StatLinks

THE OFFICIAL NEWS FROM THE TEXAS A&M DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS
TO LINK FRIENDS AND FORMER STUDENTS

EDITOR
ANA FERREIRA
ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR II

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MESSAGE FROM THE **DEPARTMENT HEAD**

As we close the Spring 2025 semester, I am filled with pride and gratitude reflecting on our department's remarkable accomplishments this academic year.

This spring, we celebrated the graduation of an exceptional group of students, whose dedication reflects the strength of our programs and community. The year brought significant achievements in research, teaching, and service. One faculty member was nominated for the prestigious title of Regents Professor, and several faculty and students received awards from the College of Arts and Sciences and other institutions for their impactful contributions.

We are proud to have established five endowed faculty fellowships, ensuring long-term support for research and teaching. Our students excelled through competitive scholarships, internships, and research presentations at major national and international conferences.

The department hosted key events including the Zorich Workshop and the Cancer and Bioinformatics Symposium in the fall, and the Best of Statistical Science (BOSS) Workshop in the spring, an international event that highlighted innovative research in Bayesian Statistics.

We also welcomed new faculty members — some last fall and others arriving this upcoming semester — who bring valuable expertise to our department and will play a key role in advancing our academic and research mission.

On a personal note, this marks my final year as Department Head. It has been an honor to lead such a dedicated group of faculty, staff, and students. I am deeply grateful for the support I have received and confident that the department is well-positioned for continued growth and success.

Thank you for being part of our community and for supporting the Department of Statistics at Texas A&M University. I wish everyone a restful, enjoyable, and inspiring summer!

BRANI VIDAKOVIC
H.O. Hartley Chair and Department Head

NEW HIRES

Jade Xiaoqing Wang

Assistant Professor
Effective August 1, 2025

Austin Brown

Assistant Professor
Effective August 1, 2025

Debangan Dey

Assistant Professor
Effective July 14, 2025

Hadi Salman

Instructional Assistant Professor and
Knowledge Development Fellow for
TAMIDS
Effective July 1, 2025

FACULTY
AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Jesús Arroyo has been selected as the recipient of the Department of Statistics Teaching Award in recognition of his outstanding dedication to student learning and excellence in teaching. This award honors his commitment to delivering high-quality instruction and fostering a supportive learning environment. As part of this recognition, Dr. Arroyo will receive a certificate and a $500 award.

Dr. Rajarshi Guhaniyogi has received a grant from the Department of Energy (DOE) as the sole principal investigator from Texas A&M University. The project, funded at approximately $120,000 for one year, supports his work on developing generative models for multivariate spatially indexed categorical data. The research aims to advance spatial mapping of building attributes in large metropolitan areas, contributing to more accurate and efficient urban infrastructure analysis.

Dr. Bani Mallick has been appointed as the Editor-in-Chief of the SIAM/ASA Journal on Uncertainty Quantification (JUQ). JUQ is a leading journal jointly published by the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM) and the American Statistical Association (ASA). The journal publishes cutting-edge work at the intersection of mathematical modeling, statistics, and computational methods, focusing on areas such as sensitivity analysis, model validation, and data assimilation.

Dr. Darren Homrighausen has been selected as the recipient of the Department of Statistics Teaching Award in recognition of his outstanding dedication to student learning and excellence in teaching. This award honors his commitment to delivering high-quality instruction and fostering a supportive learning environment. As part of this recognition, Dr. Homrighausen will receive a certificate and a $500 award.

Dr. Mohammed Aburweis has been honored with the 2025 College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Excellence Award, recognizing his outstanding contributions as an academic professional track faculty member. The award celebrates his excellence across multiple areas of responsibility, including teaching, service, and research. Along with a trophy and certificate, Dr. Aburweis will receive a $4,000 award in recognition of his significant impact and dedication.

Dr. Patricia Ning recently joined the editorial board of Bayesian Analysis as an Associate Editor, marking a significant milestone in her professional contributions to the field. She was also awarded the International Travel Conference Grant from Texas A&M University to support her invited presentation at the Bayes Comp 2025, held at the National University of Singapore—recognizing her active engagement in global statistical research and collaboration.

Dr. Huiyan Sang has been selected as the recipient of the Dr. Raymond J. Carroll and Dr. Marcia G. Ory Endowed Faculty Fellowships in Statistics in the College of Arts and Sciences. Established by Drs. Raymond Carroll and Marcia Ory to support excellence in the field of statistics, this prestigious three-year appointment recognizes Dr. Sang's outstanding contributions to research, teaching, and service. Her appointment will be effective beginning September 1, 2025.

Dr. Xianyang Zhang has been selected as the recipient of the Regina and Norman Carroll Faculty Fellowship in Statistics in the College of Arts and Sciences. This three-year appointment, effective September 1, 2025, recognizes Dr. Zhang's outstanding contributions to statistical research, teaching, and service. The fellowship supports faculty who demonstrate academic excellence and a strong commitment to advancing the discipline.

FACULTY DELEGATES PRESIDENTIAL INVESTITURE

Drs. Brani Vidakovic and Mohammed Aburweis proudly served as official delegates during the Presidential Investiture of President Mark Welsh at Texas A&M University. Dr. Vidakovic represented the American Statistical Association, underscoring his prominent role in the national statistics community, while Dr. Aburweis represented South Dakota State University, his alma mater, reflecting the lasting connection and pride he holds as a former student. Their participation highlighted both their professional affiliations and the broader academic network celebrating this significant university milestone.

COLLEGE HONORS RECIPIENTS

The College of Arts & Sciences Faculty and Staff Awards Ceremony took place on April 29, 2025, celebrating the outstanding achievements of faculty, staff, and students across the college. Representing the Department of Statistics, Dr. Mohamed Aburweis was honored with the 2025 College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Excellence Award, recognizing his multifaceted contributions and dedication to academic excellence.

From left to right: Saptarshi Roy, Rebecca Lee, Dr. Mohamed Aburweis, Reveille X, and Dr. Brani Vidakovic.

Also representing the department were graduate students Rebecca Lee and Saptarshi Roy. Lee received the Dr. Joseph Newton Graduate Student Service Award, while Roy was honored with the Dr. H. Joseph Newton Dean's Excellence in Service to Science Award. Accompanied by Department Head Dr. Brani Vidakovic, the group had the special opportunity to take a photo with Texas A&M's beloved mascot, Reveille X, making the celebration even more memorable.

FACULTY PROMOTIONS

Raymond Wong

Full Professor
Effective September 1, 2025

Rajarshi Guhaniyogi
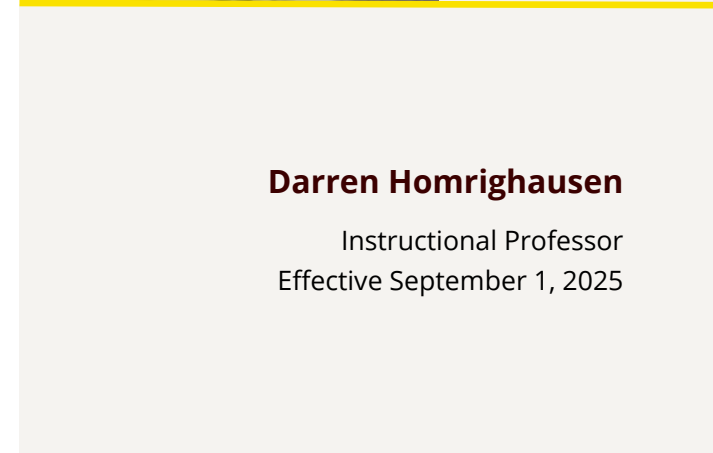
Full Professor
Effective September 1, 2025

Scott Bruce

Associate Professor with Tenure
Effective September 1, 2025

Darren Homrighausen
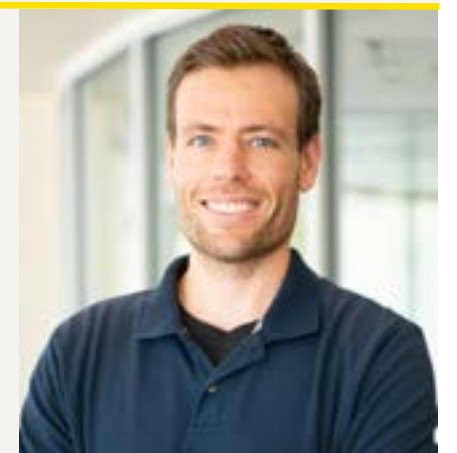
Instructional Professor
Effective September 1, 2025

Quan Zhou

Associate Professor with Tenure
Effective September 1, 2025

BANI MALLICK HONORED AS REGENTS PROFESSOR BY TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Dr. Bani Mallick, a distinguished professor in the Department of Statistics at Texas A&M University, has been named a Regents Professor by the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents. This prestigious designation recognizes faculty members who have made extraordinary contributions to their university, their field, and the people of Texas.

The Regents Professor Award, established in 1996, honors full-time professors or senior-level professionals who have held their rank within the A&M System for at least five years and have demonstrated a distinguished record of teaching, research, and service. The selection process is rigorous, beginning with a call for nominations from the chancellor, followed by an internal selection committee within each institution or agency. Final nominations undergo a comprehensive review by academic vice chancellors and past award recipients before being forwarded to the chancellor and the Board of Regents for final approval. Since its inception, 323 faculty members have been named Regents Professors.

As a Regents Professor, Dr. Mallick will carry the perpetual title for the duration of his service to the A&M System and will be honored with a commemorative medallion, an inscribed nameplate, and a certificate encased in a hand-crafted wooden shadow box. These will be presented in a special ceremony held in conjunction with an upcoming Board of Regents meeting.

Dr. Mallick has been a faculty member at Texas A&M since 1998 and is internationally recognized as a pioneer in Bayesian nonparametric regression and classification research. He serves as the director of both the Center for Statistical Bioinformatics and the Bayesian Bioinformatics Laboratory. Throughout his three-decade career, he has developed groundbreaking methodologies and theories that serve as the foundation for interdisciplinary research in fields ranging from bioinformatics and veterinary medicine to engineering and traffic mapping. His work in Bayesian modeling and computation has received funding from the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Department of Energy, and Department of Defense.

In addition to his research contributions, Dr. Mallick is highly regarded as an educator and mentor. He has graduated dozens of doctoral students and has served on more than 50 Ph.D. and M.S. committees in the past decade alone. More than 70 percent of his students have gone on to academic careers at top universities or have secured

> **"Each of these distinguished individuals has made significant contributions to their fields and to the state of Texas"**

positions at leading firms such as IBM, Pfizer, Eli Lilly, GlaxoSmithKline, and the Penn Cancer Center.

Dr. Mallick's outstanding career has earned him numerous accolades. He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Statistical Association, the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, and the Royal Statistical Society. He is also an elected member of the International Statistical Institute. His previous honors include the Outstanding Young Researcher Award from the Indian Statistical Association, the Fulbright-Nehru Distinguished Chair for 2017–2018, Texas A&M Association of Former Students Distinguished Achievement Awards in Research (2006) and Graduate Mentoring (2019), and the University of Connecticut Department of Statistics Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2020–2021. He currently serves as the joint editor-in-chief of the SIAM/ASA journal Uncertainty Quantification.

The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents named a total of 18 faculty members and 13 agency service, extension, or research professionals as Regents Professors and Regents Fellows for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

"Each of these distinguished individuals has made significant contributions to their fields and to the state of Texas," said Bill Mahomes, Chairman of The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents. "Their achievements embody the A&M System's mission of service and innovation, and I hope their dedication will motivate others."

From left to right: Bill Mahomes, Bani Mallick, Robert Albritton, and John Sharp.

Dr. Mallick's recognition as a Regents Professor is a testament to his profound impact on statistical research, education, and interdisciplinary collaboration. His dedication to advancing Bayesian methodologies and mentoring the next generation of statisticians solidifies his legacy as one of the most influential and productive figures in the field.

Dr. Mallick's impact extends beyond his research and teaching; he has been a dedicated mentor and leader in the statistical community.

His commitment to fostering the next generation of statisticians is evident in his involvement in professional organizations, editorial roles, and leadership in interdisciplinary research collaborations.

As a Regents Professor, Dr. Mallick's influence will continue to shape the future of statistics and data science, reinforcing Texas A&M University's reputation as a hub for innovation and excellence in the field.

A LASTING GIFT TO STATISTICS

In celebration of their 75th birthdays, longtime Texas A&M faculty members Dr. Raymond Carroll and Dr. Marcia Ory have made a meaningful investment in the future of academic excellence. Rather than focusing on new hires, the couple's gift will support those already making a difference—through the creation of five endowed faculty fellowships within the Department of Statistics.

The fellowships are designed to recognize the achievements of current tenured faculty members who demonstrate a commitment to impactful research, meaningful collaboration, and high-quality teaching.

"Texas A&M has been a big part of our lives," said Dr. Carroll, a renowned statistician and distinguished professor in the Department of Statistics. "We wanted to do something that supports the people who are already here and contributing so much every day."

This act of giving reflects a shared belief between Drs. Carroll and Ory: that faculty should feel valued for the work they do and the dedication they bring to their roles. By establishing a permanent endowment through the Texas A&M Foundation, the fellowships will provide ongoing support for future generations of professors, well beyond the first group of recipients.

For Dr. Ory, a distinguished professor in the School of Public Health, this endowment is not just about financial support — it is about cultivating an environment that affirms faculty contributions in real, tangible ways.

"Academia often focuses on recruiting new talent, which is important," she said. "But sometimes we forget to celebrate the talent we already have. This is our way of changing that—of saying thank you and keep going."

The fellowships reflect the couple's longstanding commitment to mentorship, collaboration, and academic growth. Dr. Carroll, who spent over three decades at Texas A&M, including three years as head of the Department of Statistics, is known for his support of junior faculty and for building a department recognized nationally for both research and teaching excellence.

Their partnership extends far beyond the university. Drs. Carroll and Ory met as undergraduates at the University of Texas and have since built a life together marked by professional achievement and community involvement. After years of relocating for education and work, they both found a lasting academic home at Texas A&M.

Dr. Ory joined the university in 2001 after a distinguished career with the National Institutes of Health, where she was instrumental in advancing research in aging, health, and behavior. At Texas A&M, she founded the Center for Population Health and Aging, now

A sign outside the Blocker Building marks a tree dedicated by Drs. Carroll and Ory in honor of their passion for statistics.

part of the Center for Community Health and Aging.

Their generosity on campus is deeply personal. Over the years, Drs. Carroll and Ory have donated funds for several trees planted in memory of their parents, siblings, and close friends. One of these trees, located near the Blocker Building, stands as a quiet but meaningful tribute to their shared passion for statistics and their dedication to Texas A&M.

Several of the new fellowships also carry personal significance. Two are named in memory of their parents, whose values of compassion and generosity continue to guide their lives. Others honor family members or bear the couple's own names, reflecting their gratitude for the people and experiences that have shaped their journey.

"We have been lucky," Dr. Ory reflected. "We had access to great education and stable careers. Now we are in a position to give back, and this feels like the right way to do it — by lifting up the people and the department that have given us so much."

From mentoring young scholars to pioneering research initiatives, Drs. Carroll and Ory have spent their careers investing in people. Through these fellowships—and the living memorials planted across campus—that legacy will continue to thrive, ensuring ongoing excellence and recognition for Texas A&M's dedicated faculty for generations to come.

STAFF RECLASSIFICATIONS

Andrea Dawson was reclassified as a Graduate Program Coordinator II in April 2025, acknowledging her growing responsibilities and continued commitment to the Department of Statistics. In her expanded role, Andrea plays a central part in managing the day-to-day operations of the graduate program, from coordinating admissions and enrollment to supporting current students and faculty. This reclassification highlights the value of her contributions to the success of the graduate program.

Ana Ferreira received a reclassification to Administrative Coordinator II in February 2025, reflecting her expanding role within the Department of Statistics. As part of this reclassification, Ana has taken on additional responsibilities in support of the department's Distance Learning Program, assisting with various administrative tasks to help ensure smooth program operations. This reclassification reflects her increasing and invaluable contributions to the department.

STAFF APPRECIATION BREAKFAST HIGHLIGHTS

The College of Arts and Sciences held its 2025 Staff Appreciation Breakfast on Thursday, May 22, celebrating the vital contributions of staff across the college. Attendees, including staff members from the Department of Statistics, enjoyed a generous breakfast buffet, door prizes, and a small gift of appreciation. The event also featured a thoughtful and inspiring presentation by Dr. Chad Nelson from the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications, titled "Growth Mindset and a Bonsai Tree."

A SCHOLAR'S LEAP: FROM UNDERGRADUATE TO PH.D.

Chen Yang, now a Statistics Ph.D. student, was honored with the inaugural Su Binghua Distinguished Biostatistics Scholarship on June 26, 2024. This prestigious scholarship, sponsored by Tigermed, recognizes exceptional rising talents in the field of biostatistics across mainland China. Notably, Chen Yang was the only undergraduate recipient selected from a competitive pool of Ph.D. candidates, a testament to the depth of their academic achievements and potential.

The $2,800 scholarship serves as a significant recognition of Chen Yang's contributions to biostatistics, underscoring their commitment to excellence in research. Their unique distinction as the sole undergraduate recipient highlights both their exceptional skills and dedication to advancing the field. This achievement marks Chen Yang as a promising figure in the future of biostatistical research, as they transition into their Ph.D. studies and continue to contribute to the scientific community.

GRADUATE STUDENTS AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Valeriya Rogovchenko has been selected as the recipient of the Newton Graduate Student Service Award, recognizing her exceptional service to the university, college, department, and broader community during her time as a graduate student at Texas A&M University. In honor of this achievement, Valeriya will receive a $1,000 award.

Saptarshi Roy has been selected as the recipient of the Newton Dean's Excellence in Service to Science Award. This award recognizes his outstanding contributions and dedication to service within the Department of Statistics. As part of this honor, Saptarshi will receive a $1,000 award.
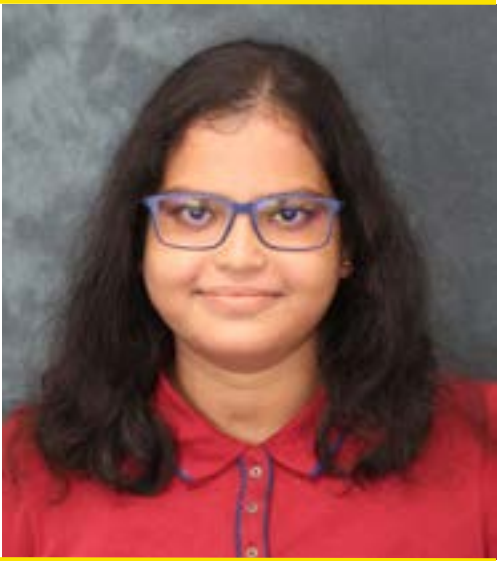

Daniel Cirkovic graduated with his Ph.D. in Statistics from Texas A&M University in Spring 2025. During his time in the department, he made meaningful contributions through his research, teaching, and service. This August, he will begin his new role as an Assistant Professor of Statistics at Marquette University. We are proud of Daniel's achievements and excited to follow his continued success in academia.

Isaac Ray is the 2025 recipient of the Ruth J. and Howard F. Newton Memorial Graduate Student Teaching Award in Statistics. In 2024, he taught STAT 489 and STAT 201, with STAT 489 requiring extensive curriculum development and initiative on his part. Isaac's thoughtful and rigorous teaching style earned high praise from students, who rated him 4.83 out of 5 for overall instructor quality. He will receive a certificate and a $1,000 cash award in recognition of his exceptional teaching.

Snigsha Das was awarded an Honorable Mention in the 2025 Student Paper Competition hosted by the American Statistical Association's Sections on Survey Research Methods, Government Statistics, and Social Statistics. Her paper, "Scalable Efficient Inference in Complex Surveys through Targeted Resampling of Weights," was recognized for its methodological innovation and contribution to improving inference techniques in survey statistics.

Rebecca Lee received the Dr. Joseph Newton Graduate Student Service Award in recognition of her exceptional commitment to supporting fellow students and enhancing the academic community. Through her leadership and service, Rebecca has played a vital role in creating an environment where collaboration and student success thrive — mirroring the spirit of the award named after a champion of student engagement and excellence.

TRAVEL AWARDS

Jacob Andros

USCOTS 2025
Ames, IA

"Deriving Realistic Examples of Statistical Problems for Life Science Majors Using AI"

Somjit Roy

IISA 2024
Kochi, India

"TAVIE: Tangent Approximation for Variational Inference in Different Exponential Families"

Sungee Hong

AISTATS 2025
Mai Khao, Thailand

"Distributional Off-policy Evaluation with Bellman Residual Minimization"

Snigdha Das

BNP-ISBA 2025
Los Angeles, CA

"Scalably Efficient Inference in Complex Surveys through Targeted Resampling of Weights"

Soham Ghosh

BNP-ISBA 2025
Los Angeles, CA

"Optimal Posterior Contraction for Principal Subspace in High Dimension"

Trisha Dawn

JSM 2025
Nashville, TN

"Spatially Varying GRN via Bayesian Nonparametric Covariate-Dependent Directed Cyclic Graphical Models"

Brigham Halverson

JSM 2025
Nashville, TN

"Hierarchical Absorbing Markov Chain Models for Pooling Sparse Combat Sequence Data"

Jiongran Wang

Bayes Comp 2025
Queenstown, Singapore

"Bayesian Robust Inference for Doubly- intractable Distributions via Score Matching"

Niladri Kal

BNP-ISBA 2025
Los Angeles, CA

"Adaptive Divide and Conquer with Two Rounds of Communication"

Minjee Kim

JSM 2025
Nashville, TN

"Bayesian Conditional Independence Testing Using Pivotal Quantities"

Jaeseon Lee

JSM 2025
Nashville, TN

"Raman Spectra using Wavelet-based ANOVA: Uncovering Dietary-Gene Spectral Components in Mice"

Jiyoung Park

AISTATS 2025
Mai Khao, Thailand

"Robust Estimation in Metric Spaces: Achieving Exponential Concentration with a Frèchet Median"

Gozde Sert

ICSDS 2024
Nice, France

"Bayesian Semi-supervised Inference via a Debiased Modeling Approach"

Valeriya Rogovchenko

JSM 2025
Nashville, TN

"Clustering Spatial Transcriptomics Data with Dirichlet Process Mixture of Random Spanning Trees"

Sayantan Roy

JSM 2025
Nashville, TN

"Boon of Dimensionality in Bayesian Heritability Estimation"

Srijato Bhattacharyya

BNP-ISBA 2025
Los Angeles, CA

"A Random Spanning Tree based Set-Partitioning Model for Spatial Clustering of Multivariate Spatial Data with Applications to Disease-Mapping"

Arhit Chakrabarti

ENAR 2025
New Orleans, LA

"Global-Local Dirichlet Processes for Identifying Pan-Cancer Subpopulations Using Both Shared and Cancer-Specific Data"

Bitan Sarkar

ASGH 2024
Denver, CO

"MR.RGM: An R Package for Fitting Bayesian Multivariate Bidirectional Mendelian Randomization Networks"

Jose Rodriguez-Acosta

JSM 2025
Nashville, TN

"A Bayesian Multiplex Graph Classifier of Functional Brain Connectivity Across Cognitive Tasks"

TEXAS A&M TO LAUNCH BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN BIOINFORMATICS PROGRAM IN FALL 2025

Texas A&M University will launch a Bachelor of Science in Bioinformatics in Fall 2025, adding a dynamic new program to its academic offerings. Developed collaboratively by the Departments of Statistics and Biology, with support from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, this in-person program will provide students with a robust foundation in statistics, biology, genetics, and computer science—skills that are essential in today's rapidly evolving field. Dr. Yuchao Jiang, Associate Professor in the Department of Statistics, was instrumental in establishing the program and will serve as its inaugural Program Director. "Featuring a uniquely designed curriculum, it aims to nurture the next generation of bioinformaticians, quantitative and computational biologists, data scientists, and researchers in various life science, biotechnology, and healthcare settings. We are excited to see this program getting materialized and greatly look forward to welcoming its first cohort in Fall 2025," said Dr. Jiang.

The program's launch addresses the growing need for professionals skilled in interpreting massive biological datasets generated by cutting-edge techniques like next-generation sequencing, proteomics, and metabolomics. Bioinformatics bridges data science and biology, focusing on quantitative methods for analyzing complex biological data—a distinction that sets it apart from computational biology, which applies computational tools to biological research.

The curriculum integrates core courses in biology, statistics, and computer science with advanced bioinformatics training. Students will delve into topics
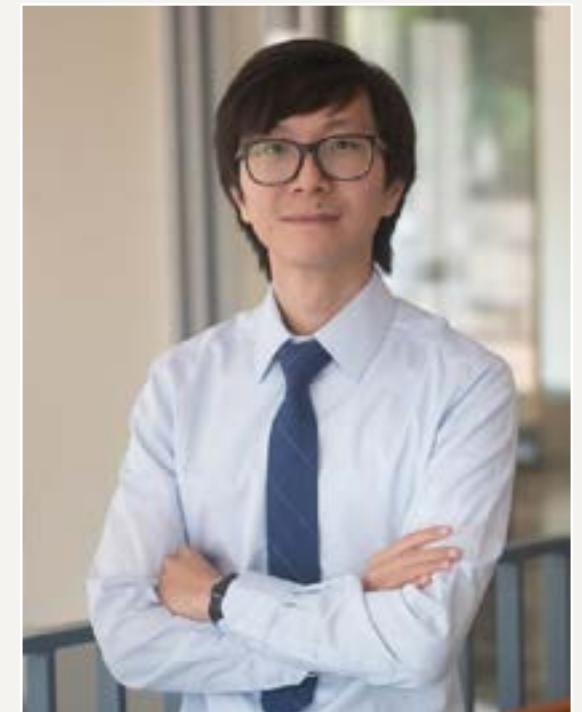

Dr. Yuchao Jiang, Associate Professor with joint appointments in the Departments of Statistics and Biology

such as genetics, genomics, and molecular biology while honing skills in statistical analysis and computational data handling. This interdisciplinary approach ensures graduates are prepared to address challenges in fields like biotechnology, life sciences, and healthcare, where data-driven insights are increasingly vital.

Graduates will emerge with expertise in both biological sciences and data analysis, ready for careers as bioinformaticians, computational biologists, data scientists, and researchers. They are expected to thrive in diverse professional environments, including research institutions, biotech companies, and healthcare organizations, where the demand for bioinformatics expertise continues to grow.

Requiring 120 credit hours, the Bioinformatics degree provides a comprehensive academic experience. The Department of Statistics will oversee the program in collaboration with other departments to ensure students receive the resources and support needed to excel in this cutting-edge field at the intersection of biology, computation, and statistical science.

NEW DIRECTOR APPOINTED FOR PH.D. PROGRAM

Dr. Raymond Wong has been appointed as the new Director of the Ph.D. Program. In this role, Dr. Wong will oversee the strategic direction, curriculum development, and mentorship initiatives within the program. His extensive experience in statistical research and dedication to student success make him well-suited to lead this pivotal aspect of the department.

With a strong commitment to advancing the academic and professional growth of doctoral candidates, Dr. Wong brings both expertise and vision to the position. His leadership will play a key role in cultivating an environment of rigorous scholarship and innovation, helping to prepare the next generation of leaders in the field of statistics.

SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE: TEXAS A&M GRADUATE ESTABLISHES FACULTY FELLOWSHIP IN HONOR OF MENTOR

Nearly 55 years ago, Dr. Ersen Arseven made a pivotal decision to pursue his Ph.D. in statistics at Texas A&M University. This choice sparked a long-standing connection to the university that continues today. Over the last 20 years, Dr. Arseven has contributed significantly to Texas A&M's future by supporting both faculty and students through various endowments. His most recent initiative, the Patricia R. Smith and Dr. William B. Smith Faculty Fellowship, celebrates the enduring importance of faculty-student relationships by investing in faculty excellence in Texas A&M's Department of Statistics.

Throughout his career, Dr. Arseven has been a problem-solver, a quality that has been key to his success as a statistician and consultant in Nyack, New York. Keeping a close watch on statistical trends, he remains particularly engaged with Texas A&M's Department of Statistics, which he considers his academic home. Recently, Dr. Arseven noticed a concerning trend: faculty members who had been integral to Texas A&M were being drawn away to other institutions. When he discovered that resource constraints were a primary reason, he felt compelled to act.

In response, Dr. Arseven established the Patricia R. Smith and Dr. William B. Smith Faculty Fellowship for Statistics. This fellowship not only honors Dr. William B. Smith, a prominent Texas A&M statistician and mentor, but also aims to provide long-term support for faculty in their teaching, research, and professional development. Dr. Smith, an influential figure in the department, earned both his master's and Ph.D. from Texas A&M and served as department head for nearly a decade. His contributions to the field and commitment to students left a legacy that Dr. Arseven deeply respects and wanted to help continue.

Dr. Arseven recalls how Dr. Smith's wife, Patricia, helped forge a connection between him and Dr. Smith beyond the classroom. While Dr. Smith was a demanding professor who kept a professional distance, the two became friends over time, bonding over their love for Texas A&M and the field of statistics. Patricia played an integral role in supporting her husband's students and was a friend and "guardian angel" to many, including Dr. Arseven and his late wife, Susan.

Dr. Arseven's endowment not only supports future faculty but also stands as a tribute to the unique connections and lasting mentorship he experienced at Texas A&M. Through this initiative, Dr. Arseven hopes to ensure that Texas A&M retains exceptional faculty who will continue to shape the futures of students, just as Dr. Smith did for him and countless others.

Dr. Ersen Arseven '74 (left) and Dr. William B. Smith '60 (right)

Professor Emeritus of Statistics Dr. William B. Smith '60 with his wife Patricia R. Smith

Dr. Smith receiving his 2011 American Statistical Association Founders Award

SPRING
2025

EVENTS

JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH

APRIL | MAY | JUNE

SPRING 2025 COLLOQUIUMS

PAROMITA DUBEY

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF DATA SCIENCES AND OPERATIONS, USC MARSHALL BUSINESS SCHOOL

"A New Mutual Independence Testing Framework for Random Objects using Distance Profiles"

YA'ACOV RITOV

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

"A Discontinuity in the Analysis of RDD"

RAKTIM BHATTACHARYA

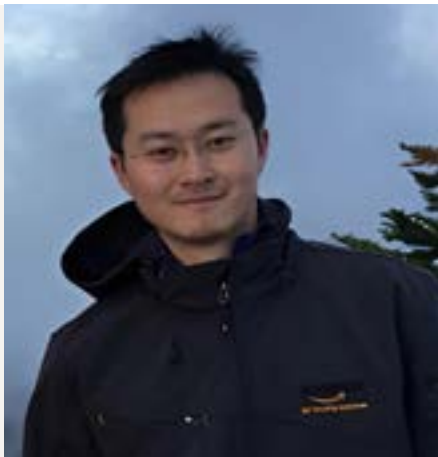**PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF AEROSPACE ENGINEERING, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY**

"Challenges in Tracking Resident Space Objects in Cislunar Space"

PENG DING

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - BERKELEY

"Design-based Causal Inference in Bipartite Experiments"

ALESSANDRO RINALDO

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS AND DATA SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

"Statistical Inference for Temporal Difference Learning with Linear Function Approximation"

CHAO GAO

PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

"Are Adaptive Robust Confidence Intervals Possible?"

STATISTICS FORMER STUDENT NETWORK
WEBINARS

SOUTIR BANDYOPADHYAY

"High-Resolution Long-term Weather Data for Energy"

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
APPLIED MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS
COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES

KRISTIN P. LENNOX

"Mathemagic! A Defense of Statistics in the Age of Data Science"

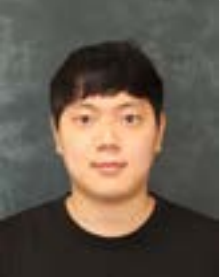**SENIOR MANAGING SCIENTIST**
EXPONENT

EUN SUG PARK

"Air Pollution Forensics and Health Effects Evaluation"

SENIOR RESEARCH SCIENTIST
TEXAS A&M TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE
DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS

WEI (AUSTON) WEI

"Personal Experiences as An MS Level Cancer Biostatistician: Service, Science, Business"

PRINCIPAL BIOSTATISTICIAN TEAM LEAD
DEPARTMENT OF QUANTITATIVE HEALTH SCIENCES,
LERNER RESEARCH INSTITUTE
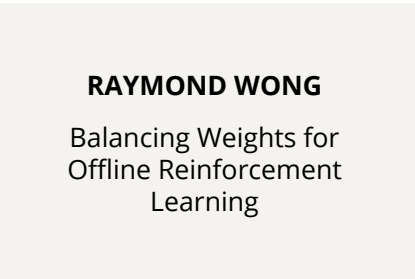**CLEVELAND CLINIC**

STAT CAFE

JIYOUNG PARK

Robust Estimation in Metric Spaces: Achieving Exponential Concentration with a Frechet Median

XIANYANG ZHANG

E-values, Multiple Testing and Beyond

RAYMOND WONG

Balancing Weights for Offline Reinforcement Learning

MOHSEN POURAHMADI

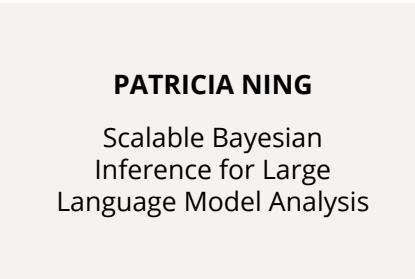An Overview of High-Dimensional Covariance Estimation

ISAAC RAY

Deep Clustering of Remote Sensing Scenes through Heterogeneous Transfer Learning

TORYN SCHAFER

Innovative Bayesian Approaches for Robust Trend Filtering and Changepoint Detection in Complex Time Series

PATRICIA NING

Scalable Bayesian Inference for Large Language Model Analysis

JESÚS ARROYO

Spectral Clustering in Networks: Overview and Novel Approaches

ALEXANDER COULTER

Fastfrechet and DistQTL: New R Packages For Distributional Regression

REBECCA LEE

Hierarchical Bayesian Spectral Estimation of Stationary Time-Series of Varying

2025 BEST OF STATISTICAL SCIENCE (BOSS) WORKSHOP

The Department of Statistics at Texas A&M University hosted the 2025 Best of Statistical Science (BOSS) Workshop on April 25–26, 2025. This two-day event brought together a distinguished group of scholars, faculty, and students for a stimulating program of research presentations, collaborative dialogue, and professional networking.

BOSS 2025 was made possible in part through the generous support of Drs. Alicia Carriquiry and James Berger, whose Hagler Fellowship Awards at Texas A&M University helped fund the workshop. Their support reflects a strong commitment to nurturing statistical research and academic community-building at both the local and national levels.

The workshop featured presentations by 16 prominent statisticians representing a wide array of institutions and research interests. Sessions covered a diverse range of topics in statistical theory and practice, offering attendees exposure to some of the most current and impactful work in the field. Each talk sparked engaging discussions and helped foster connections among scholars from different backgrounds and specialties.

As part of the workshop, two special honors were awarded in recognition of outstanding contributions to statistical science. Dr. Dipak Dey was selected to deliver the Ronald R. Hocking Endowed Lecture Series in Statistics, a distinguished lecture that recognizes sustained excellence and leadership in the discipline. Additionally, Dr. Ramses Mena was named the Inaugural SETCASA Invited Speaker, marking the first time this new honor was presented as part of the South and East Texas Chapter of the American Statistical Association's collaboration with Texas A&M.

A key highlight of the event was the graduate student poster session, which showcased the research of 14 graduate students from Texas A&M and other institutions. This session provided a valuable platform for emerging statisticians to share their work, receive feedback from experienced researchers, and gain recognition for their contributions to the field.

The workshop drew 77 participants from 18 universities across the country, including 41 students. This diverse group of attendees helped create a vibrant environment conducive to meaningful academic exchange and professional development. The interdisciplinary nature of the conversations underscored the workshop's broader goal: to advance statistical thinking across different domains and promote a spirit of collaboration within the statistical community.

To close out the first day, attendees gathered for a Friday evening dinner celebration, providing a relaxed setting for networking and conversation. The evening concluded with the presentation of the beloved "Deely Awards," a lighthearted tradition that added fun and levity to the formal academic proceedings.

With its strong lineup of speakers, high-quality student participation, and generous support from academic leaders, BOSS 2025 was a resounding success. It not only celebrated the best in statistical science but also reaffirmed Texas A&M's role as a hub for research, mentorship, and innovation. Beyond the academic rigor, the workshop fostered a welcoming atmosphere that encouraged meaningful interactions between students and established researchers. Many attendees left with new ideas, collaborative opportunities, and a renewed sense of purpose. As the field of statistics continues to evolve, events like BOSS play a vital role in shaping its future—by connecting people, sparking curiosity, and reinforcing the value of scholarly community. The Department of Statistics looks forward to continuing this tradition of excellence and hosting future gatherings that inspire the next generation of statistical leaders.

This topic is also explored further in a related article, which can be found at tx.ag/BOSS.

Seong Won (Brian) Park, Riley Wilkinson, Leo Oh, and Matthew Blackley earned second place in the graduate division of the 2025 Student Data Challenge with their team, Data Dudes. This year's challenge, Cyber Wise, focused on leveraging data science to address real-world cybersecurity issues. Over the course of seven weeks, the team developed a comprehensive solution that combined statistical modeling, machine learning, and clear data visualization to tackle the assigned problem. Their project stood out for its methodological rigor, teamwork, and practical insights, earning recognition from a panel of academic and industry judges. reflective of modern data science work.
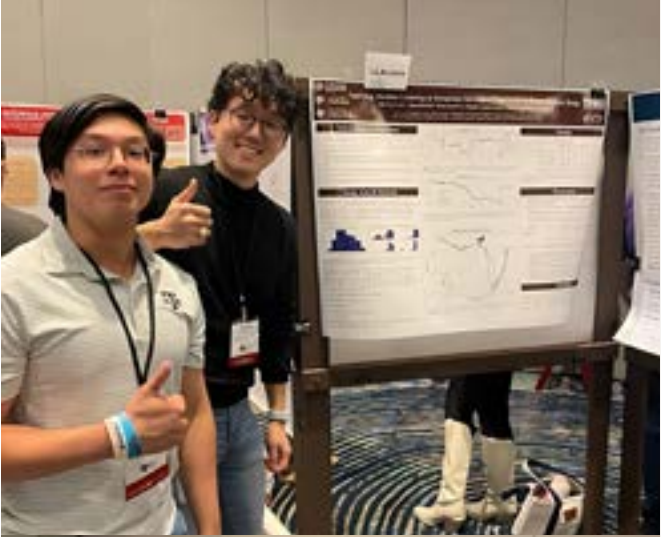

John Paul Acosta and Seong Won (Brian) Park represented the Department of Statistics at the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting, held February 19–21. They competed in the student poster competition with a project titled "Applying Machine Learning to Interpolate Movement Trajectories of Desert Bighorn Sheep." The work reflects a collaborative effort with the Department of Range, Wildlife, and Fisheries Management and the TAMU Natural Resources Institute. Supported in part by the Department of Statistics Undergraduate Summer Research Program, the project highlights the application of advanced statistical methods to ecological data in an interdisciplinary research context.

Daniel Drennan presented his research at the Verification, Validation, and Uncertainty Quantification Symposium, delivering a talk titled "Data-Driven Closure Modeling in Sparsely Observed Dynamical Systems." His work, funded by Sandia National Laboratories through the Lab Directed Research and Development (LDRD) program, focuses on advancing data-driven methods to improve modeling accuracy in complex systems with limited observational data.

Tahn Oh and Junhee Suh, competing as team LG Grams, earned second place in the undergraduate division of the 2025 Student Data Challenge. Their achievement reflects a high level of data analysis expertise and problem-solving ability in a competitive environment. The award was part of a three-way tie for second place, underscoring the strong performance and close competition among the top undergraduate teams.

Isaac Ray presented his research at Los Alamos National Laboratory as part of the Statistical Sciences Group's Invited Seminar Series on April 30. His talk, "Statistics with Spanning Tree Representations," introduced graph-based methods for regression, classification, and density estimation that address challenges in analyzing data on lower-dimensional manifolds. Advised by Dr. Huiyan Sang and supported by the National Science Foundation, Isaac's work broadens the scope of statistical learning for complex, structured data.

STUDENT EVENTS

HOLI CELEBRATION

The Department of Statistics' Departmental Climate Committee hosted a Holi Celebration lunch on Tuesday, March 18, 2025. Faculty, staff, and students gathered to enjoy a festive meal in honor of the Festival of Colors, celebrating community, inclusion, and cultural appreciation in a relaxed and welcoming setting.

SGSA GAME NIGHT

The Statistics Graduate Student Association (SGSA) hosted a fun-filled game night on Friday, February 21, in the Fisher Bowl. Students came together for an evening of friendly competition featuring board games, trivia, and laughter, making it a great opportunity to relax and connect with peers outside the classroom.

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

The Department of Statistics' Departmental Climate Committee hosted a Lunar New Year Celebration on Wednesday, January 29, bringing together faculty, staff, and students for a lunch celebration. The event featured festive decorations and traditional treats, reflecting the department's commitment to fostering community.

PROSPECTIVE STUDENT VISIT DAY

On March 17th, the Department of Statistics welcomed prospective graduate students for a Prospective Student Visit Day. Attendees met with faculty and current students, toured the department, and learned more about our programs, research, and community.

WORKFLOW WORKSHOP

On April 8, Dr. James Berger presented the Workflow Workshop with a thought-provoking talk titled "Counterexamples in Statistics That Can Alter One's Statistical Philosophy," challenging attendees to rethink foundational assumptions in statistical practice.

PH.D. QUALIFYING EXAMS

The Department of Statistics held its Ph.D. Qualifying Exams on May 19 and 21. These exams are a key milestone in the doctoral program, assessing students' foundational knowledge and readiness to advance in their research.

2025 FACULTY AND STAFF APPRECIATION BBQ

SPRING 2025 END OF SEMESTER PARTY

To celebrate the conclusion of a successful spring semester, the Statistics Graduate Student Association (SGSA) hosted the Spring 2025 End of Semester Party on Tuesday, April 29. Held in the Fisher Bowl from 1:00 to 3:00 PM, the event brought together graduate students and faculty for a relaxed and fun-filled afternoon. Attendees enjoyed a wide spread of food while mingling and unwinding after a busy academic term.

The event featured a variety of board games and a lively trivia session, with the highlight being a special department-themed Kahoot game that sparked friendly competition and plenty of laughter. The party provided a well-deserved break for everyone and a chance to celebrate the achievements of the semester together. SGSA's thoughtful planning and the enthusiastic participation of the department made for a memorable conclusion to the semester.

The 2025 Faculty and Staff Appreciation BBQ, organized by the Statistics Graduate Student Association (SGSA), was held on Sunday, April 6, at the pavilion at John Crompton Park. This annual tradition provides an opportunity for graduate students to show their appreciation for the faculty and staff whose support, mentorship, and dedication shape the academic and professional development of the department's student community. The event featured a classic BBQ lunch, outdoor games, and time for socializing in a relaxed setting.

John Crompton Park, with its scenic pond, basketball court, walking and jogging trails, and playgrounds, provided a welcoming backdrop for the afternoon. Faculty, staff, students, and their families gathered to enjoy good food and good company, creating a warm and collegial atmosphere that highlighted the department's strong sense of community.

SETCASA
POSTER COMPETITION

The 2025 SETCASA Poster Competition was held on April 30 and brought together students from across the department to showcase their research and presentation skills. The event began with a series of engaging research talks in the morning, offering graduate students the opportunity to present their work to peers and faculty. After a break for lunch, the afternoon featured the main poster session, where both undergraduate and graduate students displayed and discussed their projects with attendees and judges.

Awards were given in several categories to recognize outstanding work. Aramayis Dallakyan received the Best Talk Award for his morning presentation. In the undergraduate division, John Paul Acosta and Brian Park were awarded Best Poster for their collaborative research. Among graduate students, Arhit Chakrabarti won first place in the poster competition, followed by Snigdha Das in second place, and Srijato Bhattacharyya in third. The event highlighted the strength and diversity of student research in the department and underscored SETCASA's continued support for academic development and community engagement.

PIE-A-PROF FOOD DRIVE

The Statistics Student Ambassadors hosted the 4th Annual Pie-A-Prof Food Drive this spring, once again bringing the department together for a fun and meaningful cause. Benefiting the 12th Can—a student-run food pantry serving the Texas A&M community—the event encouraged students, faculty, and staff to "vote" for a participating professor to be pied in the face. Votes were cast by donating canned goods or contributing monetary donations, with each food item or $3 donation counting as one vote. The campaign ran from April 16–23.
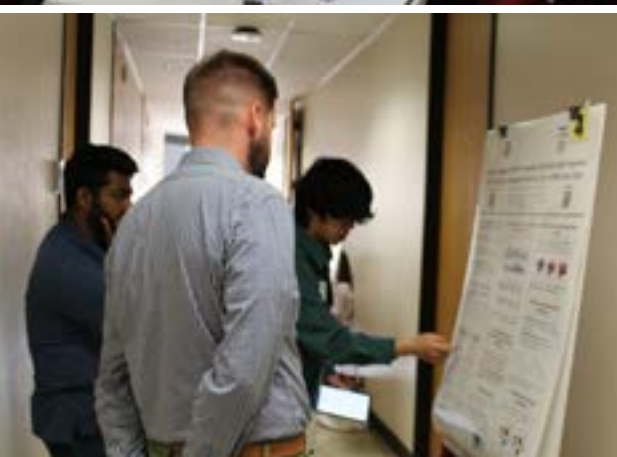
The event concluded with a celebration at the Fisher Bowl on Thursday, April 24, where results were announced and the winning professor, Dr. Jesús Arroyo, received a pie to the face courtesy of the runner-up. The atmosphere was lively, with food, laughter, and strong support from across the department. More than just a lighthearted tradition, the Pie-A-Prof Food Drive served as an opportunity for the STAT community to give back and support those facing food insecurity, all while building camaraderie in the department.
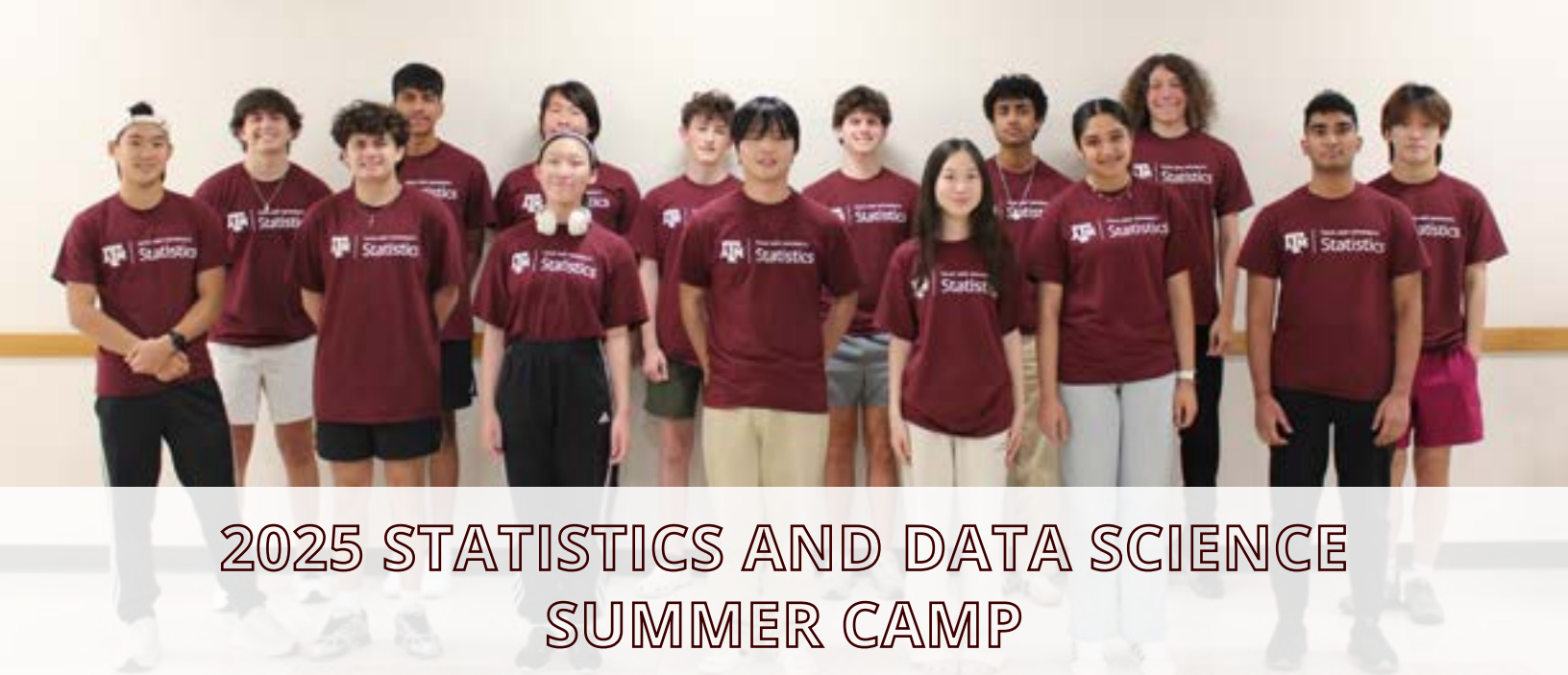
2025 STATISTICS AND DATA SCIENCE SUMMER CAMP

From June 2–6, the Department of Statistics at Texas A&M University hosted the 2025 Statistics and Data Science Summer Camp, welcoming 15 high school students for a week of discovery, learning, and hands-on experience. The camp was designed to introduce participants to the fundamentals of statistics and data science through a combination of lectures, coding sessions, and interactive activities.

Throughout the week, students explored topics such as R programming, data visualization, data cleaning, R functions, model diagnosing and performance, and the ethics of data science. They also learned to create interactive graphics using R and Shiny and worked with real-world datasets on platforms like Kaggle. Each session emphasized practical application, allowing students to build confidence in working with data.

At the end of the camp, students completed group projects to showcase the skills they developed over the week. Their work was evaluated by faculty and graduate student judges, and awards were presented to the top three projects. The showcase gave students an opportunity to apply what they learned, practice communicating their results, and celebrate their growth. The camp offered a strong introduction to the field of statistics and data science, sparking curiosity and encouraging continued exploration.

IN MEMORY OF
JEFFREY D. MACA
AUGUST 15, 1971 - SEPTEMBER 5, 2024

The Department of Statistics at Texas A&M University remembers Dr. Jeffrey "Jeff" Maca, who passed away peacefully on September 5, 2024, at the age of 53, with his family by his side.

Dr. Maca earned his Ph.D. in Statistics from Texas A&M University in 1997 and went on to build a distinguished career in the pharmaceutical industry, working for companies such as Novartis and Bayer. His contributions to the field were widely recognized, and he was honored as a Fellow of the American Statistical Association—a testament to his professional excellence and dedication.

Beyond his accomplishments as a statistician, he was a devoted husband and father. He found deep joy in his family life, especially in raising his two sons, Matthew and Nathan, and teaching them the skills and values he held dear. Dr. Maca married his best friend and the love of his life, Loren Graffigna, in 2017.

Dr. Maca's warmth, intellect, and commitment to both his work and his family left a lasting impact on all who knew him. He will be fondly remembered by the department and the wider statistical community.

Great department & I like math!

Sports Analytics

Unrivaled Job Opportunities

It was fun

Amazing reputation :)

Great faculty with Bayesian Expertise!

Close Knit Department

Amazing profs + advisors

my mommy told me to! ♡u mom

Best program ever, have met the best people through it!

Strong research, friendly people, + no snow!!

WHY OUR STUDENTS CHOSE US

Dr. Ghosh is my goat! :)

Aggieland Saturday was a bit too convincin'

The dept w/ the best people!

Comp sci + stats go really well together

for the undergrad biostat course

SVSA

took a UT stat class in High School & was fooled into thinking it was easy. Stayed because it's so versatile & fun.

Friendly & approachable faculty and researchers providing a healthy and comfortable research environment ☺

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Profs are really cool!

It's the BEST Program! Gig'em

Because of Scott Crawford!

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SPRING 2025 GRADUATES

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Krish Alex Chhabra | Ethan S. Greiffenstein | Wesley C. Halstead | Macy Ngoc Han Hoang
Aubrey Elizabeth Hollas | Troy Michael Horn | Anoushka Jadhav | Minhyuk Kim | Sophia Lazcano
Abigail G. Lifrieri | Dylan James Michaels | Robert Patrick Mullen | Landon Reid Myhill
Jaden E. Oca | Amelia Sarah Poulton | Eric L. Schillinger | Shouro Shuvit | Zachary J. Smart
Jameson Douglas Tuck | Trey Macfarlane Turner | Aliah M. Vick | Benjamin A. Yeates | Chen X. Yu

MS ON-CAMPUS STUDENTS

Harshit Garg | Kanak Tiwari | Hasitha Varada | Zizhan Xiong| Stephen Jaeyoung Cho
Elizabeth Yilin Chun | Ethan S. Greiffenstein | Wesley C. Halstead | Jae-Young Heo | Minhyuk Kim
Jack Kissell | Sophia Lazcano | Trey Macfarlane Turner | Cong Wang | Caroline Grace Weber

MS DISTANCE STUDENTS

Edward Allen Gonzales | Kevin Joseph Green | Amanda Mary Harper | Shridevi Kotta
Shiv Nilesh Patel Lala | Laura A. McLellan | Mary Martine Mendelsohn | Bati Myles
Kevin O'Neil | Jacob Christopher Paluska-Yakel | Meghan D. Plymell | Marc Adrian Salas | Jake Sheridan
Jerrin T. Wiley | Yogan Wayra Zadrozny Barrientos | Jie Zhou | Erica Joyce Lynn

PHD STUDENTS

Daniel Cirkovic

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Statistics

2025 AGGIE REUNION

We're excited to invite you to the 2025 Aggie Reunion during the JSM Conference in Nashville, Tennessee! Come join us on **Monday, August 4, from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM** at the Omni Nashville Hotel, in Room H – Broadway E. It's the perfect chance to catch up with fellow Aggies, make new connections, and celebrate the spirit that brings us all together. We can't wait to share a great evening with y'all!

Please RSVP at TX.AG/2025JSM

JSM
NASHVILLE
TENNESSEE
AUGUST 2–7, 2025

Statistics, Data Science, and AI Enriching Society

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:
UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPT 26

All Day
2025 Zorich's Applied Statistics Workshop

OCT 29-31

All Day
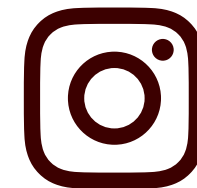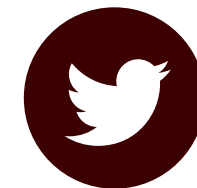EnviBayes Conference

NOV 07

All Day
8th Annual Symposium - Cancer Research: Basic Science to Bioinformatics

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