March 2026 • Issue #585

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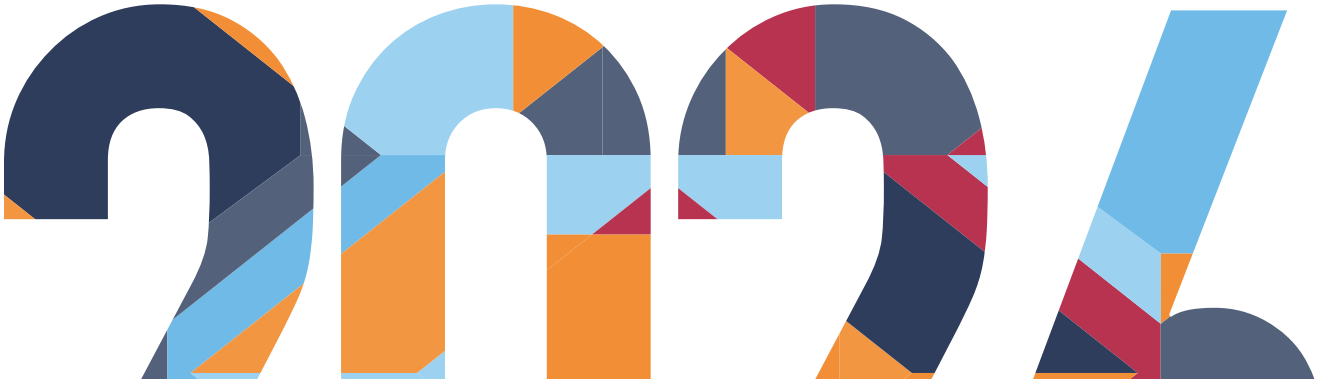

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AMSTATNEWS

MARCH 2026 • ISSUE #585

Amstat News welcomes news items and letters from readers on matters of interest to the association and the profession. Address correspondence to Managing Editor, *Amstat News,* American Statistical Association, 732 North Washington Street, Alexandria VA 22314-1943 USA, or email *amstat@amstat.org*. Items must be received by the first day of the preceding month to ensure appearance in the next issue (for example, June 1 for the July issue). Material can be sent as a Microsoft Word document, PDF, or within an email. Articles will be edited for space. Accompanying artwork will be accepted in graphics file formats only (.jpg, etc.), minimum 300 dpi.

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The American Statistical Association is the world's largest community of statisticians. The ASA supports excellence in the development, application, and dissemination of statistical science through meetings, publications, membership services, education, accreditation, and advocacy. Our members serve in industry, government, and academia in more than 90 countries, advancing research and promoting sound statistical practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare.

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columns

This column is written for those interested in learning about the world of Data for Good, where statistical analysis is dedicated to good causes that benefit our lives, our communities, and our world. If you would like to know more or have ideas for articles, contact David Corliss at *davidjcorliss@peace-work.org.*

STAT*tr@k* is a column in *Amstat News* and a website geared toward people who are in a statistics program, recently graduated from a statistics program, or recently entered the job world. To read more articles like this one, visit the website at *http://stattrak.amstat.org*. If you have suggestions for future articles, or would like to submit an article, please email Megan Murphy, *Amstat News* managing editor, at *megan@amstat.org*.

ONLINE

Q&A with Xun Chen and Xiao-Li Meng

In a recent interview with Xun Chen from AbbVie, Xiao-Li Meng from Harvard explored the evolving role of statisticians in an era dominated by AI, machine learning, and big data. Meng emphasized that while AI and large language models are transforming industries, statistical thinking remains indispensable. He also advocates for statisticians to work alongside computer scientists, domain experts, and engineers. If you want to know about how statistics can thrive and advance industries, read this interview at *https://magazine.amstat.org*.

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Share Your Community Involvement

Whether you're thinking about local partnerships, volunteer opportunities, grassroots outreach, or creative ways to engage with organizations or policymakers, ASA President Jeri Mulrow would like to hear from you. Share suggestions or innovative approaches you have using this form: *https://amstat.jotform.com/team/cross-function/communities-in-action*. To learn about Mulrow's initiative, read her January column: *https://magazine.amstat.org/blog/2026/01/01/connection-contribution-and-evidence*.

Advocacy Day

COSSA's Social Science Advocacy Day is back! Join social scientists and science advocates from across the country March 23–24 in Washington, DC. Make your voice heard in support of social and behavioral science. Learn more: *https://cossa.org/event/2026-social-science-advocacy-day*.

'Statistics Teacher'

Statistics Teacher, the peer-reviewed statistics education online journal, has a newly designed website and the editors are always looking for material. The journal is intended to inform and support K–12 teachers with education articles, lesson plans, announcements, professional development opportunities, and classroom resources. If you have an idea or article you would like to share, visit the submission guidelines page: *www.statisticsteacher.org/submissions*.

CORRECTION: In the article "Statistics in History: Dry Month January," we omitted author attribution for *Guide for the Practical Gauger*. William Hunt is the author. The online article has been updated.

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member news

Washington Statistical Society Celebrates *100th Anniversary*

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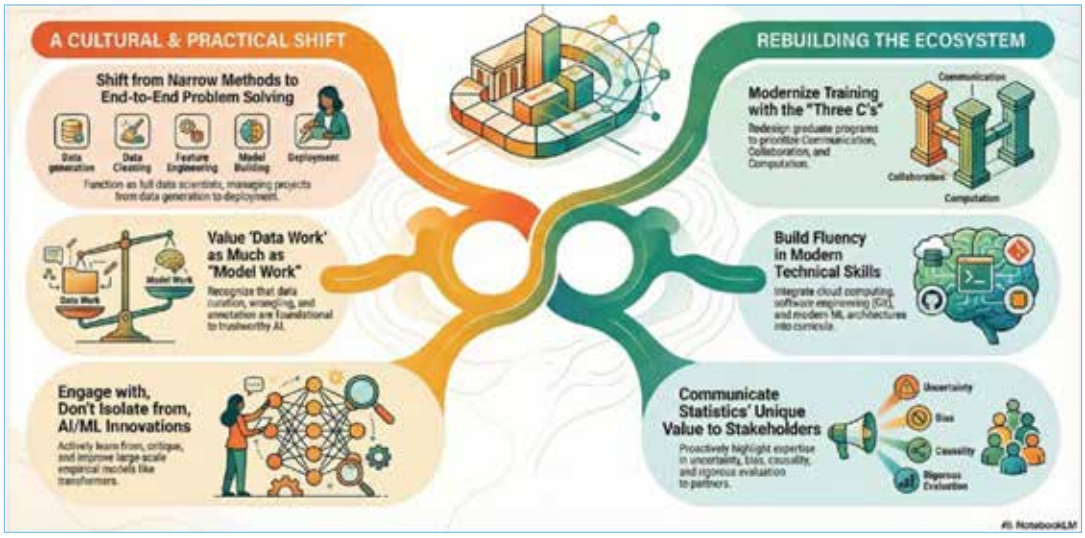
Stewards of Uncertainty: Our Role in the Age of AI



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Jeri Mulrow

As an individual, I am grappling with the questions surrounding the impact of AI technologies, which are not only technical but deeply human. I would like to begin a conversation to acknowledge both the remarkable potential and the genuine challenges AI technologies, particularly the emergence of large language models and generative AI systems, present to our community.

As I write this column, the Project Iceberg Index—(*https://iceberg.mit.edu*) which "measures where AI systems overlap with the skills used in each occupation"—is 11.7%. Project Iceberg looks across occupations and skills. According to "'Rebuilding' Statistics in the Age of AI: A Town Hall Discussion on Culture, Infrastructure, and Training," written by David Donoho and coauthors, the landscape of statistical practice is being fundamentally altered.

I believe we are uniquely positioned at the intersection of extraordinary opportunity and profound responsibility. I write not with definitive answers but with an invitation to collective action. The decisions we make now will shape the trajectory of our profession for decades to come.

The pace of change has been staggering. Large language models can draft research papers, write code, analyze data, and engage in sophisticated reasoning tasks. Computer vision systems diagnose diseases, autonomous vehicles navigate complex environments, and recommendation algorithms shape what billions of people see, read, and purchase. We have been surprised by the scale and speed of these developments.

We understand many of these AI systems are, at their core, statistical models, albeit of unprecedented scale and complexity. The data they consume, the patterns they learn, the predictions they generate, and the uncertainties they fail to quantify all fall squarely within the domain of statistical inquiry. Yet the statistical foundations of these systems are not understood by the broader public.

This disconnect presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge lies in the potential proliferation of AI systems that lack proper uncertainty quantification, are deployed without rigorous validation, and make consequential decisions affecting human lives. The opportunity lies in the unique expertise our community brings to addressing precisely these shortcomings. We understand the data's provenance is the foundation of trustworthiness. You cannot make good decisions without knowing where the data originated, who collected it, how it was processed, and who it represents. Statisticians have spent more than a century developing frameworks for inference under uncertainty, understanding the limitations of models, and communicating what data can and cannot tell us. These capabilities have never been more valuable.

Perhaps no aspect of the "age of AI" generates more anxiety than

its implications for employment and the nature of statistical work, itself. The reality is that AI tools are already transforming how statistical work is performed, and this transformation will only accelerate. Tasks that once required hours of careful coding can now be accomplished in minutes with AI assistance. Even interpreting results and drafting reports, activities we might have considered uniquely human, are now within the capabilities of sophisticated language models. For early-career statisticians especially, the questions of which skills to develop and which career paths to pursue are becoming considerably more complex. Our mission is to promote the practice and profession of statistics. Working together, we can see the entire landscape and build on our tradition of developing guidelines and frameworks to chart a path forward.

In her seminal work *In the Age of the Smart Machine: The Future of Work and Power,* Shoshana Zuboff described the impact on the nature of work and the skills required by the emergence of information technology. We also know from history that, for example, the mechanization of agriculture did not eliminate the need for human labor; it transformed it. AI will not eliminate the need for statistical expertise, but it will change what that expertise looks like.

In the age of AI, we bring the ability to formulate the right questions, understand the substantive context in which data arise, exercise judgment about when a model is appropriate and when it is not, and communicate findings in ways that inform decision-making. Perhaps most importantly, statisticians will be needed to evaluate AI systems themselves, to audit their performance, to identify their biases, and to ensure their responsible deployment.

The implications for statistical education are profound. Our curricula, developed over decades to equip students with foundational knowledge and practical skills, require thoughtful reconsideration. This does not mean abandoning the fundamentals. More than ever, students will need experience with the ethical dimensions of data science, including questions of privacy, representativeness, and accountability that pervade AI applications.

Students will need the judgment to know when a sophisticated AI approach is warranted and when a simpler method would serve better, the ability to recognize the limits of any model, and the communication skills to convey these nuances to diverse audiences. We need to redouble our commitment to mentorship and ongoing professional development. Through our conferences and publications, we can share best practices and foster dialogue. Through our advocacy efforts, we can promote the funding and institutional support necessary for statistics programs to evolve.

The AI technologies being deployed today make decisions that affect people's lives, including access to credit, health care, employment, and housing. They shape the information environment in which democratic societies function. The ASA's Statement on Ethical AI Principles for Statistical Practitioners provides a foundation for navigating this environment.

We must continue to take an active role in the broader societal conversation about AI governance. This means engaging with policymakers, participating in standards development, and contributing our expertise to regulatory frameworks. It also means fostering a culture that prioritizes ethical reflection, encourages raising concerns, and supports colleagues who face difficult decisions about the applications of their work.

As I consider our path forward, several priorities emerge. First, we must grapple with the impact on employment, confront questions of fairness and representation, and contribute to regulatory frameworks. Second, we must strengthen our connections with allied disciplines such as computer science, mathematics, and engineering. The challenges posed by AI are too large and too complex for any single field to address alone. Third, we must advocate vigorously for the value of statistical thinking in an AI-dominated world by demonstrating, through our research and practice, that statistical principles are essential even as the technologies change. It means communicating effectively with the public about what AI technologies can and cannot do and ensuring our expertise is represented in the institutions and organizations shaping the future of AI technologies. Fourth, by continuing our commitment to timely professional development and access to career opportunities, we must attend to the well-being of our members during this period of rapid change. The anxiety and uncertainty many feel are real and should be acknowledged.

I close with a call for engagement. The future of statistics in the age of AI will be shaped by the choices we make as a professional community. Each of us has a role to play. The ASA provides a platform for collective action, but its effectiveness depends on the active participation of the entire community. I look forward to hearing from you and working together toward a future in which data and statistical thinking remain an essential part of decision-making and discovery.

Leadership That Lasts: Succession Planning and Officer Recruitment

Strategies for Managing Turnover and Building Sustainable Leadership Teams

Council of Chapters Governing Board Executive Committee Members

Without a pipeline, chapters risk operational disruptions and burnout. By contrast, succession planning intentionally identifies and prepares individuals for leadership, which helps maintain continuity and chapter effectiveness over time. When leadership transitions are planned rather than improvised, institutional knowledge is retained and the chapter's programming doesn't skip a beat.

Succession planning also helps distribute responsibilities—which helps keep workloads manageable. Additionally, it preserves institutional knowledge and helps maintain a chapter in good standing (with annual reports, elections, and member communications).

Chapter officers at the 2025 Chapter Officers Appreciation Workshop mentioned the following additional pain points where succession planning can help:

- **Turnover or Stagnation** Either too much churn or the same leaders cycling indefinitely
- **Recruitment Hurdles** Hard to attract officers, especially across institutions
- **Geographic Dispersion** Distance complicates planning get-togethers at common sites
- **Limited Resources** Financial and personnel constraints

Building Continuity

One way to go about succession planning is to create an officer handbook that outlines responsibilities, deadlines, and communication norms. Be sure to emphasize realistic time commitments.

Another key is to establish a simple and durable leadership pipeline. That is, adopt a chair-elect → chair → past chair model for mentoring and continuity. Consider keeping treasurer terms longer (e.g., three years) for stability, but a position such as secretary could be a one-year term with clearly defined duties. Last, standardize elections by using a predictable cycle such as the following:

- **October:** Solicit nominations.
- **November:** Vote via Google form.
- **December:** Announce results and onboard officers.
- **January:** Update chapter officers on ASA website.

Align officer onboarding with the chapter's annual reports at the end of the calendar year to ensure a clean handoff.

Officer Recruitment Strategies That Work

Expanding the candidate pool is essential for sustainable leadership. The following ideas can help broaden the funnel of future leaders:

- Organizing panels that highlight networking, CV enhancement, and leadership training as opportunities for nurturing career development and impact can engage early-career statisticians and young faculty.
- Industry partners can be invited to co-host networking events to help broaden professional reach.
- Creating roles such as social media officer and hosting poster competitions can encourage student involvement and the formation of student chapters to build a pipeline of future leaders.

Sustainable chapter leadership is built on clarity and deliberate recruitment.

Chapter Stability and Growth: A Series

This article is part of a series inspired by ASA President Jeri Mulrow's "Communities in Action" theme, which builds on insights from the 2025 Chapter Officers Appreciation Workshop on strategies for chapter stability and growth. The first article (*https://tinyurl.com/yvewv6wp*) emphasized that maintaining an active ASA chapter does not require a large membership or numerous events. It begins with meeting a few essential requirements—foundational practices that help keep chapters in good standing, while fostering an engaged community of statisticians and data scientists.

- Offering incentives and reducing barriers can enhance recruiting success.
- Waiving first-year chapter fees for new officers or early-career recruits can increase membership.
- Working with institutions to recognize leadership service can help make roles more appealing—serving as a chapter officer is training for future industry, university, and government leaders.
- Providing clear role details and realistic time estimates (e.g., "no more than X hours per month") can encourage members to step up.
- Having current officers suggest candidates for specialized roles such as treasurer can help when bringing on new officers.
- Personally encouraging and emailing potential recruits can encourage them to join.

These strategies—combined with virtual meetings and collaborations across universities, chapters, and industry—help overcome geographic and resource challenges, while ensuring leadership remains accessible and sustainable.

Getting Started: 90-Day Plan for Building a Sustainable Leadership System

The following are ways to start building a sustainable leadership system for your ASA chapter within 90 days:

Days 1–30: Lay the Foundation

- Define roles and responsibilities: Create or update an officer handbook with clear duties, deadlines, and communication norms.
- Set election timeline: Establish a predictable cycle, as given above.

Days 31–60: Build the Pipeline

- Adopt leadership structure: Implement chair-elect → chair → past chair model.
- Launch recruitment outreach: Email chapter members and local organizations while highlighting the benefits: networking; CV boost; leadership experience.
- Clarify expectations: Share realistic time commitments (e.g., "no more than X hours/month") and role details.

Days 61–90: Activate and Expand

- Offer incentives: Waive first-year chapter fees and work with institutions to recognize leadership service.
- Broaden candidate pool: Engage early-career statisticians and young faculty, involve students (social media roles, poster competitions), and invite industry partners for networking events.
- Overcome geographic challenges: Use virtual meetings for planning and programming and collaborate with universities and other chapters to share resources.

Conclusion: Make Sustainable Chapter Leadership a System, Not a Heroic Effort

Sustainable chapter leadership is built on clarity and deliberate recruitment. Start with the 90-day plan and publish your election timeline, refresh your officer handbook, and invite early-career statisticians and industry partners into leadership. The pipeline you build today will sustain the chapter you will enjoy tomorrow.

For support, resources, or questions, contact your vice chair or ASA Manager of Chapter Relations and Member Activities Emily Fekete at *emily@amstat.org.* ■

Bay Area Biotech-Pharma Statistics Workshop Pushes Boundaries

Ron Yu, Ruixiao Lu, and Jing Huang

The 2025 Bay Area Biotech-Pharma Statistics Workshop brought together more than 360 attendees from approximately 110 organizations at Crowne Plaza Hotel in Foster City, California, November 6–7, 2025. The conference theme—"Driving Smarter Decisions: Data, AI, and Statistics"—highlighted the intersection and transformative impact of quantitative science, statistical innovation, and artificial intelligence across the pharmaceutical, biotechnology, medical devices, and diagnostics industries.

The keynote speaker on the first day was Venkat Sethuraman, senior vice president and global head of data sciences and analytics at Roche/Genentech. In his talk, "Electrifying R&D: The Data, Design, and Digital Revolution in Biopharma," he drew a parallel between electricity and AI, predicting that intelligence will soon become abundant and low cost. Sethuraman described a future shaped by two groups: those who set up the infrastructure that enables AI at scale and those who apply it to build innovative solutions. He emphasized that the most successful research and development teams will be those with the strength and capability to rapidly advance the most promising drug targets from concept to patients.

The second day featured a keynote by Sylvia Plevritis, William M. Hume Professor in the school of medicine and chair of the department of biomedical data science at Stanford University. Her talk, "Multi-Modal AI for Cancer Biology and Clinical Decision Support," highlighted the potential of combining diverse data sources—such as imaging, pathology, genomics, and clinical records—to transform cancer research and care. She described AI-assisted tumor boards that synthesize information before meetings, identify similar patient cases during discussions, and summarize decisions afterward, shifting decision-making from anecdotal experience to data-driven insight. She also discussed foundation models that capture the evolution of cancer over time, enabling prediction of future clinical events and deeper understanding of tumor biology.

Reflecting the conference's Silicon Valley location, the first day also included a fireside chat with May Wang, chief technology officer of internet of things security at Palo Alto Networks. Wang spoke about the rapid adoption of AI in health care despite regulatory complexity, highlighting its role in improving efficiency, reducing costs, and enhancing user experience. She noted that as AI elevates technical execution, strategic thinking becomes increasingly important. She expressed optimism that thoughtful use of AI can meaningfully advance progress and improve decision-making.

The technical program included six sessions across two parallel tracks. The three statistics sessions explored the use of AI in clinical development, the importance of structured decision frameworks, and advances in trial design and analysis. Speakers emphasized that high-quality decision-making requires rigorous statistical methods, strong data integration, and proactive statistical leadership. The three data science sessions addressed open-source solutions, data standards and automation, and the evolution of AI toward collaborative, agent-based systems that can transform workflows and productivity.

The program also featured three short presentations by BBSW board directors. Chito Hernandez offered practical advice for regaining momentum and pursuing personally meaningful goals. Ted Lystig provided updates on recent statistical and regulatory developments in Washington, DC, particularly around multiple testing approaches and the use of surrogate endpoints. Judy Li highlighted the importance of adaptability through the example of Choluteca Bridge and shared her insight that growth for modern statisticians is inherently multidisciplinary.

This year's conference attracted a record number of more than 30 poster abstract submissions, including one from a high school student. A speed networking session was introduced as an addition to the program, which provided an opportunity for conference participants to meet new people and make new connections. An in-person R meetup was also held, complementing the virtual R/pharma conference.

During the conference, industry leaders shared their perspectives on how AI is shaping health care and industry and reflected on what leadership means to them through the BBSW interview series BBSW Unplugged: Inside Data Leadership, offering inspiration for current and future leaders. ■

MORE ONLINE
Read the full coverage and view photos at *https://magazine.amstat.org.*

2026 ASA BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Board of Directors **President-Elect**

James Cochran

Professor of Statistics and the Mike & Kathy Mouron Research Chair, The University of Alabama

I am honored to be a candidate for president of the ASA, the "big tent" for statistics—supporting our members, strengthening the profession, and serving society through sound science and trusted information. At this pivotal moment, we have an opportunity to expand the ASA's leadership where needed most: education, career support, public understanding, and the integrity of evidence.

If elected, I will work with the ASA community on passage of a Data Science Act that increases exposure to, appreciation for, and understanding of statistics among young people. Together, we can ensure the next generation sees statistics as a powerful tool for discovery, fairness, and decision-making.

I also want the ASA to be an even stronger professional home for statisticians at every career stage. In partnership with academia, industry, and government, I'll focus on helping early career statisticians better understand the relevance of ASA and its many programs, initiatives, and member benefits—while expanding opportunities and support for early and mid-career professionals.

The ASA must lead from the front in AI. I'll work with our community to elevate the understanding that statistical thinking is the foundation of science and trustworthy AI. I'll champion uncertainty quantification, bias assessment, validation, and responsible inference in how AI is developed, evaluated, and deployed. We can strengthen the ASA's visibility and influence by engaging the public, partnering with industry, and collaborating across the scientific community.

Finally, I will prioritize support for statistics communities and capacity building in developing nations, and I will work with our members to address the ongoing and growing threat to official statistics—a cornerstone of democracy, public trust, and evidence-based policy.

These initiatives represent continuances of my long-term efforts, and it will be my privilege to continue to work with you toward these goals as ASA President. ■

The ASA announces the candidates for the 2026 election. Voting begins April 1 and runs through April 30. Make sure to check your email for a link to the online voting system.

Board of Directors **President-Elect**

Nicholas Horton

Beitzel Professor of Technology and Society (Statistics and Data Science), Department of Statistics, Amherst College

The American Statistical Association serves members in a world dependent on data. The growing role of data science and the rapid dissemination of sophisticated AI tools and models raise important questions for us as a profession. As president, I would work to strengthen the ASA as a visible, influential, and inclusive professional home for statisticians, data scientists, and analysts across academia, industry, and government.

Statistics plays a critical role in science, policy, business, and public life. The ASA must continue to promote the practice and profession of statistics, communicate its value to society, and elevate the voice of statisticians in public discourse. At the same time, we must foster excellence in statistical methods and practice, uphold strong ethical standards, and engage thoughtfully with rapid advances in computing and AI.

Education is central to the vitality of our discipline. I've committed much of my career to strengthening statistics and data science education. We must work to ensure that statistics remains a vibrant and attractive choice for the next generation of students.

Our members are the ASA's most valuable asset. With diverse and evolving career paths, we need to support statisticians at all stages of their careers, communicate the value of membership and engagement, and expand opportunities for collaboration, service, and professional connection. Attracting, engaging, and retaining the next generation is essential to our future.

I've had the privilege of serving the ASA in multiple leadership roles, including as Chapter Rep to the Board and as Vice President, where I worked to build consensus across our diverse membership. As president, I would focus on strengthening the association, ensuring financial stability, and advancing the ASA's mission to promote the practice and profession of statistics for the public good.

For more information, please see *https://nickforasa.org.* ■

Board of Directors **Vice President**

Martha Gardner

Executive Chief Consulting Engineer – Data Science/Applied Statistics and Quality, GE Aerospace

The future of statistics is strong. With the rise of data science and birth of AI, statistics is the backbone that makes those areas reliable, ethical, and useful. I'm running for this position because the ASA is key to strengthening this backbone through its role in promoting the practice and profession of statistics. If elected, my focus areas will be:

- **Promoting our field as proactive vs. reactive.** Statisticians should define how uncertainty is handled in an AI-driven world, continuing to engage in shaping model validation and robustness, uncertainty quantification for AI systems, and causal inference beyond prediction. As AI systems move into regulated and safety-critical domains, statistical thinking will be even more critical.
- **Furthering the roadmap for the "statistician of the future."** Statistics education is changing fast with more focus on modeling, statistical thinking, and how to ask the right questions. There's now a stronger emphasis on computation and simulation and a need for greater integration of ethics, communication, and reproducibility. Statisticians should be the technical anchor for credibility, trust, and rigor in data-driven decisions.
- **Statistics as a growing leadership discipline.** Statisticians are increasingly moving into technical leadership, strategy roles, and risk, compliance, and governance positions. How we help members of our profession develop skills to move from analyst to trusted advisor—where they help shape how their organizations and teams turn data into information and conclusions—will be key.

Through my own engagement with the ASA over the course of my career, I have learned valuable skills and developed a strong network and community that enabled me to grow my impact as a statistician. As a Vice President of the ASA, I would like to ensure this opportunity is available for all our members. Thank you for your consideration. ■

Board of Directors **Vice President**

Natalie Rotelli

Data Strategist, Moral

There's no better way to show my gratitude to the ASA community than to serve as vice president and give back to its valued members. It's under ASA's roof where I learned the enormity of statistical interactions with the world and grew my appreciation of volunteerism through the positions I held. The ASA shaped me into the servant leader I am today, whose priority is to listen, understand, and advocate for what matters most to our members.

I am eager and excited to serve the president in their initiatives and to move ASA's strategic plan forward. My passion for enhancing the diversity and breadth of our association has been strengthened, and my skills honed, through leading Eli Lilly's Diversity in Clinical Trial group, co-leading the Diversity Benchmarking & Metrics Workstream within a nonprofit collaboration of 18+ companies, and actively participating as a member of the EDI subcommittee of ASA's Committee of Publications.

I've been empowered to meaningfully contribute to increasing our profession's visibility by advocating for building communication skills among leaders at all levels. In leading Eli Lilly's Advancing Leadership workshops for statisticians, I created an ASA Council of Sections Leadership Workshop—working across industries with an ethical technology start-up, academia, non-profits, and others. As vice president, I'll roll up my sleeves and leverage committee and council memberships to help ensure the future of our profession. And as we face challenges around integrating AI into our field, I'll work to support our members through societal changes and help promote trust in science. I want to help position our profession to adapt and thrive.

I'm excited to get started and work with you all. Thank you for taking the time to learn about me and using your voice to vote. ■

Board of Directors **Publication Representative**

Megan Price

Executive Director, Human Rights Data Analysis Group

I am honored to be nominated for ASA Board publications representative and am eager to contribute. If elected, I'll collaborate with fellow board members to bolster ASA activities and initiatives aligned with members' interests, advance the association's mission, and enhance its visibility within and beyond the statistical community.

A central focus of my service will be advancing the ASA's three publication-related objectives:

1. Maintaining a diverse portfolio of journals that disseminate high-quality, high-impact research in statistics and data science
2. Sustaining and further developing outreach publications, including *Amstat News, CHANCE,* and *Significance*
3. Increasing the number of open-access papers and journals

Recent partnerships, new open-access journals in data science, and *ASA Discoveries* provide strong momentum toward these goals. Consistent with the current ASA strategy, I'm also particularly interested in supporting journals' efforts to recruit reviewers and cultivate the next generation of editors.

The growing availability and use of AI to generate scholarly content presents an important issue for all scientific publications. I am committed to working with journal editors and reviewers, board members, and other ASA stakeholders to develop thoughtful and responsible approaches to this evolving landscape.

Beyond publications, I would welcome the chance to contribute to broader ASA activities. I'm especially committed to the work of the Committee on Scientific Freedom and Human Rights and the Scientific and Public Affairs Advisory Committee. Mentoring students and early-career researchers is also a priority, and I would actively support programs and initiatives that help new members feel welcomed, supported, and engaged within the ASA. ■

Sherri Rose

Professor, Stanford University, Department of Health Policy

I'm running for a position on the ASA Board of Directors as publications representative, where I'll contribute perspectives on open science, rigor, and reproducibility.

I was previously co-editor-in-chief of the journal *Biostatistics* and currently teach the graduate-level course "Methods for Reproducible Population Health and Clinical Research" at Stanford. This background and experience grounds my views on the future of scientific publications for ASA journals.

The broader role of research publishing is also at a crossroads amid the unfortunate proliferation of AI slop in research and the continued influence of scientific incentives that counter a focus on timely, impactful work (vs. trendy and unrigorous).

I'd be honored to be elected to the board and serve our membership during a pivotal time for publishing. ■

Board of Directors **Treasurer**

Motomi Mori

Member (Professor) and Endowed Chair, Department of Biostatistics, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

I am deeply honored to be nominated for the treasurer position. As a current member of the ASA Board of Directors, I understand the essential role the treasurer plays in safeguarding the organization's financial health. In my first accounting class during my MBA program, the instructor often said, "No margin, no mission." This principle resonated with me—without financial stability, no organization, especially a nonprofit, can effectively pursue its mission.

The treasurer position is critical to ensure the long-term sustainability of the ASA. I am committed to doing everything I can to protect and strengthen the financial foundation that allows the ASA to grow, advance its mission of "promoting the practice and profession of statistics," and work toward its vision of "a world that relies on data and statistical thinking to drive discovery and inform decisions."

Drawing on my MBA training, I hope to advise the ASA board of directors in close collaboration with the Finance, Audit, and Budget Committees—supporting both day-to-day financial decisions and long-term strategies for financial growth and stability. As a current board member, I am already familiar with the ASA's financial status and strategic direction, and I look forward to using that knowledge to help shape a strong future for the organization. My goal is to ensure that future generations of statisticians and data scientists can continue to rely on the ASA as a vital and enduring resource—one that remains firmly committed to its mission for decades to come. ■

Bruce Meyer

McCormick Foundation Professor, University of Chicago

It's an honor to be nominated for ASA treasurer. I first joined the ASA as a graduate student in the 1980s, published my first academic paper in an ASA journal, served as an associate editor of an ASA journal, and recently became a life member. I have valued the conferences and publications of the ASA and the exchange of ideas and experiences they have brought. I hope I can support and enhance the efforts of the ASA in several dimensions:

- **Meetings and membership.** The ASA must continue to adapt to changes in membership and meeting attendance. We can broaden involvement in the ASA with the entry of new people working on new topics within the statistics profession. The financial health of the ASA depends on recognizing and adapting to these changes.
- **Education.** Statistics and data science are increasingly important at all levels of study. These disciplines are also increasingly important, where evidence-based policy making has taken hold in government. Statistics also comes up more in public discussions, as major newspapers add data specialists, while cutting back in other areas. The ASA serves an important educational mission in these venues. As a long-term statistics teacher, I hope I can help advance the ASA's educational efforts.
- **Government statistics.** Government statistics are under threat from both political interference and declining quality. A strong voice needs to emphasize that government statistical leadership should focus on nonpartisan accurate statistics, rather than political loyalty. And as obtaining information from respondents becomes more difficult, the accuracy of government statistics is declining. I hope to continue ASA's strong support for accuracy in government statistics by protecting statistical agencies and their push to improve data quality. ■

Board of Directors **Council of Chapters Representative**

Junxian Geng

Director Biostatistics, Team Lead for Medical Affair and HEOR Biostatistics Team, Servier

I'm honored to be nominated as a candidate for the Council of Chapters representative position. The ASA has played a formative role in my career development through mentorship, community, and opportunities to connect with statisticians across sectors. I have benefited greatly from this support and am motivated to give back by serving the statistical community.

My professional experience in the pharmaceutical industry has reinforced the critical role of statistics in advancing science, informing decision-making, and ultimately improving patient outcomes. If elected, my priorities would focus on three key areas:

- **Increasing the visibility and impact of statistics in the pharmaceutical industry.** I see significant opportunities to engage clinicians more deeply in ASA activities, fostering stronger collaboration between statisticians and clinicians, and ensuring that statistical thinking is embedded throughout clinical development.
- **Ensuring the future of our profession through early outreach**. As secretary of the ASA Connecticut chapter, I'm actively engaged in outreach efforts and would expand high school engagement. I'll work to highlight statistics as a dynamic and impactful major, which will help build a strong and diverse talent pipeline.
- **Safeguarding our profession in the AI era**. As artificial intelligence continues to evolve rapidly, statisticians should lead in defining ethical, transparent, and scientifically sound approaches to integrating AI into decision-making. I would advocate for establishing best practices at the intersection of statistics, AI, and real-world applications.

As a COC representative, I would also strive to represent the interests of ASA members in their regions, communicate council perspectives and concerns to the board, and report board actions and decisions back to the council. I believe transparent communication between the board, council, and chapters is essential to a vibrant organization. ■

Maureen Mayer

Principal Systems Engineer, RTX Technologies (Retired)

I'll work to strengthen connections across diverse ASA communities—applied statistics, biostatistics, data science, and beyond—while championing the ethical, legal, and responsible practices that define our profession.

As statisticians, we have a critical responsibility to communicate the power and rigor of statistical methods to broader audiences. I share President Jeri Mulrow's vision of building meaningful connections among people and communities. My goal is to strengthen ties between ASA members, connect us more effectively to our association's resources, and bridge relationships with professional and community leaders across sectors.

Mentorship matters. Whether you're entering the field or transitioning from a related discipline, you deserve support and meaningful professional relationships. I will actively engage with district vice chairs to ensure chapter members' needs are heard and addressed.

As your representative, I will attend Board of Directors meetings, report activities to COCs, and serve on assigned committees. My 3 priorities:

1. **Connect and support our community**. I will maintain active communication with VCs, advocate for members' interests at board meetings, and participate fully in committee work to ensure your voices shape ASA decisions.
2. **Advance statistical thinking in the data science era.** As AI transforms our data-driven economy, we must ensure statistical methods remain central to responsible innovation and interpretation.
3. **Defend integrity in federal statistics.** I will continue the ASA's vital work in monitoring threats to federal data collection through initiatives like "Nation's Data at Risk."

Statistics is both powerful and joyful. I am committed to promoting our field—especially to the next generation—and sharing why this profession deserves our passion. I would be honored to serve you and help shape our association's future. Thank you for your consideration. ■

Board of Directors **Council of Sections Representative**

Candace Berrett

Professor, Associate Chair, and Graduate Coordinator, Department of Statistics, Brigham Young University

I'm excited to be nominated for the position of Council of the Sections board representative. Being part of various ASA sections and their executive committees has been a meaningful and valuable part of my career—from the mentoring received to the services provided. As our discipline continues to expand and grow, the importance of active involvement within our sections and support for the broad ASA community is imperative. My community-building areas of passion include mentoring, communication, and creating resources to lift everyone.

Mentoring has been central to my work as a statistician and educator. Having received strong mentorship from established statisticians across the ASA, I know firsthand the impact that mentoring can provide. Continuing to facilitate and develop the ASA and its sections' mentoring programs is a top priority for me. I want the ASA to be a place where newer statisticians and data scientists receive guidance that reflects today's realities, where mentoring helps them build careers that fit who they are, and where they feel capable and supported as they grow.

Communication is essential for advancing both the profession and our impact on society. Statisticians often assume our work speaks for itself, but it rarely does. Developing statisticians to be better outward-facing communicators is critical. It is also essential that we practice strong communication within our own community. I want to support efforts that strengthen communication across sections, committees, and the Board.

Creating resources to lift everyone is how I think about education, access, and representation. Not all communities have the same resources or visibility, but the interest and talent are everywhere. I am supportive of the ASA's continued efforts to broaden access to statistical education and professional opportunities locally, nationally, and globally, while preserving the core principles that define our discipline. ■

Felicity Enders

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Mayo Clinic Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (2025 – Present); Associate Director, Mayo Clinic Center for Clinical and Translational Science (2022 – Present); Professor of Biostatistics, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science (2016 – Present); Professor of Clinical Translational Science, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science (2025 – Present), Mayo Clinic

I am deeply humbled to be nominated to the Board of Directors as the Council on Sections representative. The ASA has served as the foundation and springboard of my career. Serving on the board at this time would permit me to give back at a time of great transition and potential opportunity for the field of statistics.

Statisticians as leaders in an AI-powered world. With the revolutionary evolution of AI, many of us have become concerned about the impact of AI on our profession. While AI will certainly impact what we do as statisticians, I envision a future in which we act as leaders who demonstrate excellent usage of AI—a future where we are trusted experts who guide others in best practices. To achieve this future, ASA can support all our members in developing new AI capabilities aligned with our expertise as statisticians. Examples include how to use AI to support development of statistical code—while embedding internal checks and external flags to catch mistakes—and how to use AI to automatically identify gaps while combining datasets across resources.

Finding the statistician in the haystack. At the same time, I believe we can leverage AI to make it easier to find key contacts in our large association. For instance, we could develop an ASA member database linking contact information with publications, grants, and public websites of companies with ASA members. This would allow us to search for potential contacts, such as "statistician who is well published in analysis of environmental issues in public health" or "biostatistician with expertise in clinical trials through pharmaceutical companies." This database will facilitate both networking and potential peer reviewers. Such a tool would add key value for midcareer members.

If elected, I will collaborate to support the ASA's strategic plan. While I always bring ideas to the table, I firmly believe that leadership is grounded in team science, transparency, and trusted partnership. ■

Member Showcase: Elvan Ceyhan

This month, we're highlighting Elvan Ceyhan, the Marguerite Scharnagle Endowed Professor in the department of mathematics and statistics at Auburn University. He's also co-director of the proposed Center for Data Science Innovation and current president of the ASA Alabama-Mississippi Chapter.

Elvan Ceyhan

What is your current role or area of expertise in statistics and/or data science?

I am the Marguerite Scharnagle Endowed Professor in the department of mathematics and statistics at Auburn University, where I'm also involved in leading campus-wide efforts in interdisciplinary data science through Auburn's Collaborative Data Science Initiative. My work lies at the interface of statistical learning and decision-making under uncertainty, with a particular emphasis on networks and spatial structure.

Methodologically, I develop graph-based approaches for classification and clustering, often in settings with class imbalance or overlapping structure. I study random geometric graphs, especially proximity catch digraphs and their theoretical and computational properties. I also develop stochastic network optimization and traversal methods—such as for the Canadian traveler's problem and the stochastic obstacle scene problem—while applying graph-based and nearest-neighbor approaches (including spatial point pattern tests based on proximity-catch digraphs) to pattern recognition, spatial statistics, and high-dimensional biomedical and neuroimaging data analysis. This work can directly inform scientific and societal questions.

What has been one of your biggest professional achievements?

One of my biggest professional achievements has been building a sustained research and leadership agenda that connects foundational statistics with decision-making under uncertainty on graphs/networks.

On the research side, my work has focused on advancing graph-based learning and stochastic network optimization. Especially in navigation and adversarial contexts through externally funded projects such as National Science Foundation support for the stochastic obstacle scene problem with adversarial agents and Office of Naval Research funding for adversarial network traversal.

On the leadership side, my time as deputy director of the Statistical and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute helped me learn how to build interdisciplinary infrastructure and partnerships. I spearheaded outreach to local minority-serving universities through workshops and events, and I directed the professional development workshop series for postdocs and graduate students.

More recently, being named the Marguerite Scharnagle Endowed Professor was a meaningful recognition of this combined trajectory in research, teaching, and service.

What career advice do you live by, and who gave it to you?

The career advice I try to live by is to optimize for substance and integrity, not short-term visibility. Do work you can defend technically and ethically. Let recognition and impact follow.

I first adopted this mindset from my PhD adviser, Carey Priebe, who consistently modeled high standards, intellectual honesty, and long-range thinking in both research and mentoring. Later, David Banks reinforced this perspective by encouraging me to work in modern, emerging areas, so I could both stay relevant and help shape where the field is going—whether in graph-based methods, spatial statistics, or stochastic network models. That combination—deep rigor paired with a willingness to engage with new problems—has guided how I choose projects, collaborations, and leadership roles throughout my career.

What experiences and past roles have led you to where you are today?

My path has been shaped by a mix of rigorous training, interdisciplinary collaborations, and leadership roles that kept pulling me toward problems where statistics can genuinely move the needle. I started with a strong mathematics foundation at Koç University, then pursued graduate training with an MS in statistics at Oklahoma State University and a PhD in applied mathematics and statistics at Johns Hopkins University, where my dissertation focused on proximity-catch digraphs and related random geometric graph ideas.

After a postdoctoral fellowship at the Johns Hopkins Center for Imaging Science, I joined the faculty at Koç University (assistant to associate professor), where I served a one-year rotational term as chair of the department of mathematics. A visiting appointment at the University of Pittsburgh, followed by a dual role as research associate professor at North Carolina State University and deputy director at SAMSI, deepened my engagement with collaborative, cross-sector research and professional community-building.

I am now a professor at Auburn University, where I continue to integrate research, education, and outreach in statistics and data science, including collaborative interdisciplinary data science initiatives across campus.

What is the biggest career challenge you've overcome?

Instead of highlighting a single "biggest" challenge, I'll mention two that are strong contenders for first place. One of the biggest challenges I've faced has been carving out a clear research identity, while working at the intersection of statistics, applied probability, optimization, and data science. Interdisciplinary work is deeply rewarding, but it can be harder to communicate and "place." So, I had to learn how to frame problems by leading with the inferential or decision question, stating assumptions plainly, and making the statistical core of each contribution unmistakable.

A second major challenge came after nearly three years in a primarily administrative leadership role at SAMSI. Transitioning back into a research-intensive faculty position required rebuilding momentum: refreshing my pipeline, re-establishing day-to-day research habits, and re-centering teaching and mentoring. In the long run, though, that experience sharpened my sense of which problems I most wanted to pursue and how to balance leadership with a sustainable, research-active academic life.

As the president of the Alabama-Mississippi Chapter, would you recommend others get involved in an ASA chapter? Why?

Yes, I would strongly encourage others to get involved in an ASA chapter. Chapters make the profession feel local and personal, connecting statisticians and data scientists across academia, industry, and government. They give students and early-career members a low-pressure venue to present and be mentored. They also create natural entry points for outreach and partnerships in the communities in which we live.

> [D]esign activities that are practical, welcoming, and easy for people to say 'yes' to.

As president of the AL-MS Chapter, I've learned that thriving chapters are built on sustainability rather than one-off events: regular programming (like our annual conferences); shared leadership; and smooth continuity from year to year. I've also learned how important it is to listen carefully to what members actually need and want—whether that's networking, professional development, or stronger support for students. And then, design activities that are practical, welcoming, and easy for people to say "yes" to.

What is something you'd like people to know about you that we haven't asked?

One thing I'd like people to know is that mentoring and community-building are central to how I think about research, not an add-on. I especially enjoy working with students and collaborators as they develop technical depth, good scientific habits, and confidence in their own voice. More broadly, I am drawn to problems in which statistical thinking has real consequences—particularly for decision-making under uncertainty—such as in stochastic network navigation, adversarial settings, and spatial applications. That keeps me focused on clarity about assumptions, uncertainty, and what counts as good evidence in practice, so the methods we develop can genuinely inform action in science, policy, and beyond. ■

Behind the Mic: Meet the Minds of the *Stats + Stories* Podcast

Aidan Cornue

John Bailer, Rosemary Pennington, and Richard Campbell prepare for an upcoming episode of *Stats & Stories*.
Photo courtesy of *Stats + Stories*

Editor's Note: This is reprinted with permission from the author, Aidan Cornue of *Oxford Free Press*.

After nearly 400 episodes, *Stats + Stories* has become a podcast where statisticians, journalists, and the curious can listen in to make sense of the world around them.

John Bailer, university distinguished professor, emeritus, and founding chair of the department of statistics at Miami University (Ohio) co-created the *Stats + Stories* podcast in 2013 alongside Richard Campbell, professor emeritus of journalism from Miami University and columnist for the Oxford Free Press.

Rosemary Pennington—chair and professor for the media, journalism, and film department—joined Campbell and Bailer behind the mic as a moderator and host in 2016. After working together for a few years, Campbell retired and Pennington's role became more prominent on the show.

"I was really nervous when Richard left," Pennington noted. "John and Richard had known each other for a very long time, and I was still new to this."

Pennington noted that her excitement and curiosity roped her into the new gig. With her journalistic touch and Bailer's statistically set mind, the podcast thrived.

Bailer added, "I've often been impressed at how similar journalists and statisticians are. I think that we share this kind of interest in science and politics and economics and sports and all of these different areas that we can explore."

Over time, Pennington and Bailer have become a dynamic duo on the show. The pair believe that each episode strengthens their respective skills and communication, building character with each guest.

Behind the Scenes

According to Bailer, the podcast's backlog runs deep, with episodes recorded in September not airing until "months and months later."

Each episode tactically spans around 28 minutes, according to Bailer.

"If you were going to walk to this building from your house," Bailer said, "that's about enough time to listen to an episode. We want to have more of a 'tapas' target than an entrée."

Every episode has two sections, with a quick show identification break splitting them.

Behind the scenes, each show is crafted and edited by Charles Blades, a former student of Pennington's.

Not only does the show help explain certain issues and data, but also it urges listeners to look into their own research to form their own conclusions.

Since 2018, Blades has operated the recording equipment inside Williams Hall for each episode of *Stats + Stories.*

Every two weeks, Blades comes into the recording studio early to prep and set up all the equipment for each episode.

"He makes us sound good," Bailer noted.

Reflecting and Re-Contextualizing

Among their multitude of episodes together, the pair recalled one show focusing on carbon cycling and whale feces, further highlighting the vast range of topics that vary regularly.

"Some (episodes) are triggered by something that happens in the real world," Bailer said. "Others are just evergreen science that you just want to understand better."

The show aims to include relevant and timely topics, while mixing in more fun and entertaining ones to create variety, according to Bailer.

These topics can range from sports-related content, such as if a coach should throw a flag to challenge a call in football to more serious issues like whether it's critical to have official statistics operating in countries to make key decisions.

Over the pair's partnership, certain episodes have stood out in their minds. For Pennington, one of these shows featured Sir David Spiegelhalter, a globally recognized British statistician.

Having joined the show multiple times, Spiegelhalter's presence and discussion focused, at least in one episode, on his book *Sex by Numbers,* which homed in on issues of sexual behavior with data-driven research.

"The way he was able to talk about statistics was so easy to understand for me to be able to stop and ask questions…(and) to be able to communicate to listeners," Pennington said.

Early on, Bailer believed the podcast to be a good and fun project, but as time has passed, he believes that the show has undertaken a "greater call."

"This is critical—to have an understanding of information," he said.

The show works to build trust with its audience by hosting guests that are statisticians and professionals who can walk through their work with Bailer and Pennington in a colloquial and open environment.

"It makes it easier to trust the work being produced if you understand the questions and thought process," Pennington added.

Not only does the show help explain certain issues and data, but also it urges listeners to look into their own research to form their own conclusions.

"You hear all of the qualifications that people describe around their work to let the audience know that this is trustworthy statistical data," Pennington said. "But here's why maybe you want to look somewhere else or maybe you understand that this is only telling you one slice of something."

Pennington believes *Stats + Stories* succeeds in helping its listeners "recontextualize the way statistics are produced and used."

In 2021, *Stats + Stories* won the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics Communications Award, which recognizes individuals or groups for outstanding work in communicating mathematical ideas and information for a general audience, according to the American Mathematical Society.

When receiving the award, Bailer felt "affirmed" by his work on the show. For Pennington, the award was incredibly important.

"I'm, in some ways, the interloper," she said. "I do stats and research (in journalism), but I'm not a statistician."

Receiving this award helped Pennington feel more comfortable with her work on the show.

'Statistics Behind the Headlines'

Bailer and Pennington co-authored the book *Statistics Behind the Headlines,* published in September of 2022. It aimed to answer the age-old question: do journalists do their jobs accurately? In the book, Bailer and Pennington dissected various news stories that utilized statistics.

"We're using it to educate people on the practice of statistics and also journalism," Pennington said, adding, "we are both very concerned about the distrust of journalists and distrust of data."

Each chapter focused on one story, with the two conducting their own research through sources used in the original story.

"We talk about the data used to draw this conclusion," Bailer said. "And we talk about how they come to these conclusions." ■

MORE ONLINE
Listen to the latest episode of *Stats + Stories at https://statsandstories.net.*

CELEBRATING

WOMEN in STATISTICS & DATA SCIENCE

In honor of Women's History Month, we're celebrating remarkable women in statistics, biostatistics, and data science. As mentors, educators, and influencers, these women shaped the field in countless ways. Read their journeys and learn about their incredible achievements.

DONNA JEAN BROGAN entered mathematics when technical careers were largely closed to women. After being offered only a secretarial role, despite exceptional aptitude, she pursued graduate study instead, earning a PhD and challenging discriminatory policies along the way. Brogan built a distinguished career in biostatistics focused on women's health, becoming a pioneer, educator, and advocate for systemic change. As a founder of the Caucus for Women in Statistics and Data Science and a barrier-breaking faculty member at Emory, Brogan's influence continues to reach well beyond her research contributions.

REGINA DOLGOARSHINNYKH grew up in the Soviet Union, where statistics was viewed with suspicion and computing power was scarce, but curiosity persisted. A rare female professor at Moscow State introduced her to rigor, mentorship, and the idea that probability is not randomness, but structure. Her path led from actuarial science and industry back to foundational theory at The University of Chicago, then to teaching at Columbia. She has built a rigorous, widely beloved classroom—where clarity, history, and purpose shape how students learn statistics.

MORE ONLINE: Read the full biographies at *https://magazine.amstat.org/blog/2026/03/02/whm26.*

JENNA KRALL'S path weaves art and analysis. Raised in Pittsburgh's creative, academic pulse and crowned "best dancer" in high school, she double-majored in dance and mathematics at George Mason—often sprinting from calculus to ballet. A statistics project on consumer product injuries sparked a deeper calling. Graduate study led her to public health and air pollution research. Now a tenured professor at George Mason, Krall blends creativity, teaching, and research to train the next generation of public health professionals.

NAN LAIRD'S path to statistics was anything but a straight line. Beginning in mathematics, she searched for work that felt grounded in the real world. After moving through studies of French and computer science, she discovered the power of statistics to connect theory with lived experience. At Harvard, she helped reshape how scientists analyze complex, imperfect data, developing methods that reflected how studies unfold over time. Her work made it possible to learn from messy data—and changed modern biostatistics in the process.

GRACE WAHBA'S journey into statistics began in high school with a deep interest in math and science. Accepted to Cornell despite being discouraged to apply, she found one of the few places where women could study mathematics alongside some of the world's greatest mathematicians. While working full time and raising a child, she earned advanced degrees, completing her PhD at Stanford and becoming the first woman faculty member in statistics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Wahba pioneered smoothing splines and shaping modern nonparametric regression, while mentoring generations of statisticians and leaving a lasting imprint on data analysis and machine learning.

KATHERINE WALLMAN grew up in New Jersey, the daughter of a teacher and a telephone executive, and majored in sociology at Wellesley. She started her career coding in COBOL, then moved to Washington, DC, joining the federal statistical system. Rising through the ranks, she became Chief Statistician of the United States in 1992, championing data confidentiality and evidence-based policymaking. Named president of the American Statistical Association in 1992, Wallman shaped professional standards and statistical education. When she passed in 2024, the statistical community lost a tireless advocate for data and public service.

Welcome TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Aaron Abkemeier
Theophilus B. K. Acquah
Sefanit Admasu
Friday Agala
Önder Akkaya
Naima Alam
Steven Alberding
Israel A. Almodovar-Rivera
Nan An
Dede Aryeh
Illia Arzamastsev
Samuel Assefa
Priscilla Ati-Tay
Vincent Johnson Attakpah
Okolie Awele
Krishna Charan
Selin Bayazit
Robert Jackson Beal
William Beatty
Charlotte Beckford
Brenda Betancourt
Mohammad Bhuiyan
Samuella Boadi
Adam Zaid Austin
Bouyamourn Wade Brorsen
Amanda Marie Brush
Jonathan Martin Bryan
Anderson Bussing
Heloisa Campanaro
Luis Mauricio Castro
Aditya Chakraborty
Jian Chang
Woonyoung Chang
Pannapa Changpetch
Carlos Chavez
Geping Chen
Jie Chen
Min-Yi Chen
Qi Chen
Shaoxuan Chen
Xinyun Chen
Yanjie Chen
Yineng Chen
Sujung Choi
Ryan Christopher
Clarkson Annika Cleven
John Cobbinah
Daniel Ryan Cohen
Noelle M. Cook
Bridget Coyne
Runze Cui
Tengfei Cui
Bimal Kumar Datta
Jaruwan Davidson
Sugandhika Dayarathne
Nicola de Souza Donovan
Dean Edem Defor
Devon Delport
AnnMaria Demars
Qingying Deng
Shejuty Devnath
Mamadou S. Diallo
Vishmi Dissanayake
Hyungrok Do
Yuzheng Dun
Faith Dunbar
Martin Dunbar
Julia K. Elrod
Mohamed Ali Elsaeiti
Joseph Engmark
Ifeanyi Ezuma
Asher Faben
Oluwafunmibi Omotayo Fasanya
Kaniz Fatema
Eleanor Feingold
Joseph Feldman
Weiran Feng
Denis Folitse
John Luke Gallup
Purna Saubhagya Gamage
Tianming Gao
Heng Ge
David C. Gerard
Jeffrey Joseph Gilbeaux
Russell Jacob Goebel
Jess Graves
Justin T. Greene
Andrew P. Grieve
Madison Griffin
Fatma Gunturkun
Fuyu Guo
Ronald R. Gutierrez
David Guy
Ferney Henao-Ceballos
Andy Henning
Jinyoung Hong
Md. Arif Hossain
Pei-Hsuan Hsia
Junda Huang
Yu Huang
Carolyn Rose Hurt
Beimar Iriarte
Md. Tamzid Islam
Abhi Jain
Colin Jarratt
Wenxuan Jiang
Yun Jiang
Shaowli Kabir
Daniel Israel Kakou
Madhavi Dilshani Kaluduwage
Hyun Bin Kang
Induni Kariyawasam
Nayanthi Karunanayake
Giwon Kim
TaeWook Kim
Bledar A. Konomi
Karin Kralicek
Andreas Krause
Radhika R. Kulkarni
Karan Kumar
Priya Kumari
Chandra Kundu
Alfonso Landeros
Jonathan Larson
Jessica Lazen
Bonwoo Lee
Kevin Haeseung Lee
Yongjun Lee
Owen Leete
Chenlei Leng
Qianhao Li
Xiaoxi Li
Xinyu Li
Xinyu Li
Ruohan Liao
Xiaofeng Lin
Dingning Liu
Xun Liu
Yang Liu
Yiwen Liu
Ziqi Liu
Hong Liu-Seifert
Shou-En Lu
Xin Lu
Yangyifan Lu
Yun Lu
Nicholas Reign Lugu
Yu Luo
Liangbo Lyu
Chao Ma
Stacey Major Murphy
Lohuwa Mamudu
Vahed Maroufy
Julie Marshall
Liora Mayats Alpay
Jeremy Scott McElroy
Tapan Mehta
Katherine J. Merrill
Sara Mezuri
Melissa Mischell
Jovana Mitic
Maliha Mehnaz Mitu
Vivian Ijeoma Mogbolu
Shanavaz Mohammed
Fernanda Montoya
Khondoker Nabi
Prasad Naik
Umamaheshwaran Narayanan
Christopher Newmark
Kiet Nguyen
Collin McNary Nill
Themba L. Nyirenda
Holly P. O'Rourke
Akiko Okamoto
Charles Onwujiobi
Oluyemi Oyeniran
Anis Pakrashi
Eshani A. Pareek
Kaylee Pascarella
Hayden Patterson
Sarah Peskoe
Linda Peters
Ryan Peterson
Patric Platts
Bipin Poudel
Shreya Prakash
Malith Premarathna
Valentina Prospero
Md. Hasibur Rahman
Ritvik Rajesh
M. Z. Raqab
Karin Reinhold
Haoyu Ren
Damon Roberts
Anna Rosengart
Bernard Rosner
Subhrajyoty Roy
Arisa Sadeghpour
Peter M. Schilling
John Karl Schmid
Frederic P. Schoenberg
Jennifer Scott Khalil
Shafie Bradley Shen
Jinghe Shen
Azim Shivji
Andrew Siefert
Ankit Sisodia
Ekaterina Smirnova
Abigail Smith
Scott Henry Smith
Michael D. Sonksen
Samuel K. Soon
Michael Spencer
Colby Stakun-Pickering
Quinn W. Stoddard-O'Neill
Ella Grace Sukup
Eric Sun
Wei-Hsiang Sun
James T. Symanowski
Chrystine Tadler

Priyanga Dilini Talagala
Thiyanga Shamini Talagala
Natalija Tanina
Xueting Tao
Anitha Thekkedeth
Soumya Thomas
Xin Tian
Candace Todd
Gabriel Torrealba-Acosta
Nicholas David Trout
Hima Bindu Vanimisetti
Katlyn Villers
Hao Wang
Ruiyi Wang
Tong Wang
Wenting Wang
Yijin Wang
Yize Wang
Owen Ward
Adam Waterbury
Hui Wen
Lorie Wijntjes
Colin Williams
Jordyn Wood
Miles Woollacott
Chris Wu
Jiaheng Xie
Jingrong Xie
Haiyan Xu
Chao Yang
Mun Won Yang
Xiaoyi Yang
Youqi Yang
Zihao Yang
Ian Yankovsky
Alyssa Ylescupidez
Manjun Yu
Shibo Yu
Jiangshan Zhang
Kaicheng Zhang
Runzhi Zhang
Wenjin Zhang
Yiqian Zhang
Zhen Zhang
Chen Zhao
Zhizhen Zhao
Ziyue Zheng
Linyun Zhou
Anqi Zhu
Eric Zhu
Zheng Zhu
Keyue Zhuo
Yudan Zou ■

New Member Spotlight: ESHANI PAREEK

This month, we spotlight new member and health care data specialist Eshani Pareek, who answered the following questions so we could get to know her better:

How did you become interested in statistics and/or data science?

My path to statistics and data science was unconventional. I started as a biochemistry and biotechnology major, working in wet lab research. During my graduate program in biotechnology, a course on statistics in clinical research opened my eyes to how data could accelerate drug discovery and translate biological insights into patient impact.

The turning point came during my internship, when I worked as a business and market analyst for a noninvasive prenatal genetic testing product. We noticed unexpectedly low reimbursement rates, and I was tasked with finding out why. Working with large accessions data sets in SQL, I identified systematic processing issues that were costing the company sizable revenue. Our findings became the key driver of a large-scale process improvement initiative, which led me to a powerful insight: All my biological/clinical knowledge was valuable, but without the ability to analyze data rigorously, I couldn't translate that knowledge into actionable insights.

That experience truly shaped my career. In all my roles so far, I have worked to bridge life sciences and analytics to solve health challenges. Today, as a health care data specialist at Weill Cornell Medicine—collaborating on research spanning cancer genomics, vascular surgery, stroke care, and autism—I use my biological background to shape study design, identify patterns, and translate findings for clinical impact.

Is there a particular group of statisticians you would like to reach out to you?

I'd love to connect with folks in the NYC Chapter! Being able to meet local statisticians working in health care and collaborate in person would be invaluable. I'm also eager to engage with the Section on Statistics in Genomics and Genetics, as much of my current work involves genomic analyses, and that intersection of biology and statistics is what I'm most passionate about.

What is your favorite hobby?

My favorite hobby is watercolor painting! It is equal parts meditative and creative, helping me enter a flow state, and it's completely different from my analytical work.

If you are a new member interested in being featured, email ASA Communications Manager Megan Murphy at *megan@amstat.org*.

MORE ONLINE
Read the complete interview with Eshani Pareek at *https://magazine.amstat.org*.

This Month in Statistics History:
ASA's First Female Fellows

Penny S. Reynolds

In celebration of International Women's History Month, here are the first 14 women elected ASA Fellows, between 1918–1951, presented in short biographical sketches. These women were economists, sociologists, medical statisticians, and teachers and administrators. Others influenced national and international policy. All influenced the procedures and practices of statistics we all know today.

Kate Holladay Claghorn
1918

(February 12, 1864 – March 22, 1938): The first woman to be elected ASA Fellow, Claghorn was a suffragist, social reformer, and civil rights activist, specializing in immigration and criminal law.

Aryness Joy Wickens
1937

(January 5, 1901 – February 2, 1991): The second woman elected ASA president. A highly influential federal economist, Wickens was acting commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and one of the architects of the BLS Cost-of-Living Index, later renamed the US Consumer Price Index.

Helen Mary Walker
1940

(December 1, 1894 – January 15, 1983): As the first woman elected ASA President in 1944, Walker is best known for her work on education research and the history of statistical methodology. She emphasized the importance of statistical education for non-statisticians and decision-makers of all kinds.

Dorothy Swain Thomas
1942

(October 24, 1899 – May 1, 1977): Thomas pioneered statistical applications in studies of population redistribution and economy. She was the first female president of the American Sociological Association and a United Nations technical consultant.

Gertrude Mary Cox
1944

(January 13, 1900 – October 17, 1978): The third woman elected ASA president, Cox was also the first woman to be elected Fellow of the International Statistical Institute. Additionally, she was president of the International Biometrics Society. She was best known for her classic books on applied experimental design.

Mary van Kleeck
1945

(June 26, 1883 – June 8, 1972): A long-term member of the ASA, van Kleek was director of the Russell Sage Foundation Department of Industrial Studies and the first woman to lead a US federal agency: The Women's Bureau.

Edith Abbot
1945

(September 26, 1876 – July 28, 1957): Abbot conducted pioneering statistical investigations into major social welfare issues such as poverty, housing conditions, truancy, immigration, and crime. She was also a major influence on federal social welfare legislation and policy development. In 1924, she was the first woman appointed dean of a major US graduate school at The University of Chicago.

(Photo unavailable)

Gladys Louise Palmer
1946

(April 5, 1895 – June 27, 1967): Palmer was director of the Industrial Research Unit at the Wharton School and an international expert on federal policy for labor mobility and manpower issues. She was a major driver of the coordination and standardization of labor statistics and developer of a novel measure of unemployment rate.

Faith Moors Williams
1946

(October 6, 1893 – September 20, 1958): A prominent government economist, Williams was director of the Office of Foreign Labor Conditions in the Bureau of Labor Statistics and one of the architects of the BLS Cost of Living Index—later the US Consumer Price Index—with codevelopers Aryness Joy Wickens and Stella Stewart.

Dorothy Stahl Brady
1949

(June 14, 1903 – April 17, 1977): Brady was a pioneer in economic measurement and historical economics. Primarily a career government statistician, she was division chief in the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and later, professor of economics at the Wharton School. She received the National Women's Press Club Award in Economics from President Harry S. Truman in 1948.

Margaret Jarman Hagood
1949

(October 26, 1907 – August 13, 1933): Hagood pioneered the application of rigorous statistical methods in the study of rural sociology. Her 1937 study of gender inequality, fertility, and contraception use among depression-era farm women was one of the earliest systematic mixed-methods research studies.

Hildegard Kneeland
1949

(July 10, 1889 – September 15, 1994): Kneeland pioneered an extensive investigation of homemakers as a labor force. Her documentation of time-use and income disparities in a nationwide survey of homemakers showed they were overworked and "labor-saving" appliances did not reduce the time spent on chores.

Besse Beulah Day (Mauss)
1951

(*September 1, 1899 – September 14, 1986):* Day pioneered statistical design of experiments in both forestry and engineering. Mentored by Ronald Fisher during her employment with the US Forest Service, she later became head statistician for the US Naval Engineering Experiment Station. In 1956, she was the first woman to win the American Society for Quality Brumbaugh Award for contributions to statistical quality control.

Margaret Merrell
1951

(December 3, 1900 – December 21, 1995): Merrell served as chief statistician to the surgeon general of the United States Army and designed large-scale clinical trials for testing the efficacy of penicillin for syphilis. She later became the first female full professor at Johns Hopkins. ■

A Community of Giving: How Donors Helped Advance the ASA Mission in 2025

Amanda Malloy, ASA Director of Development

Donors, partners, and volunteers played a vital role in advancing the ASA's mission throughout 2025. In total, just more than $590,000 was raised, helping to advance our mission to promote the practice and profession of statistics and data science and our vision of a world that relies on data and statistical thinking to drive discovery and inform decisions. This sum represents a 96% increase over 2024, driven in part by two six-figure one-time gifts. Even without these one-time gifts, individual giving rose 19%, thanks to the generosity of donors at all levels.

ASA Giving Day once again demonstrated the strength of the ASA community. In total, 219 donors—the largest number to date—contributed $71,366 to support ASA programs. The new Section Showdown competition added friendly energy to the campaign, with sections competing for a $500 voucher toward a JSM reception.

How Donor Support Made an Impact in 2025

Donor generosity directly strengthened programs across the ASA community:

- Support for the Student and Early Career Travel Fund helped talented young members attend ASA meetings to present their research and connect with mentors and collaborators—opportunities that often shape future careers.
- ASA StatFest continued to encourage and inspire undergraduates to explore careers in statistics and data science, offering networking opportunities and exposing participants to a wide range of graduate programs and career pathways.
- Donations also advanced public engagement. Through initiatives such as Telling Our Stories, donors helped elevate voices across the profession and highlight the human side of statistics—who statisticians are, what they do, and how their work improves society.
- And with continued investment in K–16 education, the ASA is helping ensure that younger students are introduced to data literacy, statistical thinking, and the excitement of discovery early in their education.

Together, these programs demonstrate how donor support strengthens the profession from multiple angles, bringing new talent into the pipeline, supporting their development, and increasing public understanding of the field.

Honoring Leaders and Expanding Legacy Giving

The ASA Legacy Page Program continued to grow as more members sought ways to honor individuals who have shaped the field. Four new legacy page campaigns launched in 2025, each attracting support from colleagues, students, friends, and family. These pages have evolved into a powerful expression of gratitude and community memory, preserving stories of mentorship, scientific impact, and service to the profession.

Just as importantly, these campaigns brought new donors into the fold, many supporting the ASA for the first time because of a personal connection.

A Heartfelt Thank You

The ASA's successes in 2025 reflect more than dollars raised. They reflect a shared belief that statistics and data science matter and that the profession benefits when more people have opportunities to participate, learn, and lead.

To every ASA Partner and every donor who contributed in 2025: Thank you! Your generosity strengthens the statistical community today and helps prepare the next generation of statisticians and data scientists—those who will drive discovery and inform decisions in the years ahead.

We are grateful for your partnership and for all you make possible. Keep an eye out for the 2026 ASA Stewardship Report for more examples of the impact your donations have across the community. ■

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From Scattered PDFs to Analysis-Ready Data: Putting an End to Time-Consuming Data Collection, Cleaning

Thiyanga S. Talagala, Department of Statistics, Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Cyclone Ditwah brought heavy rains to Sri Lanka. Amid this national emergency, Sri Lankans living around the world demonstrated the strength and unity of the nation by organizing various programs, such as relief supplies distribution programs, clean-up and restoration campaigns, and missing persons identification services.

While these responses delivered lifesaving support on the ground, the disaster also revealed a critical gap in Sri Lanka's disaster information ecosystem. That is, much of the essential data needed for data analysis and decision-making was often locked in PDF files across different websites.

There was no centralized repository to access the available data, which was also unstructured and messy—not ready to analysis. When researchers spend most of their valuable time collecting and cleaning data, it can delay analysis and modeling. In response to this information gap, our team developed open-source R programming packages that provided access to tidy data sets related to rainfall, river level, and impact counts, along with interactive dashboards for visualizing data and early warnings of landslides during the Ditwah cyclone period.

Data Is Everywhere, but Is All Data Useful?

When the cyclone Ditwah struck, vast amounts of data were generated every day, sometimes every hour. For example, during the cyclone, the Department of Metrology and the Disaster Management Centre published (mostly in PDF format) weather data, river water level, flood warning level data, and landslide early warning data. Furthermore, the Hydrology and Disaster Management Division of the Irrigation Department provided, through a dashboard, real-time water level information for major rivers across Sri Lanka. These efforts helped the public stay informed during the emergency. However, we found these data sets were not immediately ready for statistical data analysis. The primary reasons: reports were distributed across multiple sources—PDFs or HTML files—and they followed different naming conventions. They also varied in granularity.

To make the data analysis-ready, it must be converted into a tidy format, meaning:

1. **Each variable forms a column:** Every column represents a single variable.
2. **Each observation forms a row:** Each row corresponds to a single observation or measurement.
3. **Each value must have its own cell:** Each cell contains a single value corresponding to that variable for that observation.

Our Contributions

We developed two R packages, transforming landslide and flood warning reports, real-time water level data, situation counts, and rainfall data into tidy data sets. The data was published by the Disaster Management Centre, the Hydrology and Disaster Management Division of the Irrigation Department, and the Department of Meteorology, respectively. The R package ditwahLandslide also includes a tidy data set on early warnings of landslides that allowed researchers and practitioners to quickly access, filter, and analyze landslide-related information.

The R package Ditwah includes rainfall, flood warning levels, and river water level data, which allows users to efficiently study flood risks and hydrological patterns. This package also contains situation-related data, such as numbers of affected families, deaths, and safety centers. By converting scattered, heterogeneous, and often non-machine-readable reports into standardized, tidy data structures, these packages facilitate reproducible analyses, visualizations, and decision-making. They also serve as a foundation for developing forecasting models, risk assessments, and other data-driven applications for disaster management.

Thiyanga S. Talagala is a senior lecturer in the department of statistics, faculty of applied sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura in Sri Lanka. She holds a PhD in mathematics and statistics from Monash University, Australia, and develops open-source software tools to support reproducible research and teaching. She's authored several R packages, available on CRAN.

Hexstickers of the R Packages. Both packages are available on CRAN.

In addition to providing tidy data sets, these packages offer functionality to visualize data. The packages also offer access to interactive data visualization dashboards. A data dashboard is a visual display of the most important information in the data. This tool helps researchers quickly see what is happening, understand trends, and make decisions without needing to look at raw data.

By centralizing all the data sets we developed, we created an online website called Ditwah Cyclone Data and Analysis Hub, where researchers can easily explore, visualize, and get data download instructions from a single platform. By bringing diverse data sets into a single online platform, this hub enables researchers to easily discover, explore, and reuse data. Open, transparent, and accessible practices support the development of science.

Key Benefits

This work contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). Key benefits include the following:

1. **Timely and accurate weather forecasts and early warnings:** Structured data allows researchers to focus on data analysis and model building, without the need to manually download and clean data from dozens of PDF files. By streamlining these processes, this work helps strengthen national preparedness for climate-driven emergencies.
2. **Open-access centralized disaster data hub:** A single location—where all Ditwah-related data is organized, stored, and made publicly accessible—helps promote research transparency by allowing others to verify, reproduce, and build upon available data analyses. Furthermore, it helps avoid duplicating data cleaning efforts and encourages data reuse and sharing, which is crucial for research sustainability.
3. **Stronger education and data literacy:** Beyond immediate disaster response, the packages are designed for educational purposes. Schools, universities, and community groups can now use real Sri Lankan data to learn about disasters and patterns.
4. **Enhance research collaboration:** Data packages support research collaboration, particularly during large-scale events like natural disasters. When data is shared in a structured, standardized, and open format, collaboration becomes faster, more effective, and more inclusive.
5. **Supporting interdisciplinary work:** Data packages can be used by statisticians, geographers, climate scientists, public health experts, social scientists, and educators. A single, well-prepared data set enables diverse perspectives and integrated solutions.

The Way Forward

More data from cyclone Ditwah will be added in the coming months, including post-impact data sets and regular updates as new information becomes available. We invite researchers, educators, journalists, and the public to visit the Ditwah Cyclone Data and Analysis Hub to access the data, explore practical examples, provide feedback, and contribute to the continued growth of this open-access initiative. By leveraging existing information, this initiative supports disaster response, research, and education. ■

DahShu Data Science Symposium Highlights Innovative Frontiers

Kun Chen, Zhenming Shun, Ming-Hui Chen, Rui (Sammi) Tang, Jing Huang, and Peng Yang

The 2025 DahShu Data Science Symposium was held October 16–18, 2025, at the University of Connecticut in Storrs. Centered on the theme "Innovative Frontiers: AI and Data-Driven Advances in Drug Development, Precision Medicine, Healthcare," the symposium brought together researchers and practitioners from academia, industry, and regulatory agencies to showcase how AI and data science are reshaping biomedical research, drug development, and health care.

The first two days of the symposium opened with remarks from Barry Wells, UConn College of Liberal Arts and Sciences associate dean, and Rui (Sammi) Tang of Astellas Pharmaceuticals. Keynote lectures by Haiyan Huang of the University of California, Berkeley, on the first day and David Madigan of Northeastern University on the second highlighted cutting-edge challenges and opportunities in modern data science, biostatistics, and regulatory science.

The scientific program was organized into five themed sessions. Presentations in "AI in Genetics, Computational Biology, and Biomedical Studies" and "Medical Imaging, Neuroimaging, and Dependent Data" showcased advances in multi-omics integration; computational biology; and the analysis of high-dimensional, structured, and dependent data. The "Innovative Trial Design and Real-World Evidence" session highlighted new approaches to clinical trial methodology, including the use of real-world data in trial design and evidence generation.

On the second day, sessions in the theme "Machine Learning and AI in Healthcare" and "AI for Drug Development" demonstrated how AI and machine learning are being embedded across the drug development pipeline, from early discovery and translational research to later-phase clinical development and post-marketing evaluation.

In addition to the scientific talks, the symposium featured two panel discussions. The first, "Thriving in the AI Era: Challenges, Tools, and New Frontiers for Data-Centric Professionals," explored how statisticians, data scientists, and quantitative scientists can adapt to rapid advances in AI, manage evolving tools, and position themselves for leadership roles. The second panel, "AI in Drug Development: Governance, Organizational Readiness, Training, and Business Impact Evaluation," focused on practical questions of implementation, such as building governance frameworks, preparing organizations to use AI responsibly, training the workforce, and measuring business impact.

A highlight of the social program was the Thursday evening banquet, held at the Rome Ballroom on the UConn campus. The banquet talk, "From Data to Leadership: My Path to Chief Data and AI Officer," delivered by DauShu President Jing Huang (CareDx), offered a personal perspective on career development and leadership in data- and AI-driven organizations.

The panel discussion, titled "Thriving in the AI Era: Challenges, Tools, and New Frontiers for Data-Centric Professionals," is moderated by Jing Huang (CareDx). From left: Cindy Lu (AstraZeneca), Sammi Tang (Astellas), Shuangge Ma (Yale), and Ming-Hui Chen (UConn).

Coffee breaks, lunches, and the banquet provided opportunities for networking, mentoring, and cross-disciplinary conversations among participants at different career stages.

Another component of the meeting was the student poster competition. The symposium received 20 student poster submissions, spanning topics aligned with the major themes of the conference. During the poster sessions, students had the opportunity to present their work and engage in discussion with attendees. Several students received awards in recognition of the quality and impact of their research, and an award ceremony during the closing session honored the winners and highlighted the depth of emerging talent in the field.

For more information about the symposium, visit *https://dahshu.wildapricot.org/page-18129.* ■

STATS4GOOD

Data for Good Activists Fight **Human Trafficking**

David Corliss, Peace-Work

With a PhD in statistical astrophysics, **David Corliss** works as a data scientist in industry. He serves on the ASA Board as a Council of Chapters representative and is the founder and director of Peace-Work, a data for good nongovernmental organization.

Since this column began with a guest piece in late 2017 and then became a regular feature in January 2018, my goal has been to cover the breadth and depth of possibilities for Data for Good and ways people are using Data for Good to make an impact on our lives, communities, and world. This month, for my 100th column, I'm focusing on a subject near to my heart: how statisticians and data scientists contribute to efforts seeking to eradicate human trafficking in all its forms.

Data for Good activists fight against human trafficking in a variety of ways, and AI is playing an increasingly important role. In December, a US House committee created an overview of the state of the technology. While prevalence of this hidden crime can be difficult to measure accurately, statisticians using multiple system estimation are making important progress. Research on risk factors, especially using meta-analysis by geography, is needed to implement the most effective actions in each area.

Statisticians and data scientists are also needed by programs that find people caught in human trafficking and help them rebuild their lives. Training programs teach first responders and medical and educational staff to recognize risk factors. Legislative D4G activists meet with policymakers to develop effective actions and testify before House and Senate committees. In January, federal legislation was signed into law allowing victims to clear their record of crimes they were forced to commit by traffickers.

Safe harbor laws such as this are an effective way to support victims and encourage them to come forward to identify perpetrators. Going forward, matching state-level legislation is needed in the nearly 30 states with weak or absent safe harbor laws. This is an example of how our scientific teaching skills are needed to educate lawmakers about prevalence and risk factors. Helping to show the demonstrated impact of legislation like this can convince the rest of the states to follow the federal example.

Being engaged in Data for Good, I often find people working on important social justice programs with valuable data but without the analytic resources needed to use it effectively. One organization making great strides in data-driven activism is the Global Association of Human Trafficking Scholars. This institution has been a nexus for human trafficking researchers for more than five years, bringing together academics, government leaders, program managers, students, and others working to end human trafficking. With a mission "to respond to human trafficking by moving the knowledge base forward," the association has become a leader in turning solid research into actionable results.

The Data for Good nongovernmental organization Peace-Work has been a partner since the organization began, providing analytic research to support anti-trafficking programs and practitioners. This year, Peace-Work and the Global Association of Human Trafficking Scholars established a human trafficking Analytic Center of Excellence. Organized as a collection of resources housed on the association's website, it is available to all without cost. It includes four main components: links to open-source analytic research publications; a list of analytic researchers in the human trafficking space with contact information; links to programs leveraging statistics and data science in their anti-trafficking work; and a set of educational materials and other resources for program support, including procedures for recording and handling data and finding and working with statisticians and data scientists.

Peace-Work's operating model of analytic professionals donating a few hours a week in community service fits with the strategy of encouraging and supporting more people to get involved in Data for Good. The human trafficking Analytics Center of Excellence can serve as a model for other Analytics Center of Excellence projects. It's an opportunity for everyone to consider how to make our analytic resources available to wider audiences in Data for Good. ■

Getting Involved

This month, consider looking at the Analytic Center of Excellence concept that the Global Association of Human Trafficking Scholars implemented and how it could be used in your work area. Also, sign up for the email newsletters from important data resources such as the US Census Bureau (*https://tinyurl.com/3exftdka*), Friends of BLS (*www.friendsofbls.org/join*), and Bureau of Economic Analysis (*https://tinyurl.com/3huwddmr*) to get the latest developments to support your work.

STAT*tr@k*

Statistics Is a Journey, Not a Destination

Scott Evans, The George Washington University

I took a plan, execute, review, and improve training course for new statisticians in clinical trials when I was beginning my career that included a lecture on the role of the statistician in clinical trials. Years later, I was a faculty member for the same course and gave the same lecture to a new cohort of clinical trial statisticians. What follows is advice drawing on that lecture and lessons accumulated over the years.

Scott Evans is director of the biostatistics center and professor and founding chair of the department of biostatistics and bioinformatics at The George Washington University. He is also the author of more than 200 peer-reviewed publications and three textbooks about clinical trials.

➤ Understand the research question; ensure it is the right one.

- Work hard at finding and understanding the question before searching for answers.
- Place increased interest on questions of a pragmatic origin. These are the most important questions for patients and clinicians.

➤ Be inquisitive.

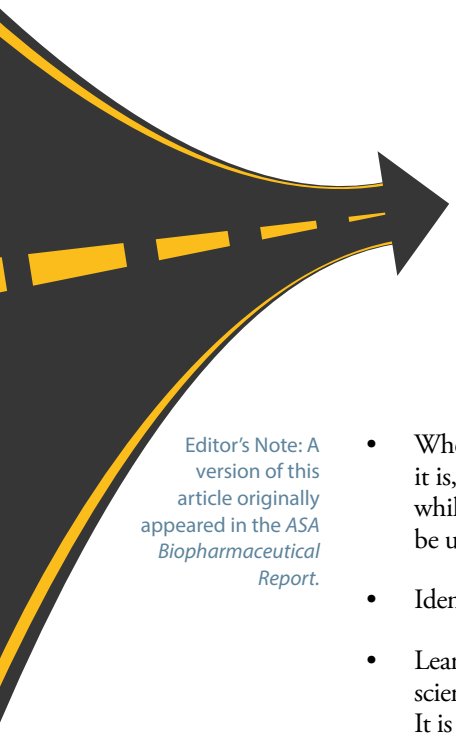
- Be a detective.
- Ask a lot of questions before answering one.
- It is better to know how to learn than to know. Go beyond what into why.

➤ Be thoughtful.

- Do not rush your answers.
- Think about a problem and develop your own ideas for solutions before researching how others have approached it. This is how novel thinking begins.

➤ Protect scientific integrity. Clinical trials are our strongest tool.

- Be motivated to do things better rather than faster and cheaper.
- Strive for objectivity, robustness, and transparency.



We are a critical part of team science, collaborating to improve the lives of our fellow humans through sound, principled, high-integrity research.

Editor's Note: A version of this article originally appeared in the *ASA Biopharmaceutical Report*.

- When sacrifice is necessary, and sometimes it is, sacrifice quantity based on feasibility while protecting quality. Otherwise, we will be unable to fully understand the evidence.
- Identify options and their pros and cons.
- Learn to distinguish innovations advancing science vs. compromises advertised as such. It is better to walk alone than in a crowd going in the wrong direction.
- Voice scientific opinions. Ensure they are well rationalized.

➤ Educating yourself and others is never-ending.

- Keep learning. Science does not stand still.
- Own and learn from your mistakes.
- Know the statistical literature.
- Know the medical literature. Interpret it critically.
- Tactfully teach others regarding clinical trial concepts and sound approaches.
- Educate colleagues about what you do and learn from them about what they do.
- Find mentors. Use your references and resources.
- Develop a library of key papers about different topics in the design, monitoring, analyses, and reporting of clinical trials.
- Participate in professional societies, attend professional meetings, and take short courses.

➤ Keep developing content of character.

- Pretend to be the best person you can imagine; you will become that person.
- Find opportunities for others.
- Be proactive.

➤ Develop effective communication skills.

- This involves listening, writing, speaking, and presenting.
- Tailor to your audience.
- Avoid being isolated.
- Learn to explain complicated ideas in simple ways.

➤ Finish the job.

- The goal is to understand the results, not simply obtain them. Thoroughly understand and help others understand the result.

Learning statistics is one thing. Learning to be a statistician is another.

Becoming a statistician is not like learning the state capitals or a collection of methods that can be checked off as completed. Being a statistician is as much a road as a destination. We are a critical part of team science, collaborating to improve the lives of our fellow humans through sound, principled, high-integrity research. Developing the nontechnical skills along with the technical skills is critical for maximizing our important contributions. ■

Preparing a Confident Workforce: Starting Courses with a Meet-and-Greet

Jaya M. Satagopan, Rutgers School of Public Health

"I am really nervous about biostatistics. Any advice?"

"I am not a math person. How do I survive this course?"

These are some of the questions I hear every semester from incoming students once they find out they must enroll in Introduction to Biostatistics. I hear similar concerns from master's biostatistics students preparing for the theory-heavy estimation and hypothesis testing course.

What is striking is not that students are anxious, but that their anxiety arrives even before the first week of class. Anxiety sets in the moment they find out that the biostatistics core course is a requirement for their MPH or MS program. By the time they walk into class, many are already convinced that biostatistics is difficult and they will struggle. If this anxiety goes unaddressed, it has profound consequences not just for course performance, but also for the confidence and competencies students require to succeed in the public health profession.

The Hidden Cost of Fear

Training in biostatistics is critical for public health practice. It forms the foundation of evidence-based research, study design, data management, data visualization, and data analysis skills that define our field. But biostatistics carries a reputation as scary, difficult, boring, overwhelming, or weed out. Students internalize these labels, which can create significant barriers to engagement right from the outset and adversely impact their workforce readiness.

Fear of biostatistics manifests in various subtle but consequential ways: silence during classroom discussions; reluctance to ask questions; resistance to collaborate in group activities; procrastination; and missing classes. Together, these adversely impact the achievement of key competencies such as interpreting data, communicating findings, and collaborating with peers. Fear is not simply an emotional feeling that students experience. It has direct implications for their workforce preparedness. The skills we want students to develop are compromised when fear dominates their early engagement in the class.

A Pre-Course Meet-and-Greet Session

Several years ago, I began hosting a meet-and-greet session for students enrolled in my biostatistics class each semester. I host the session a few days before classes begin. This session is not a class or a lecture. Instead, it is an intentional strategy to ensure students are emotionally and cognitively ready to engage in the course. During the session, I do the following:

- Explain the course structure, objectives, and practical relevance of the course content. This helps students understand how classroom activities translate into skills they will need as public health professionals.
- Clarify how students can succeed in the course through consistent engagement, following instructions, active participation in class materials, and forming collaborative study groups, all of which mirror real-world public health work.
- Emphasize that some materials can be challenging but are navigable through time management, task management, and study plans. This frames challenges with course materials as skill-building opportunities, rather than a path to failure.
- Explain that fear and anxiety are normal, not a sign of weakness, and invite students to share their concerns and questions.

The primary goal of the meet-and-greet session is to create and ensure psychological safety of the students, boost their confidence, and enhance their learning experience and performance in both academic and professional settings. I do not camouflage expectations, do not issue warnings or threats, and do not imply that fear is evidence of lack of readiness for the course or the master's program.

To supplement the meet-and-greet session, I also create a pre-class discussion board within the course's online learning management system. In this space, I briefly introduce myself, including my interests outside of biostatistics, and invite students to introduce themselves, as well. This discussion board helps allay fears associated with

Jaya M. Satagopan, professor of biostatistics at Rutgers School of Public Health and full member at Rutgers Cancer Institute, studies statistical genetics and genomics in cancer. She holds a PhD in statistics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and an MSc in science communication and public engagement from the University of Edinburgh. She is also an ASA Fellow.

Sample Introduction on Discussion Board

I am a professor of biostatistics. My research work is in statistical genetics and genomics with applications in cancer. Besides statistics, I enjoy reading works by Agatha Christie and P. G. Wodehouse and studying the night sky. During April 2024, I had the opportunity to enjoy the total solar eclipse from near a lake in Austin, Texas. It was an inspiring experience to observe the moon fully cover the sun to create a couple of minutes of nighttime illusion.

the instructor-student hierarchy by allowing students to see my human side and making them more comfortable approaching me with questions, both inside and outside the classroom.

Allaying Fear Enhances Workforce Readiness

Allaying student fear does not imply rigor is compromised or course standards are lowered. Instead, it strengthens student preparation and allows them to engage deeply and comprehensively with foundational materials. Addressing fear at the outset helps students approach the course with confidence and clarity. It equips them with the following vital soft skills and core competencies essential for impactful public health:

- Data literacy: manage, interpret, and analyze data accurately
- Critical thinking: apply quantitative reasoning to real-world public health problems to develop innovative solutions
- Collaboration: engage in discussions; share insights; learn; and work effectively with peers, colleagues from various disciplines, and community partners
- Communication: share findings effectively using tables, figures, and written summaries
- Emotional intelligence: be self-aware, manage relationships, and prioritize tasks even under pressure
- Adaptability: adjust to the need of the hour, such as shifting needs or public health emergencies

Impact of the Meet-and-Greet Sessions

Over the past several semesters, I have noticed consistent changes when students participate in the meet-and-greet sessions. Students tend to ask questions earlier and with greater confidence. Class discussions are more participatory and collaborative. There is higher engagement with in-class problem-solving activities. Students show more curiosity about diverse approaches to data visualization, analysis, and communication. They arrive better prepared and engage in substantive discussions with each other before, during, and after classes. Students persist more actively when engaging in difficult topics.

Overall, these positive changes are early indicators of workforce preparedness. Students who enter the professional field with the ability to analyze data, communicate, collaborate, adapt, and think critically are better positioned to meet the demands of the public health profession.

I do not claim a causal effect of meet-and-greet sessions on these positive changes. Rather, I draw on student feedback indicating that these sessions boost their confidence in their quantitative abilities early in the course and motivate their active engagement throughout the semester.

Broader Implications

Although I have developed the meet-and-greet sessions for biostatistics courses, this principle is broadly applicable to other public health courses. When getting ready for a semester, we typically share the course syllabus with students and prepare for the semester by focusing on content delivery and assignment design. The pre-class meet-and-greet sessions serve as an emotional onboarding process to ensure students begin courses with confidence, are supported, and are ready to engage consistently throughout the semester. Such emotional onboarding is critical for predicting and addressing fear and for creating an environment in which students succeed both academically and professionally.

Concluding Remarks

A course does not begin solely on the first day of classes. For students, a course begins in their minds, and their confidence and interest in engaging in the course is shaped by their past experiences and expectations and the reputation of the course topic.

Fear of a course is often predictable and addressable. I have used meet-and-greet sessions as an intervention strategy to normalize fear and address it early on before students arrive for their first class. Such efforts to allay fear may be small in scale but can be substantial in impact. Students who enter the course with confidence and clarity that challenges are part of the learning process are better prepared to acquire the competencies critical for succeeding academically and, most importantly, for succeeding as public health professionals.

I conclude by inviting my peers to share their thoughts on this question: How can we help students discard their fear of statistics/biostatistics and intentionally prepare them to not just survive a course, but also to thrive as professionals? ■

Health Policy Statistics Conference Slated for Annapolis in 2027

International Conference on Health Policy Statistics

Evidence-Based Policy in Action: Statistics, AI, and Digital Health in Practice

January 13–15, 2027 • Annapolis, Maryland

Conference venue: Graduate by Hilton Annapolis, 126 West Street, Annapolis, Maryland

The 16th International Conference on Health Policy Statistics will take place January 13–15, 2027, in Annapolis, Maryland. The theme of the conference is "Evidence-Based Policy in Action: Statistics, AI, and Digital Health in Practice."

ICHPS brings together statisticians, health services researchers, economists, methodologists, and policy analysts to tackle pressing methodological and data challenges in health policy research. With a community of roughly 350 attendees, the conference offers an environment for discussion, collaboration, and networking across career stages.

Invited session and workshop proposals will be accepted until March 31. Learn more at *ww2.amstat.org/meetings/ichps/2027.* ■

Yulia Gel Tapped for Project Supporting Genesis Mission

Yulia Gel, a professor at Virginia Tech, recently joined a new project that will support the US Department of Energy's Genesis Mission. Gel will focus on the Learning-Accelerated Domain Science Institute, which aims to make scientific machine learning accessible to domain scientists.

The institute "breaks down the traditional disciplinary boundaries and brings the statistical and mathematical foundations to the forefront of innovations in scientific computing," said Gel. She added that she views this as an opportunity "to redefine and highlight the unique role modern statistical science plays not only in scientific machine learning, but the AI breakthroughs in general."

The Genesis Mission is charged with developing an integrated platform connecting the world's best supercomputers, experimental facilities, AI systems, and unique data sets across every major scientific domain.

To learn more about the Genesis Mission and LEADS, visit *https://tinyurl.com/5c7pwsd3* ■

TELLING OUR STORIES

The goal of the Telling Our Stories video project is to highlight the profound impact of statistics on society. Each video tells the story of how statisticians and data scientists are advancing science, informing public policy, and contributing to a world in which decisions are data-driven.

Check out the videos in the series on the STAT*tr@k* website: *https://stattrak.amstat.org/telling-our-stories.*

Obituary

Stephen Portnoy

Longtime ASA member and Fellow Stephen Portnoy passed away December 28, 2025. A professor emeritus in the department of statistics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Portnoy was a preeminent statistician who published more than 100 research articles and served as the editor of the Theory and Methods section of the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*.

Born in Kankakee, Illinois, Portnoy completed his undergraduate degree in mathematics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and earned his PhD in statistics from Stanford University. He served as an assistant professor in the department of statistics at Harvard University before returning to Illinois to join the department of mathematics at the University of Illinois. In 1985, he established the department of statistics there.

In 2016, Portnoy was elected to the American Association for the Advancement of Science for contributions to asymptotic theory and quantile processes, leadership in the development of robust regression methods, and building significant collaborations between statistical science and ecology.

Portnoy leaves a legacy in the field of statistics.

To learn more about Portnoy, read a tribute from the University of Illinois at *https://tinyurl.com/mt9znwtn.*

Obituary

Richard Arnold Johnson

Hira L Koul , Michigan State University

Richard Johnson

Richard Arnold Johnson, aged 88, died on February 2, 2026. He lived a rich life of service and contributed greatly to the profession of statistics.

Rich was born on July 10, 1937, in St. Paul, Minnesota. He earned three degrees from the University of Minnesota—a BEE, a master's in mathematics, and a PhD in statistics. He joined the University of Wisconsin-Madison statistics faculty in 1966, where he remained as a tenured professor until his retirement in 2008. During his 42 years on the faculty at the University of Wisconsin, Rich served for three years as the statistics department chair.

Rich published more than 125 technical papers in internationally acclaimed journals such as the *Annals of Mathematical Statistics, Annals of Statistics, Journal of the American Statistical Association,* and *Technometrics.* His papers span a wide range of topics marked by contributions to asymptotic theory, rank tests, circular statistics, multivariate statistics, and reliability. His work on applications of statistics in forestry was invaluable. He especially enjoyed his creative collaborations with Gouri Bhattacharyya and George Roussas.

Rich co-authored six textbooks. The best known is the highly cited *Applied Multivariate Statistical Analysis,* published with Dean Wichern. This book is in its 6th edition and used throughout the world. His other highly circulated text on statistics—*Principles and Methods,* published with G. K. Bhattacharyya—is in its 5th edition. He was also the sole reviser of *Probability and Statistics for Engineers* by I. Miller and J. Freund for the 4th through 7th editions.

Rich received several honors and awards. He was an elected Fellow of the American Statistical Association, International Statistical Institute, and Institute of Mathematical Statistics. He was awarded the Carver Medal in 2008 for his service to the IMS and the Don Owen Award in 2009 for his service to the ASA. At his retirement conference, Rich was presented with an award by James Evans of the US Forest Products Laboratory that read, "For 30 years of collaborative research leading to advances in statistical methodology that significantly enhanced the Forest Products Laboratory's research effort." His paper with Chris Morrell on random truncation and neutrinos was awarded the Frank Wilcoxon Award in 1991 for the best applications paper in *Technometrics.*

Rich's service to the profession included his having been an IMS associate program secretary, program secretary, and member of the executive committee. He was also on the editorial board of the *Journal of the American Statistical Association.*

One of his major contributions to the statistical profession was the creation of the international journal *Statistics and Probability Letters.* Rich was the founding editor and served as its editor-in-chief from 1982–2007. This journal is well regarded worldwide and has been credited by some for helping to change the culture of statistics journals toward faster response times. It is now in its 44th year.

Rich, accompanied by his wife, Bobbie, was an unofficial ambassador for statistics, giving technical talks in 23 countries and meeting with statisticians worldwide. He was also proud of the 25 PhD students he advised during his tenure. During his professional career, he also mentored numerous scholars. He will be missed immensely.

How Can We Help?

We want to help you share your own news with colleagues and showcase your latest successes. If you have any news you would like to share, email *megan@amstat.org*.

Deadlines for Select ASA National Awards and Special Lectureships

The ASA's extensive awards program recognizes statisticians who have made outstanding contributions to the association and statistical profession through research, teaching, consulting, and service.

ASA Awards

Student and Early Career Travel Fund

Deadline: At least three months prior to the start of the ASA conference for which the applicant is applying for support.

https://tinyurl.com/5bjk99x9

ASA Section Awards

Deadline: March 15

Annie T. Randall Innovator Award
https://tinyurl.com/2uy7askp

Biopharmaceutical Section Scholarship Award
https://tinyurl.com/53dnw4zj

Deadline: April 15

Social Statistics Section Mid-Career Award
https://tinyurl.com/5avjm48x

Deadline: May 1

Government Statistics Section Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship
https://tinyurl.com/pf9v47vv

Deadline: September 15

Health Policy Statistics Section Achievement Awards
https://tinyurl.com/3v94nrf9

Additional Award Listings

Deadline: December 15

COPSS Distinguished Achievement Award and Lectureship
https://tinyurl.com/2s3unxd2

Elizabeth L. Scott Award and Lectureship
https://tinyurl.com/2s3unxd2

COPSS Emerging Leader Award
https://tinyurl.com/2s3unxd2

Visit the ASA website to view a comprehensive list of awards and scholarships.
https://bit.ly/46X9sLm

A Century of Statistical Excellence: WSS Celebrates *100th Anniversary*

Benmei Liu

The Washington Statistical Society is one of the oldest and most active chapters of the American Statistical Association. On January 19, 1926, the WSS was officially organized and its constitution approved. Exactly 100 years and one day later, the WSS hosted a celebration to honor this milestone.

The WSS 100th Anniversary Founding Party, held at NORC, drew approximately 80 members and friends as the evening bridged the society's past and future. Attendees enjoyed food and drink and received commemorative gifts of WSS-branded charging cables or T-shirts to mark the occasion.

WSS presidents gather with ASA leadership. Front, from left: Mary Batcher (1999–2000), Fritz Scheuren (1991–1992), Phillip Kott (1996–1997), Clyde Tucker (2005–2006), and Michael Cohen (2007–2008). Back, from left: Benmei Liu (2025–2026), Mark Otto (2021–2022), Dan Kasprzyk (1986–1987), Chris Moriarity (2015–2016), ASA President Jeri Mulrow, John Czajka (2004–2005), David Marker (2003–2004), and President-Elect Lisa Mirel.

Honored Guests and Reflections

In attendance were several ASA leaders, including Executive Director Ron Wasserstein, Associate Executive Director Donna LaLonde, ASA President Jeri Mulrow, and ASA Vice President Susan Paddock. Also present were 11 past WSS presidents, whose service spanned 1986–2022, and WSS President-Elect Lisa Mirel.

Glenn White and current WSS President Benmei Liu opened the evening with welcoming remarks. The brief program featured reflections from three past presidents—Dan Kasprzyk, Mary Batcher, and John Czajka—who shared stories from their tenures. Kasprzyk noted that the concerns of the WSS have remained consistent over the last 40 years, focusing on seminars, outreach, and encouraging young statisticians. "Key to the success of the organization are the volunteers who work tirelessly to make the WSS a successful chapter," he said. "These volunteers were critical to my presidential term in 1986–87, and they continue to be critical now."

Batcher reflected on her time leading the society and her long-standing history with the chapter, including her role in welcoming White into the WSS fold early in his career—a testament to the society's long-standing tradition of peer mentorship and professional support.

Czajka shared a memory of the chapter's physical history, recalling how he volunteered to house 8–10 boxes of WSS materials in his own office in 2005 when the US Census Bureau moved buildings and the chapter's archives were left without a home.

Wasserstein congratulated WSS on its century of achievements and contributions as an ASA chapter. Mulrow, for whom the WSS is home chapter, offered remarks about her presidential initiative, encouraging statisticians to volunteer their skills in local communities. She said, "Chapters are an important part of the ASA. They are places where local statisticians and data scientists can gather, create connections, learn from one another, and share innovations."

The WSS community supports its members and local community through mentoring, quantitative literacy, and science fair judging. It also supports the federal statistical agencies and data infrastructure that is part of the DC community that supports the nation. As Mulrow noted, "WSS members benefit greatly from these community connections."

A Spirit of Dedication

Kasprzyk celebrated the WSS 60th anniversary 40 years ago, and Fritz Scheuren (president, 1991–1992) has been a WSS member for more than 60 years. Indeed, many of the attendees were WSS members for more than 30 or 40 years.

Mark Otto, 2021–2022 president and mentoring program founder, traveled from Colorado to attend and arranged for several mentor-mentee pairs to meet in person for the first time. Gary Cline, the chapter's social committee chair, traveled back from an out-of-state trip to attend. Both arrived directly from the airport to join the festivities.

Looking Toward the Next Century

Since its founding, the WSS has been powered by the dedication of its members. The roster of leaders and volunteers at the celebration was a reminder that the WSS story is not written by any one individual but by a community of leaders who care deeply about its mission. Over the past 100 years, as the statistics field has evolved from early survey and traditional statistical methods to the frontiers of data science, machine learning, and AI, the chapter's core mission has remained constant: providing a professional home for exchanging ideas; recognizing excellence; and mentoring the next generation.

The WSS serves as a bridge between government, academia, and industry, ensuring statistical thinking is applied to the public good. It remains a place where lifelong friendships form. While members honor the contributions of long-standing members, they also embrace new voices and young spirits who will carry the chapter forward. ■

Taking the Opportunities the WSS Has Given

Mark C. Otto

In 1989, I took a small step by volunteering at the Washington Statistical Society for the quantitative literacy project. Wendy Rotz was the chair, and we met monthly at her house. We taught Girl Scouts more about probability using M&Ms than anyone thought possible. I ran booths for the American Statistical Association and WSS at STEM festivals and helped judge science fairs—a good way to meet other statisticians. The WSS 100th anniversary reminded me that my chapter and the ASA have given me more opportunities for collaboration and leadership than I have had in my jobs. Here are some small steps and opportunities I found and took advantage of—something you could try as well.

I tried career talks at schools and created an interactive exhibit for STEM and STEAM festivals, integrating work from the Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge with statistical experiments using banding data. I conducted sample surveys in elementary school classes, letting students choose the questions they asked their peers. I was scared to find that the average wake time for school commutes was 5:00 a.m. and the average weekly television hours (20) were likely biased high by March Madness and students' ability to estimate hours. I helped the WSS effort judge science fair projects at several regional fairs around the Washington area.

Judging science fairs was as easy as answering an ad in the WSS newsletter, and then one thing led to another. In 2013, Dhuly Chowdhury and I helped bring the Meeting Within a Meeting to the ASA headquarters. I recruited teachers from around the Washington Metro Area. I met two science teachers at the workshop and began helping teachers and students create better science fair projects using the ASA's Quantitative Literacy materials. Teachers were already overwhelmed by teaching requirements but were interested in their students doing well in science fairs. I developed

Mark Otto

materials that presented statistics as a formalization of the scientific method, explained how to manage data, and showed how to write good tables and draw good graphs. I taught these in a research class for teachers at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. I worked with high school year-long research classes at the DC School Without Walls and TC Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia. In both places, students worked to enter national and international science fairs.

Ana Humphrey, one of my most successful students and one I mentored for three years, won first place and the $250,000 prize in the 2019 Regeneron Science Talent Search. In her junior year, I connected her with Elisa Quintana at the Goddard NASA Space Flight Center. The next summer, Ana worked with Elisa and the exoplanet team. They are writing a paper exploring how more planets might fit into exoplanet systems. Ana graduated from Harvard with a degree in astronomy. Often, the mentor learns more than the mentee.

Although I was unable to develop materials for a professional teachers' workshop, the ideas were incorporated into ASA Director of Science Policy Steve Pierson's *This*IsStatistics science fair guidance. I could have used the collaboration skills I was introduced to later.

In 2010, I was appointed to the Committee on Applied Statistics. I helped the committee with its 2012 membership initiative to build and sustain mentoring programs within the ASA. The committee found that programs lasted only two years on average. They developed a system that works by building a program and a committee and by matching mentors to mentees—the small, hard decisions that trip up a budding program. This became *The American Statistician* article titled "An Eight-Step Guide to Creating and Sustaining a Mentoring Program."

In September 2014, David Morganstein proposed that the Washington Statistical Society start a chapter mentoring program. I joined the board call to encourage the chapter to use the tools the Committee on Applied Statistics developed. Since introducing the tools, I have been asked to chair both the pilot and official committees. The program, documented in the *Amstat News* article titled "Washington Statistical Society Builds Community Through Mentoring," has been given as an example of a chapter mentoring program. In 2015, I won an at-large member position on the WSS board, and much of my term focused on the mentoring program. This is our tenth year.

In 2017, I was selected to serve as ASA vice chair of the Membership Council, overseeing its nine committees. I worked to increase the diversity of committee members, including early-career statisticians, and some of them became our strongest chairs. Many of us older leaders asked what those years of experience bought us.

As vice chair, I learned from the Committee on Applied Statistics and its new chair, Allison Florance, as they put together an ambitious schedule of 10 webinars on various aspects of collaboration. This also included a collaboration workshop with the Council of Sections in 2017. I used the committee's collaboration initiative to help other committees work more closely with presidential initiatives and foster greater collaboration among committees and other parts of the ASA. Those ideas and skills proved valuable when I later became WSS president.

I also worked with Gary Sullivan's Ad Hoc Committee on Statistical Leadership Training. I contributed articles to *Amstat News:* a humorous article about management and another with Gary about leadership journeys. At that time, the ASA was trying to get the ASA chapters to initiate more leadership activities. Jennifer Parker, Eileen O'Brien, and I organized a WSS statistical leadership class. At the end of 2018, Gary taught the two-day course and past ASA presidents Barry Nussbaum and Sally Morton shared their leadership stories. The class was successful for the 34 participants. In 2022, Eileen and I organized Tuesday lunch talks. Some have kept the discussions going in peer mentor groups.

As my wife, Syd, and I were moving to Colorado, I was asked to run for WSS president. She thought I was crazy because we wouldn't be living in the area, but it would be my last chance to make that kind of contribution. As it turned out, my three-year term coincided with COVID. The board barely realized I wasn't local. The social committee did a great job hosting a Zoom holiday party and annual awards dinner. I kept Jill Dever's idea of the

I don't think members realize how much the WSS board does and how our programs engage so many volunteers.

three presidents meeting before board meetings to share leadership. Those discussions provided better direction. I learned a lot. My Membership Council work helped me understand what was going on with the ASA and access its resources.

I don't think members realize how much the WSS board does and how our programs engage so many volunteers. It is amazing to see young statisticians grow in their careers and leadership. I would love to see a study comparing the ASA, American Association for Public Opinion Research, and WSS volunteers with those who focus solely on their careers. I am definitely biased toward my WSS network.

Now we have Jeri Mulrow, another WSS member, as ASA president. She wants to bring our statistical work to our local communities. Look at the ways the WSS already affects our communities, including Quantitative Literacy, science fair judging, professional communities, and the state of our federal data—which affects all our communities and lives. Thank you to Johnathan Auerbach for his project tracking the state of our federal data and statistical agencies and how that integrates with Steve's ASA policy support. We are at a time when we can expand our work and consider small changes that affect those around us. What small steps could you take to volunteer? ■

sectionnews

Survey Research Methods Highlights Active Groups and JSM Sessions

Survey Research Methods Section members already active in related areas might want to join one of the following ASA interest groups:

- Statistics and Data Science in Aging
- Mobile and Wearable Data Science
- Stats Up AI

Learn about these groups by visiting *https://tinyurl.com/4n9ra39ms*.

For the 2026 Joint Statistical Meetings, five invited paper sessions have been accepted, two of which tie directly to the conference theme of Communities in Action: Advancing Society.

SRMS seeks nominations for the ASA Fellow (*www.amstat.org/your-career/awards/asa-fellows)* and 2027 Joseph Waksberg (*https://tinyurl.com/353st382*) awards. ■

Quality & Productivity Section Sees Busy 2025

John Szarka, Section Chair

The Quality and Productivity Section finished a strong year, wrapping up executive committee meetings in December. The tactical plan was set for 2026 with the following three focus areas:

- Strengthening student and early-career membership
- Increasing the visibility and outreach to our members
- Improving processes for running the section

Each area contains specific actions to provide more member value, in alignment with points of emphasis from broader ASA leadership at this year's Council of Sections meetings at JSM. A group of newer and experienced officers across industry, academia, and government will execute this plan in 2026 and provide different perspectives.

Overall, the section had several accomplishments in 2025. Its flagship conference, the Quality and Productivity Research Conference, was successful in June at the University of Washington, operating at a profit in a challenging environment of uncertainties. The Fall Technical Conference, the section's jointly sponsored conference with the Section on Physical and Engineering Sciences and two sections of the American Society for Quality, was also a success in Houston, Texas, in October.

At last year's JSM in Nashville, Tennessee, Q&P had a strong invited session, Modern Process Monitoring, while also co-sponsoring an additional invited session, In Praise of Modern Statistical and Machine Learning Methods for Digital Engineering. Q&P also sponsored two topic-contributed paper sessions, one contributed papers session, and a contributed poster session. Additionally, the section co-sponsored six topic-contributed sessions, including the SPES and Q&P student paper aware and Natrella scholarships.

Two of the section's members (Jennifer Van Mullekom and Brian Weaver) were named ASA Fellows for 2025, as well. ■

Top Ten Signs I Am Getting Older

Ron Wasserstein

Amstat News continues its lighthearted series from ASA Executive Director Ron Wasserstein, who shares a top 10 every month on the *Practical Significance* podcast and we share here. He says, "I've got a birthday coming up. At this point in life, I'm happy to keep having birthdays. But the number of birthdays has accumulated substantially, a fact that is measurable statistically. Here are the top 10 signs I am getting older."

To listen to the *Practical Significance* podcast, visit *https://magazine.amstat.org/podcast*-2.

10
My posterior distribution has shifted. (*I figured I should get that obvious joke out of the way first.)*

09
The upward trend in my hazard function is disturbing.

08
I am clearly a lagging indicator.

07
To look presentable, I need a lot of smoothing.

06
I keep telling the same stories, indicating serious autocorrelation.

05
My memory qualifies as "sparse data."

04
I am an outlier in any distribution that matters.

03
My model is suffering from drift

02
There is observable shrinkage in many of my parameters.

#01
My random walk is more of a random shuffle.

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can **help a student or early-career statistician attend an ASA meeting** (ASA Student and Early Career Travel Fund).

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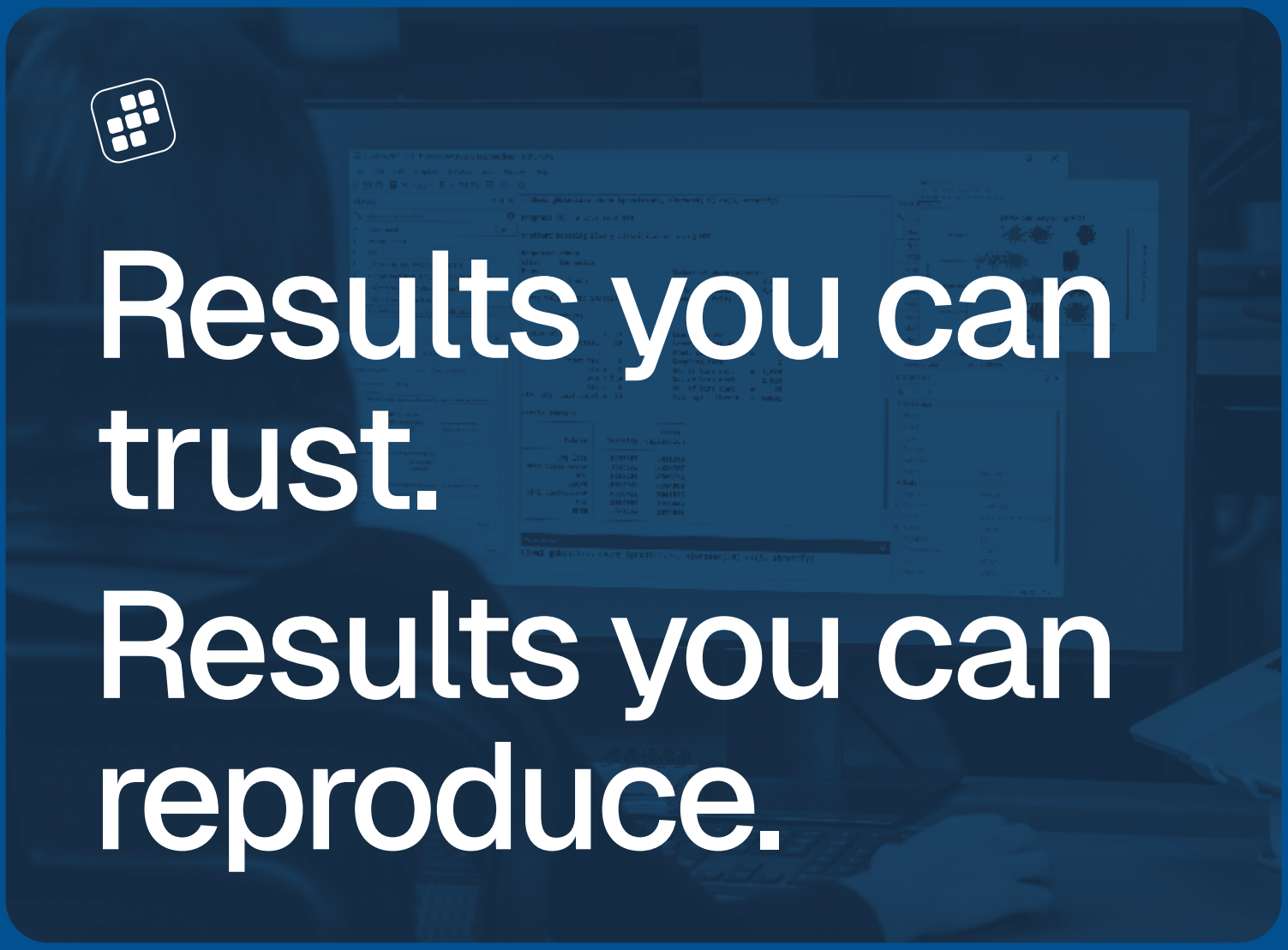

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