011-12**

[Read about what the Stat Club did during the 2011-12 academic year and about their future plans](#)

**2011 WUSS Conference — Jimmy Doi**

Many statistics majors and faculty attended the annual WUSS (Western Users of SAS Software) conference in 2011.

[Read about the conference](#)

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**Statistical Snippets**

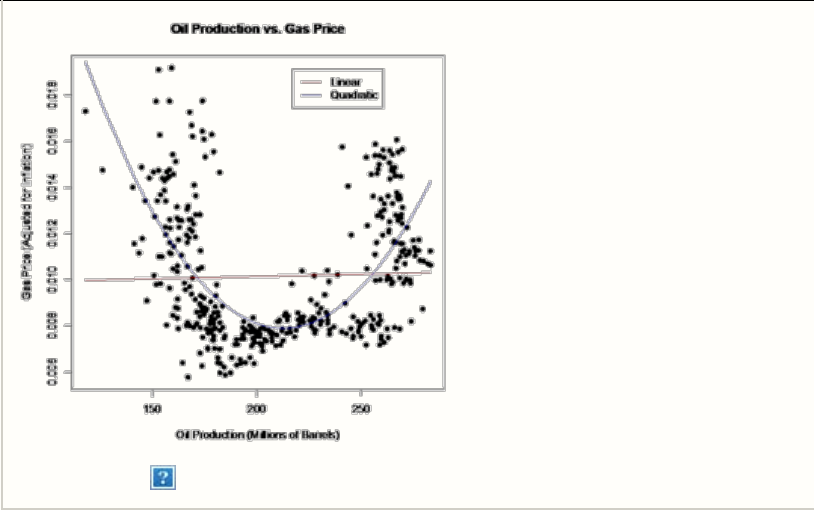
**Oil Production vs. Gas Price — Samuel Frame**

[Read about Frame's analysis of oil production vs. gas price using R.](#)

**Using Historic Economical and Political Data in the Classroom — Steve Rein**

[Read about Rein's use of historic data in the classroom \(PDF\)](#)





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Home : Message from the Chair

## Message from the Chair

Hello again, and welcome to a new year! I'd like to pause for a moment to honor Jim Daly, who passed away in December 2011. He fought the good fight, going through what appeared to be successful esophageal cancer surgery. The cancer returned, though, and Jim was unable to fight off the disease. Jim was one of the finest individuals I ever met and a great friend; he is sorely missed.

For those of you unaware of the history of the department, Jim was the associate department chair when we were part of the Computer Science and Statistics Department and the first chair of the Statistics Department. Without his efforts in those early years, the department would not have grown as successfully as it has.

Pat and Judy Marsh donated a bike rack in memory of Jim. Pat was a lecturer in the Statistics Department and earned his master's degree in computer science from Cal Poly. Both Pat and Judy were good friends of Jim.

Those wishing to honor Jim's memory may donate to the Joyce Curry-Daly and James Daly Scholarship Endowment, a scholarship endowment established by Jim in honor of his first wife, Joyce, and renamed and further endowed by his second wife, Wendy. The number and amounts of donations received upon Jim's death were remarkable and demonstrate the large number of people whose lives he touched. For more information, please read [a brief biography of Jim and his many achievements](#).

The department has undergone personnel changes. First, the subtractions. Last year **Lina Ignatova** took a leave of absence to be with her new husband and child; after that year she decided not to return and has resigned her position. **Kent Smith** completed his teaching assignment under the faculty early retirement program (FERP) and will not return.

We also lost three lecturers from last year. **Mohammed Aziz**, who replaced Lina for the year, has accepted a position at the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire. Mohammed stepped in at the last moment to replace Lina and his efforts are appreciated.

**Clint Hahlbeck** is returning to the Mathematics Department at Cal Poly, having accepted an administrative position that includes teaching. He did a fine job for us, and we wish him well in his new career.

**Dennis O'Brien** has re-retired and hit the road traveling around the country in his rather fancy motor home with his wife Diane. This was the second time that Dennis agreed to help us out, and we appreciate his efforts and wish the wind be at his back and all that sort of stuff.

Now, the additions. We have four new tenure-track faculty members. They have written about themselves elsewhere in this newsletter, and we are lucky to have all four joining us. We look forward to seeing grand things from them all.

Notable events for the faculty include the promotion of Ulric Lund to full professor, the granting of tenure and promotion to associate professor for Karen McGaughey, and the retention of Soma Roy to a fifth and sixth probationary year — all well-deserved. Also, Steve Rein was elected chair of the Academic Senate while Andrew Schaffner continues to serve as the chair of the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee, key positions both.

Once again, a major event for many in the department was grading the Advanced Placement Statistics

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exam, discussed in Allan Rossman's article.

The student body in the department is healthy. Eleven students graduated this year, two in the winter and nine in the spring, with another due to finish at the end of the summer. We have 21 well-qualified new majors, 19 freshman and two transfer students, about the same number as last year.

**Melody Pietsch**, the department's administrative coordinator, continues to streamline the department and often presents her dunderheaded boss with excellent suggestions to make me look better than I am. She and **Beth Chance** put this newsletter together and their efforts are appreciated.

This will be my last year as department chair. I am retiring next September and plan to FERP, teaching half-time for the following five years. The new department chair will be **Allan Rossman**, who I promise you will do a wonderful job. We will treat this year as a transition year — I will take a few of Allan's classes and he will take on some of my duties. This experience should make it easier for Allan in subsequent years.

The faculty and students appreciate all of you who have supported the department financially — your help allows us to fund student and faculty activities that are an important part of the educational process and to purchase equipment and materials that further the department's mission. Thank you!

Have a great year!

Bob Smidt, Department Chair



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Home : Statistics Department 2011-12 Year-End Social

## Statistics Department 2011-12 Year-End Social

At this past year's social, the Statistics Department professors, staff, students, friends and family enjoyed good company and good food. We had delicious, catered BBQ from Tahoe Joe's. In addition to the catering, those in attendance brought side dishes such as salads, vegetables and even a coffee-toffee cheesecake!

Other than eating the food, attendees had the opportunity to catch up with those in the department they may not have spent a lot of time with over the years. For the students, the picnic provided a "calm before the storm" as finals were just around the corner.

Perhaps the most exciting and entertaining part of the picnic were the faculty "awards" given to the faculty by the members of the Stat Club. Among them were "Most Popular Office Hours," which went to Karen McGaughey; "Queen of Odds Ratios," which went to Beth Chance and "Most (computer) Monitors," which went to Samuel Frame. See the rest of the Faculty Awards [here](#). After the awards were announced, the results of the Stat Club election were announced. Visit the [Stat Club page](#) to see the results.

In summary, it was fun and food for all!

[Check out more pictures on the department's Flickr page](#)



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Home : Donors 2011/2012 (July 1, 2011- June 30, 2012)

## Donors 2011/2012 (July 1, 2011- June 30, 2012)

Pat and Judy Marsh donated a bike rack in memory of Jim Daly, first chair of the Statistics Department. Jim passed away in December 2011 after fighting esophageal cancer. Pat was a lecturer in the Statistics Department and earned his master's degree in computer science from Cal Poly. Both Pat and Judy were good friends of Jim.

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The bike rack is located outside the statistics faculty offices between Bldg. 25 and the new Warren J. Baker Center for Science and Mathematics.

### Donor List (July 2011-June 2012)

- Ms. Brooke A. Bachmann
- Mrs. Barbara M. Balison
- Mr. Randolph Balison
- Dr. Matthew A. Carlton
- Mr. and Mrs. Frank D. Chance
- Mrs. Wendy Daly
- Dr. Leonard Deaton
- Dr. and Mrs. Jay L. Devore
- Mr. Reed Elliott
- Mr. Edward L. Ellis, Jr.
- Mr. James M. Gagel
- Mr. and Mrs. Gene M. Garritano
- Mr. Kyle W. Gasperik
- Ms. Danielle Goodner
- Mr. and Mrs. Kevin B. Gregory
- Mr. Michael S. Han
- Mr. Ronald L. Inman
- Ms. Katrina J. Jackson
- Mr. Roy Malahowski
- Mr. Patrick L. Marsh
- Mrs. Judy C. Marsh
- Ms. Mary Miller
- Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Neher
- Mr. Erik M. Oehm
- Mr. James B. Park
- Mrs. Carolyn H. Park
- Mr. Dan C. Quinn
- Dr. John M. Rogers
- Mr. Glenn E. Roiz
- Dr. and Mrs. Allan Rossman
- Ms. Cindy S. Rusler
- Mr. and Mrs. Steven R. Russell
- Mrs. Elizabeth N. Schroeder
- Mr. Robert Sison
- Dr. Robert K. Smidt
- Ms. Elisabeth A. Smith
- Mr. David M. Stern
- Mrs. Laine E. Thomas
- Mr. and Mrs. Michael Wilson
- Mr. Stephen Zoradi

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Mrs. Janice Zoradi

Note: Every effort has been made to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the listing of contributors from July 2011 through June 2012. If you have been omitted from the list, please let us know at [statisticsdepartment@calpoly.edu](mailto:statisticsdepartment@calpoly.edu).

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## In Memory

### About

This page is dedicated to the memory of those who were near and dear to the Statistics Department and affected its success in a lasting way.

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### Jim Daly



January 7, 1944 - December 3, 2011

**Jim Daly was the first chair of the Statistics Department. Beloved by faculty and students alike, he taught Statistics at Cal Poly for 37 years. You can read more about his life and contributions to the department at [www.statweb.calpoly.edu/jdaly/](http://www.statweb.calpoly.edu/jdaly/)**









Peter Chi



Peter Chi and his fiancée, Elisha

I am excited to be joining the faculty of the Statistics Department at Cal Poly in spring 2013! I am currently completing my Ph.D. in Biostatistics at the University of Washington and will be getting married this fall. My fiancée, Elisha, and I are both looking forward to our move to the California Coast.

Much of my experience and interest is in biomedical research, with specific expertise in statistical genetics. I earned a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Michigan and a master's degree in genetic epidemiology from Johns Hopkins University.

My other interests include educational research and statistics of games and sports. I look forward to sharing these interests with students through both classroom examples and potential senior projects.

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Home : Gary Hughes

Gary Hughes



Gary Hughes

I'm arriving at Cal Poly by way of Northwestern University (B.A.), UC Santa Barbara (M.A.) and the University of Pennsylvania (Ph.D.). I've also spent a number of years in the infrared industry, designing and manufacturing infrared imaging systems for commercial and military applications. In industry, we make extensive use of statistical methods, such as for process control, quality assessment and reliability prediction. I hope that examples of successful application of statistics to industrial issues can help enhance students' motivation for studying statistics. While working in industry, I have also lectured in earth science and mathematics at Cal State Channel Islands and in statistics at Cal Poly. As I join the statistics faculty at Cal Poly, I plan to maintain contacts in industry, knowing they will have a never-ending supply of interesting and challenging problems for students of statistics.

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## Gail Potter



Gail Potter

I am excited to join the Cal Poly Statistics Department. I discovered my love of teaching as a Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal, where I taught math and English in a rural area. My experiences living in Nepal and Africa inspired me to focus my research on public health topics. As a graduate student at the University of Washington and a post doc at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, I've developed methods to estimate networks of face-to-face social contacts to improve our understanding of infectious disease transmission.

I enjoy interdisciplinary collaboration and look forward to building partnerships with Cal Poly faculty in a variety of fields. I love making statistical concepts clear, intuitive and straightforward when talking with friends, students and collaborators. I look forward to bringing my enthusiasm for statistics into the classroom, growing as a teacher and connecting with students during this intense and important period of their lives.

Originally from Washington DC, I love the west. I got the impression that San Luis Obispo is an idyllic, possibly unbeatable place to live. Moreover, I was impressed by the collegiality and dedication of the Cal Poly statistics faculty and staff.

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## Kevin Ross



Dr. Kevin Ross

I'm originally from Marlton, N.J. I earned my bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and then worked for a few years as an actuarial specialist at Towers Perrin (now Towers Watson) in Philadelphia. I returned to UNC for graduate school and received my Ph.D. in Statistics. After that I spent three years as a postdoc in the Statistics Department at Stanford. For the last three years, I have been a visiting assistant professor at Swarthmore College.

I'm excited to join the excellent Statistics Department at Cal Poly. I love teaching and I enjoy collaborating with students on research. My primary research interests are in probability theory, but I look forward to branching out into more applied areas at Cal Poly.

I'm married with three kids who can't wait to move to sunny California. We enjoy hiking, going to the beach and cheering for Carolina basketball. See you in the fall!

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Home : Computers for Kids is Statistically Significant for One Adult — Andrew Schaffner

## Computers for Kids is Statistically Significant for One Adult — Andrew Schaffner



The flyer from 1981

Computing has opened up the world to statistics, but I only recently realized it was statistics that opened up the world of computing to me. Sure, I'm a Cal Poly alumnus (B.S., Mathematics, 1992, with a statistics minor) and have been a faculty member for more than 15 years now, but it turns out that my ties to the Statistics Department are even deeper than I knew, dating back to 1981 when I was 10 years old. The following story is a tribute to a former Cal Poly statistician who I just learned was influential in my life — Joyce Curry Daly.

Every once in a while it's time for a deep purging of junk — those files and papers that accumulate over time. The Statistics Department was clearing out the old and digitizing what we needed to save. Our student assistant Julia Schedler (class of 2013) showed me a paper from the junk pile that she thought was cute. It showed a cartoon of a couple of early personal computers (Radio Shack TRS-80's) and was advertising a kids' summer computing program at Cal Poly. The advertisement reads: "Learn about graphics — 'pictures' on the computer screen."

What a surprise for me! I recognized this flyer from the summer camp I went to as a 10-year-old! The flyer further revealed that the camp was sponsored by the Computer Science and Statistics Department. (In 1981, Computer Science and Statistics was a single department.) Furthermore, Joyce Curry-Daly was one of three faculty members running the program. I knew Joyce as an undergrad — I was a grader for her and often tutored her students — but I never realized we had met 10 years prior when I was a young boy.

For years when folks asked me how I became interested in statistics I usually told them I had a really

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influential instructor — Jay Devore. I think he's going to have to share some of that credit with Joyce now!

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Home : Grading 153,000 Exams with 615 Friends — Alan Rossman

## Grading 153,000 Exams with 615 Friends — Alan Rossman

This past June marked the end of my third year in the role of Chief Reader for the Advanced Placement program in statistics. My primary responsibility is to coordinate and oversee the grading of approximately 153,000 exams. Fortunately, I shared this task shared with 615 other statistics teachers from around the country who gathered in Kansas City, Mo. on June 10-16, 2012. One of the great things about this process is that I was able to rely on many Cal Poly colleagues to fill important roles and to make the experience enjoyable.

Soma Roy participated in the AP grading for the first time this year. Her supervisor told me that Soma immediately performed like a seasoned veteran, applying the scoring rubrics thoughtfully and consistently.

Heather Smith served as a grader for the second year. On short notice I asked Heather to make a presentation at one of the professional development sessions that we hold for faculty in the evenings. She introduced teachers to the topic of quality control and provided examples of why statisticians need to both contribute to this area and encourage their students to study it.

This was John Walker's third year as a grader. John's supervisor emphasized that John was an extremely valuable member of her team and that he was considered the "go to" person for difficult questions.

Matt Carlton has been a grader for many years. This was his second year grading the alternate version of the exam. Only a few dozen graders are selected for this important position because it involves grading a greater variety of questions than most graders experience.

Karen McGaughey joined the leadership team this year, helping to develop the scoring guidelines and also supervising a team of eight graders. Karen adapted to this role quickly and provided valuable feedback on draft scoring guidelines while supervising her team with deft professionalism.

Roxy Peck supervised grading the international version of the exam. She supervised the development of scoring guidelines and led the trainings on their application. Roxy is a former Chief Reader, and I greatly appreciate Roxy's willingness to apply her experience and leadership to continue to help with the grading process.

Beth Chance served as Assistant Chief Reader and was a driving force behind the success of the grading experience. Beth is a tremendous problem solver and multi-tasker, and she used these skills to great effect in Kansas City. Whenever anyone had a need or problem, Beth took care of it immediately. She made sure that statistical inference questions across various forms were graded consistently throughout the week, gave advice to presenters about how to incorporate clicker technology into their trainings, arranged for breaks to be held in a more accessible location, coordinated the signing of books by our guest speaker Sharon Bertsch McGrayne (author of "The Theory That Would Not Die") and developed a more efficient system for providing the leadership team with data on how consistently their graders were performing. Beth's contributions to the grading process were invaluable.

Our department's involvement with grading AP exams is extraordinary and unique. I recently attended a conference session on the topic of increasing college faculty participation in the AP program. The College Board presenter had no way of knowing I was in the audience or what department and university I represent. Across all AP subjects and considering all universities in the country, one particular department in one specific university was held up as a model for all others to strive for. You guessed it: Cal Poly's Statistics Department.

Once again I am very proud to be a member of this department, and I greatly appreciate the help of departmental colleagues in the formidable task of grading 153,000 AP Statistics exams. Perhaps even

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more remarkably, these people make this event a downright fun experience.

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Home : Professional Projects — Matt Carlton

## Professional Projects — Matt Carlton

Several professional projects kept me busy last year. For a start, I helped coordinate and analyze the data for Cal Poly's Freshman Success Program (FSP), which we designed three years ago. It helps new students who are put on academic probation in their first quarter. Year after year, our research shows that FSP benefits these freshmen in both academic and non-academic ways. Statistics majors Huey Dodson, Tempus Fugitt and Ryan Allison helped analyze and report on the data.

I supervised two senior projects this year. Diana Shealy completed nearly two years' work with the Biological Sciences Department in their efforts to implement a cost-effective alternative to DNA testing for identifying sources of *E. coli* contamination. Diana designed several experiments for the project team, analyzed their data and proposed methods for marking a "threshold" between matches and non-matches among unidentified *E. coli* strains. My other senior project advisee, Tyler Bramhall, used an arsenal of probability techniques and a healthy dose of simulation to identify winning strategies in the River Crossing Game.

In August 2011, I was invited to speak on teaching probability at the undergraduate level at the 58th World Statistics Congress in Dublin, Ireland. (The trip also gave me a chance to visit Guinness Brewery and admire the various recognitions they give to legendary statistician William Sealy Gosset!) In the talk, I described our Introduction to Probability Models course, which statistics majors take at the end of sophomore year. One of the ongoing challenges of this course is finding a textbook that covers the necessary topics at a suitable mathematical level for college sophomores. To solve this problem, Professor Emeritus Jay Devore and I have embarked on a new writing project. By 2014 we hope to have an applied probability text appropriate for lower-level college undergraduates. The book could be used in both STAT 325 and 350.

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Home : Year in Reflection 2011 - Jimmy Doi

## Year in Reflection 2011 — Jimmy Doi

In fall 2011, I had the pleasure of co-teaching Introduction to Statistical Investigation once again with Soma Roy. I appreciate getting to know our majors so early in their careers. It is incredibly fulfilling to see these students mature over the years. In the winter term I taught Statistical Computing with SAS for the first time in about four years and had the opportunity to include new information on ODS GRAPHICS/SGPLOT. On the research front I continue to be involved with some interesting consulting projects that I hope will turn into publications in refereed journals.

But the most important news of the year is the arrival of our first child! Our daughter is everything my wife and I could have ever hoped for.



The Doi Family

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Home : Saying Goodbye — Lina Ignatova

## Saying Goodbye — Lina Ignatova

Only a year ago I left Cal Poly and all of you with a strong wish to be back in San Luis Obispo. The four years we worked together in this beautiful California town were very important to me, and I was happy to start my family there.

It is astonishing how life changes and we have to re-evaluate our values and rearrange our priorities.

Today, I am holding my little four-month-old, Sofia, in my hands, and I want to share with you that my family has built a stable and happy home here in Greensboro, N.C. Together we experience the most beautiful things, with hard work and satisfaction. My husband and I both needed this balanced life to welcome our new arrival.

At this moment I have to give priority to my husband's academic path and put mine on hold for one more year in order to keep my family together, raise our daughter and prepare for some possible professional changes.

It was very hard to decide to leave my tenure-track position in Cal Poly's Statistics Department as I enjoyed being a member of it and am going to miss it. I will always remember both the good and the difficult moments we went through, and I appreciate everything I learned as a statistics teacher, as a colleague and as a friend. I will keep in touch and hope our professional paths will cross some day soon!

Thank you all for the time we shared!

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Home : Personal and Professional News — Jeff Sklar

## Personal and Professional News — Jeff Sklar

### Professional

This past year, my research assistant Logan Lossing and I were busy working on an Extramural Funding Initiative project that investigated the impact of changing major on persistence and graduation of Cal Poly students. We used discrete-time survival models focused on students who persisted in their original major, switched to a science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) major, and those who switched to a non-STEM major. The relationship between hazard (or risk) of graduation and major switching behavior depended on several factors including student's matriculating college, the year that the switch occurred and the student's gender.

One particularly interesting finding was that after adjusting for various background student and institutional characteristics, students originally enrolled in a "science" college (College of Architecture and Environmental Design, College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, College of Engineering or College of Science and Mathematics) who switched their major to a non-STEM field tended to increase their hazard (risk) of graduating, while students originally enrolled in the College of Business or College of Liberal Arts who switched their major to a STEM or non-STEM field tended to decrease their risk of graduating. I am currently working on a manuscript over the summer that will present the findings from the investigation.

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Yazmin being playfully unaware that her little brother is sneaking up behind her.

### Personal

There were big changes to the Sklar household as a new member was added just prior to the beginning of the 2011-12 academic year. Gabriel Christopher



Sklar was born on September 15, 2011, weighed a healthy 7 pounds 12 ounces and was 20 inches tall. Maria and I have been adjusting to raising two infants (our daughter Yazmin was only 19 months when Gabe was born). Although it can be challenging at times, it has been a joy to watch them grow together and bond as brother and sister. Their personalities complement each other in many ways. Gabe is generally mellow and laid back, while Yazmin is typically more serious and intense. Now that Gabe is nine months old (that went by fast), he is crawling everywhere and pulling himself up on anything he can reach. It's fun to watch them interact, although Yazmin can get a little irritated when Gabe plays with her toys or tries to pull her hair (like I mentioned, he will try to pull himself up anywhere he can grab onto something).

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# Learning Something New — Beth Chance

In the fall I took a course in "program level evaluation" from the University of Illinois, Chicago. It was a master's level course, and I got to experience the fun of applying to the program. They wanted proof of my bachelor's degree, which of course was buried in moth balls, so I offered them proof of my doctorate. When that didn't satisfy them(!), I managed to unbury my job application forms and find a copy of my undergraduate diploma. Once in, I enjoyed being a student again — a lot of reading and writing assignments and even test anxiety! I guess the moral is, keep copies of everything — you never know when you may need it.

On the personal front, we enjoyed watching our son flourish in kindergarten (reading, tying shoes, losing teeth, graduating past training wheels) and are slowly coming to terms with the fact that he will be a first grader in the fall. He even completed his first one mile race!

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Home : Four Years at Cal Poly — Soma Roy

## Four Years at Cal Poly — Soma Roy

Even after four years, I still feel brand new to both Cal Poly and San Luis Obispo in many ways. I still find it challenging to locate rooms in what remains of Building 52. I am still surprised when the temperatures fall to near freezing (okay, that's an exaggeration) after sundown. I still haven't entered Bubble Gum Alley and probably never will.

But in other ways, I feel at home. I know to always carry a sweatshirt with me. I know exactly which parking lot downtown has the best chance of having open spots, even during the busiest hours. I know where to find the best deals on used books. And, most of all, I have made some great friends.

Not surprisingly, teaching continues to be fun. I have now had the wonderful opportunity to teach Introduction to Statistical Investigations twice with Jimmy Doi and am looking forward to teaching it with Karen McGaughey this fall.

Outside of classes, I continue to co-advise the Stat Club along with Jeff Sklar. On the research side, I have been involved in various projects, with Jay Singh (Industrial Technology), Candace Winstead (Biological Sciences), Laura Hall (Food Science and Nutrition) and Steve Kane (Education) among others. I have also had the opportunity to work with some great statistics majors on summer research projects as well as senior projects. Topics have included using *R* to write GUIs that can be used in class and analyzing survey data.

A research topic that is very near to my heart is statistics education, and I have been collaborating with Allan Rossman and Beth Chance as well as collaborators from Hope College, Mich.; Dordt College, Iowa and Mount Holyoke, Mass. on an NSF-funded project on using a randomization-based approach to introduce statistical inference in introductory statistics classes.

I have been using this approach in my own classes since 2010 and had the opportunity to present some assessment results at this year's Joint Statistical Meeting (JSM) in San Diego. Speaking of JSM, going to dinner with Cal Poly alumni, current students and faculty members was great. For future reference, if you are at any JSMs, please let us know. We would love to catch up with you.

Last summer my parents flew all the way from India to spend time with me and see where I live and work. We made a trip to Glacier National Park in northern Montana. If you ever get the opportunity to make this trip, please do. To convince you that this is a trip worth making, here's a picture of the Many Glacier. Now imagine how much more beautiful it looks when you are there in person.

As this year draws to a close and a new one begins, I look forward to all the adventures to come.

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Home : Year in Review and FLASH- Karen McGaughey

## Year in Review and FLASH- Karen McGaughey

### Year in Review

I just finished my seventh year at Cal Poly and received tenure and a promotion to associate professor! In addition to accomplishing this milestone, I spent the year working with colleagues in Kinesiology, Library Science and Mathematics on several consulting projects. Three of these projects resulted in publications in *International Journal of Sports Science and Engineering*, *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* and *College & Research Libraries*.

In the classroom, I took on the challenge of teaching our capstone course, Statistical Communication and Consulting. Co-teaching this course with Heather Smith was a great experience, and I learned a lot both from her and from our fantastic seniors. It was a pleasure to watch this group of students grow as statistical consultants, and I know they will be successful wherever their paths may lead.

Most recently I was in Kansas City, Mo., grading the Advanced Placement Statistics exam. Being promoted to Table Leader this year gave me the opportunity to experience the grading from a new perspective. And of course it was wonderful to be back in the rolling hills of Kansas and Missouri, close to my hometown of Manhattan, Kan., for a few days.

### FLASH!

For the fourth year in a row, the Statistics Department has been involved with the FLASH College Health Study. Designed as a longitudinal study, FLASH tracks the health behavior, knowledge and status of students throughout their college careers. Beginning in fall 2009 with the Cal Poly class of 2013, questionnaire and physical assessment data were collected each fall and spring. In summer 2011, as part of the College Based Fee Summer Research program, four statistics majors (Jenna Colavincenzo, Chelsea Lofland, Julia Maddalena and Shawna Perry) cleaned and merged data sets for future analyses. Chelsea Lofland and Shawna Perry used this data in their senior projects, investigating changes in dietary patterns over the freshman year of college and lifestyle choices in relation to BMI and blood pressure, respectively.

The FLASH study continues to be a wonderful opportunity for our students to Learn by Doing, giving them hands-on experience with large, messy data sets not ordinarily seen in the classroom. In addition, students gained valuable experience in communicating with clients and writing reports. The department hopes to continue our involvement with FLASH in the future.

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## Personal Update- Steve Rein

During Spring 2012, I was voted chair of the Academic Senate at Cal Poly for the 2012-13 academic year. As the term started July 1, I've already done some work in this new role. That will only increase as Cal Poly considers a few challenging questions in this next year including budget woes and whether we'll switch to semesters from quarters.

The Academic Senate and its role in the university is not well understood by people who have never served as senators. A quick summary: The Academic Senate is the formal mechanism that allows the faculty and administration to work together to run the university. Somewhat like the U.S. government in which Congress writes the rules and the executive branch implements the rules, the Cal Poly Academic Senate writes the rules for the university that touch on issues of curriculum. The senate also has the power to advise the administration on almost any other matter. Needless to say, the plate can often be full.

However, to be fully honest, it seems that rather than filling a formal role, the senate serves as a venue for informal communication. The provost and the president's chief of staff are at every meeting along with the vice president of student affairs as well as a dean. When issues come up it's important to get the right people together for open and informal dialogue in before any formal decision is made. As in many areas of life, simply being open to compromise allows for institutional flexibility.

In other news, I've continued to volunteer to help out with Mathematics at the High School level at the [SLO Classical Academy](#), where my four kids go to school. This past year and coming year, I'm working mostly with geometry students to help them understand proofs.

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Home : Now What? — Ulric Lund

## Now What? — Ulric Lund

In summer 2012, I was promoted to full professor. With no more advancements to work toward, I am finally free to follow my heart, cash in my academic freedom card and focus my attention on my one true passion: writing poetry.

How can a statistics professor remain professionally relevant writing poetry you ask? Easy: by writing poems about statistics. I estimate 53% of my poems need to be about statistics for me to qualify as a statistical poet. That statistic, 53%, may have been made up on the spot, but I've been told that's not unusual.

In the future, my muses will undoubtedly lead me to write poems about non-statistical themes, such as lakes in New England. But first I will have to visit those lakes, and airfare is expensive. So for now, I will stick with statistical poems.

The last time I had enough free time to write poetry was third grade, and it seems fitting to pick up where I left off. What better way to start my new collection of verse than with a tribute to the immortal "Roses are Red, Violets are Blue":

### Outliers

Outliers we dread,  
But luckily they're few.  
When no one is looking,  
We know what to do.

Another great type of poem for a rusty old bard like me is haiku. Everyone pretends that haiku is an artsy, spiritual, nature-inspired type of poetry. But if we are honest, this form is so popular is because these poems are short and do not need to rhyme. The reader appreciates the brevity, and the lack of rhyming is a godsend to the author. You need only be able to count to 5 and to 7. Well, and to 5 again.

### P-Value

Probability  
null hypothesis is true.  
No partial credit.

Thus ends my tongue-in-cheek newsletter contribution for 2012. The highlight of this past year really was being promoted. I hope I've conveyed that message in an entertaining fashion, and I thank you for your indulgence.

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Home : Personal Hilights — Andrew Schaffner

## Personal Hilights — Andrew Schaffner

Somehow I had this idea in my head that with each additional year of experience, my work at Cal Poly was supposed to get easier and easier. I'm not sure where that misguided vision came from! This past year was one of the busiest for me: I continued serving as the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee Chair, partnered with Suzanne Phelan (KINE) as Co-investigator on two NIH grants, and taught what seems like several new courses as we transition from Minitab to JMP.

Some of you will be surprised to hear that my current research collaborations don't focus on poop. This past year, and for the next five years at least, I will be helping Dr. Phelan with two NIH funded projects related to weight control and pregnancy. One study investigates the impacts of an internet-based behavioral weight control program for low-income postpartum mothers—think Facebook for new moms with a registered dietician and nurse mediating discussions and facilitating virtual support groups along with providing tools and games for tracking food intake and weight).

The second study will test the efficacy of a lifestyle modification program that incorporates meal replacements designed to prevent excessive gestational weight gain in obese women. It is thought that pregnancy is an especially “teachable moment” and that lifestyle changes, including diet, can have lasting effects beyond the pregnancy. We are hoping that as moms improve their eating habits, these changes may spill over to others in the household. Dr. Todd Hagobian in the Kinesiology Department and I just submitted a supplementary research proposal to NIH for funding to collect data to test this “spillover” hypothesis.

For those of you who are thinking I've lost my penchant for truly fascinating statistical collaborations, you'll be happy to hear that this summer I will continue my consultation with the National Estuary Program's fecal bacteria monitoring of the Morro Bay watershed. In addition, I am helping Dr. Perrine from the Biology Department assess the impacts of a new fencing project to prevent car/animal collisions along the Cuesta grade and will help Dr. Plummer from the Animal Science Department in a project to assess the impact of probiotic diets to reduce infections and improve semen quality in bulls. Thus, in summary, my current research involves obesity, poop, road kill, semen quality, and pregnancy.

Of course my most important duty and passion around here is teaching, and it's been a fun year as we transition from Mintab to JMP in many of our courses. At first, I hated the JMP's unique interface, but now I must say that JMP has become my go-to software for routine analyses. I am embarrassed to say this, but I use it more than R for day-to-day work.

But how is it in the classroom and especially for students learning introductory statistics? I think the jury is still out on that one. The interface protects students a lot by making decisions about what types of analyses are appropriate given the types of variables in the model and which variables are declared explanatory versus response. This protection robs students from making some choices (and mistakes) on their own. On the plus side, it is quick to provide students with basic summary graphs (always plot your data!) and output for interpretation, which is the focus of our introductory courses.

Regarding upper-division, I had the pleasure of teaching Applied Multivariate Statistics this spring and used JMP in the course. I hadn't taught this class in 10 years(!), so it seemed like a ripe time to try a new textbook and software. I think I made the right choice regarding the software: JMP easily did most everything needed for the course, including matrix algebra using the scripting language. I guess an old dog can learn (and enjoy) some new tricks.

On a final and more personal note, I've really enjoyed staying connected with many former students via Facebook. It's great to see what you're up to — jobs, vacations, family. It makes me feel old watching you get married and have kids, but I really enjoy staying in touch. Best regards to all of you.

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Home : 2011-12 Statistics Graduates

## 2011-12 Statistics Graduates

### Fall 2011 Graduates



The 2011-12 seniors, left to right: Kurtis Voris, Diana Shealy, Julia Maddelena, Maro Tsiifte, Neal Grantham, Shawna Perry, Jenna Colavincenzo, Scott Davis, Samantha Law, Chelsea Loomis Lofland and Dr. Smidt.

Neal S. Grantham \*\*  
Christopher Dau Wei Ling

### Spring 2012 Graduates

Ryan Michael Allison  
Jenna N. Colavincenzo  
Scott Matthew Davis  
Alan R. Dorin  
Chelsea Loomis Lofland  
Logan Samuel Phillip Lossing \*\*  
Shawna Marie Perry  
Diana A. Shealy  
Maro Tsiifte \*  
Kurtis Bradley Voris

\* = Cum Laude  
\*\* = Magna Cum Laude

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Home : STAT 440 Interview Series

## STAT 440 Interview Series

Spring 2012, Tuesday, late afternoon, statistics studio. Students start logging into Elluminate, a web conferencing program, and are soon face to face with AnnMaria De Mars, president of the Julia Group and World Judo Champion. Professor Ottesen, at the instructor's terminal, inquires, "Can you hear me?" De Mars replies. Yes, she can.

The web conference session has a two-way visual and audio connection between Ottesen and De Mars. Ottesen interviews De Mars with a set of questions the students formulated while conducting some brief background research on De Mars before the interview. The students watch and listen to De Mars answer their questions on screen and comment or ask more questions for her in the chat box integrated into the web conference window.

This past quarter, students in the SAS(SAS/STAT© Software) Certification Preparation course have been studying for the SAS Base Programming Exam and grappling with infamous "Ottesen data sets." But SAS is not just about programming. There is a whole SAS community out there, and Ottesen has come up with a new way to help budding SAS programmers get connected: the Webcam Interview Series, featuring a diverse group of SAS users ranging from experienced professionals to young programmers.

Each interviewee had a different perspective to add to the series, making each interview unique and memorable. In addition to De Mars, we spoke with Bob Rodriguez, director of R&D at SAS and 2012 President of the ASA; Renato Villacorte, senior statistician at Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates; Art Carpenter, CALOXY owner, consultant, and Cal Poly graduate; and Susan Slaughter, co-author of "The Little SAS Book." Our questions covered topics such as their experience in industry and their approach to the hiring process.

We learned that Villacorte looks for candidates who have had experience working with data through projects or internships and who have solid communication skills. He looks to see whether candidates are active in the field, attending and presenting at conferences.

When interviewing a candidate for a job position, Rodriguez mentioned that he looks for people who pass the "pencil test." When Rodriguez is describing his company or the colleagues the candidate could be working with, is the interviewee actively taking notes? Is he asking questions about the job? Is the candidate showing that he wants to be there?

Companies are looking for qualified individuals who have not only the aptitude and skills required to perform well on the job but also the attitude and desire to be there and feel invested in the quality of their work and in their relationships with other team members.

We also wanted to compare the benefits of working in industry right after college to those of going directly to graduate school, and we turned to recent students turned professionals for advice. Kathryn Martin, senior researcher at UCLA School of Public Health, worked at the Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center while in graduate school for both her MPH and Ph.D. in epidemiology and stressed how important it was for her to get experience while studying. Having that experience under her belt was a key component of her educational career and helped launch her into her current research position.

Tyler Benz, recent Cal Poly statistics graduate, decided to enter industry after graduation and now works with SAS to analyze defense data at Northrop Grumman Corporation. He believes he made the right decision but is still thinking about continuing on to graduate school.

We also spoke to Tyler Smith, associate professor at National University, who also believes he benefited

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from entering industry before continuing his education. Whichever post-graduation plans you decide to pursue, be sure to get experience through jobs, internships or other projects in college and throughout your career thereafter.

It was great to compare the success of our two Cal Poly alumni in the interview series, one at the beginning of his career and the other at the height of his career. Carpenter has worked on many high profile environmental studies and clinical trials including data analysis for the 1989 Valdez oil spill and design of experiments for cleanup efforts. Benz recognizes Cal Poly for teaching him how SAS works, not just how to use SAS. He identifies how this has served as an invaluable foundation for his expansive and still growing knowledge of SAS. The quality of our Cal Poly education is unquestionable.

This interview series presented two main take-home messages: get experience in working with big, real life data sets and be engaged — network at professional conferences, get in contact with people and show employers that you are interested in the job you are interviewing for. Interviews are not a one-way street. Ask questions and never stop learning.

Special thanks to all of our interviewees for taking time out of their busy schedules to speak with us, to Becky for organizing this interview series and to Tom for going above and beyond the call of duty in providing technical support. This wonderful experience could not have happened without you all.

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Home : Stat Club 2011-12 and the Future

## Stat Club 2011-12 and the Future

The Stat Club will continue its tradition of Shack Night during the 2012-13 school year. Students and faculty members meet at The Shack, a sports bar located on Foothill Boulevard. Shack Night is a wonderful way for students and faculty members to enjoy each other's company in a non-academic setting. People can order burgers or catch their favorite team playing on one of the many TVs in the restaurant. The get-togethers are a great opportunity for students to bridge cross-class gaps and get to know other statistics majors they haven't met in class. In addition, the students can get to know their professors' extra-statistical interests such as their favorite sports teams and television shows.

The Stat Club also hopes to plan more social activities both on and off campus, such as pick-up sports games and movie nights.

The club has also re-kindled the Stat Buddy program in which older stat majors are paired with incoming freshmen or transfer students and provide advice and direction to the new students. This year, students with similar interests were paired so that older students could pass on information on possible minors.

To see the 2012-13 club officers as well as upcoming events, visit the [Cal Poly Stat Club Page](#).

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## 2011 WUSS Conference- Jimmy Doi

The 2011 Western Users of SAS Software (WUSS) conference was held October 12-14 at the Grand Hyatt San Francisco. I had the pleasure of attending this conference for the first time, and it was a real treat. Fellow faculty member Rebecca Ottesen served as one of the lead organizers for the event, as she has for many years. In addition, a large number of Cal Poly students, many of whom were WUSS scholarship recipients, attended the conference.

Congratulations to all scholarship winners: Jennifer Gildner, Maxwell Klingmann, Chelsea Lofland, Christopher Moore, Shawna Perry, Diana Said, Diana Shealy, Lauren Soltesz and Sean Taylor. As is usually the case at WUSS, Cal Poly had the largest number of students receiving the Student Scholar award.

In the Applications Development section, Cal Poly statistics major Diana Shealy gave a superb presentation titled "Benefits of JAVA Within SAS: Exploring the Differences of the New JavaObj and SAS/IML Studio." Diana is extremely knowledgeable in SAS, and due to her high level of expertise, several audience members were shocked to learn that she was only an undergraduate student. I later heard from Diana that several potential employers met with her afterwards and she received one or two job offers.

In the Resources section, I gave a presentation titled "This Is How We Do It: Teaching SAS in the Cal Poly Statistics Department." This paper was written by Rebecca Ottesen, Ulric Lund, Karen McGaughey and me. As the title suggests, we presented how we have taught Statistical Computing with SAS and Advanced Topics in SAS within the statistics studio environment; we also offered many helpful tips and resources for teaching SAS. At the end of the conference we were pleasantly surprised to learn that we received the best paper/presentation award for the Resources section.

During the conference, it was a pleasant surprise for us to bump into some recent Cal Poly statistics alumni including Jordan Keene, Kaycee Roeser, Huey Dodson and Max Wise. It was so nice to catch up with them and find out how they've been enjoying life and also how they've been using SAS in their careers.

Diana Shealy wasn't the only student who made a big splash at WUSS. After encountering our big entourage of Cal Poly students at the conference, Margo Stutesman, one of the SAS executives attending WUSS, tweeted the following:

**@calpolystatclub are the smartest Stat students I ever met. It's the best part of #WUSS11**

Coming from someone who has surely met many students at similar conferences in the past, this is high praise!

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## Stuff Happens-- The Year in Review- Bob Smidt

It has been a busy year. In addition to serving as department chair, I served on several university committees and acted as the department's liaison to the third annual Pacific Coast Statisticians and Pharmacometricians Innovation Conference held at Cal Poly in June 2012. I also won the California Faculty Association Lecturer Council's Best Department Chair award. (There wasn't much pomp and circumstance — I found a plaque on my desk one day with no note.)

Off campus, I continue to consult for the Advanced Placement Statistics program. During the year, I held one-day workshops for high school teachers in Las Vegas, Nev.; Bellevue, Wash.; and Colorado Springs, Colo.. During the summer, I conducted week-long workshops in Plainfield, Ill.; Northfield, Minn. (Carleton College); Houston, Texas (Rice University); Sacramento, Calif. (Sacramento State University); Fayetteville, Ark. (University of Arkansas); and San Antonio, Texas (University of Texas at San Antonio). I relearned how hot it gets in the South during the summer.

On a personal note, there were several noteworthy incidents. My older son, Jesse, graduated from Cal Poly in June. He is currently in a management training program for the Pool Corp in Riverside, traveling to Louisiana and Texas as part of the training. Upon completion he will have the opportunity to work at one of several locations around the United States. My younger son, Luke, has two part-time internship positions evaluating software programs and seems to enjoy the work.

And on Friday, July 13, I was lucky enough to marry a wonderful woman, Yvonne Ramos. We plan to live in Los Osos, she rooting for the sun to come out, I hoping for the fog to roll in.



Bob and Yvonne

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[Dr. Smidt's Sons, Jesse and Luke](#)

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Statistics Department

# Statistics After Retirement- Jay Devore

Jay Devore finished teaching his last classes at Cal Poly in March 2011, but he has not divorced himself from statistical activities. The second edition of "Modern Mathematical Statistics with Applications," coauthored with Ken Berk, was published in January by Springer. His first book, "Probability and Statistics for Engineering and the Sciences," is now in its eighth edition, and the publisher is already making plans for a new edition.

For the fourth year in a row, Devore will teach a summer session course at Columbia University in New York City, where both his daughters and two grandsons live. He and his wife, Carol, took an interesting tour of China last fall and plan to travel to parts of Europe and the Middle East in September to celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary.

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