

Affiliates Annual Meeting

The 2005 Annual Meeting of the NISS Affiliates and NISS/SAMSI University Affiliates was held at NISS on Thursday and Friday, March 3 and 4, 2005. Representatives of more than 20 affiliates attended. The meeting featured both traditional and new activities. Among the traditional were the ever-interesting “Three-Minute Madness,” at which every attendee has three minutes to describe his or her organization, its interests and its needs. The nearly traditional breakout discussions on Friday moved a step closer to tradition, and are discussed more below.

Thursday introduced two new elements of the annual meeting. The morning was devoted to potential NISS projects on data quality and software engineering, to elicit affiliate reaction and engagement. The afternoon focused on four released NISS software products and one potential package:

- The NISS Data Swapping Toolkit
- PowerArray software for analysis of bioinformatics data
- PowerMV, for molecular visualization and analysis of chemical data, presented by NISS postdoc Jun Feng
- SAVE-2, a Simulator Analysis and Validation Engine, presented by NISS and SAMSI postdoc Jesus Palomo
- A Microdata Toolkit for risk-utility explorations on microdata

One more innovation took place on Friday: attendees were joined for lunch by the NISS and SAMSI postdocs.

In his annual report to the affiliates, NISS director Alan Karr put forth goals and mechanisms for “2005—The Year of the Affiliate.” The goals include customized NISS-Affiliate relationships, focused on long-term value provided by NISS to the affiliates, increasing the number and diversity of affiliates and more events at affiliates’ sites. Among mechanisms are visits to affiliates, quarterly updates on NISS research, increased affiliate contact with postdocs, and review of the fee structure.

SAMSI director James Berger reported on SAMSI programs for 2005-06, 2006-07 and beyond.

The breakout discussions focused on what the affiliates programs can do for affiliates. Two specific suggestions, and the responses by NISS and SAMSI, were:



- Early information about, and opportunities for remote participation in, SAMSI program working groups. The SAMSI directorate has committed to placing information about working groups on the SAMSI web site within one week of the opening workshop, and to allowing all working groups to engage external participants by teleconference.
- Remote access to NISS and SAMSI events, such as technology days and workshops. Karr and Berger have agreed to consider issues and options carefully, although Karr states that “some solutions may have to wait for an expanded building.” See his director’s corner on page 2 for more on this.

Finally, a reliable source reports that Karr and Thomas Gerig, Assistant Director for University Affiliates, are working on a scheme “to make the annual meeting mobile in both space and time.” An announcement at the August 7 Affiliates JSM Lunch is rumored.

On the Inside

Director’s Corner: Page 2
NISS Building Expansion: Page 3-4
NISS and SAMSI Calendars: Page 5
Affiliated Organizations: Page 6

Director's Corner

Alan F. Karr



Building for the Future

On pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter are sketches and floor plans for a possible addition to the NISS building. They were prepared by O'Brien Atkins, the architects of the current NISS building. It is hard not to be excited by them, but equally hard not to ask some tough questions. Also, it is important to realize that these are merely design ideas. If we do expand the building, the final result may bear only coincidental resemblance to these images.

Since we moved into the building in October of 1997, it has served NISS well in every way. It is functional, comfortable and elegant without being extravagant. Maintenance and operating costs have been manageable, and we have funded depreciation reserves exceeding \$250,000. And SAMSI is the tenant and scientific partner of our dreams.

Given this, why should I or anyone else even think about an expansion?

Numerically, the answer is simple; the double-the-current-size NISS called for by the strategic vision and an exciting, effective SAMSI do not fit into the current 16,000 square feet. At a deeper level, while NISS mainly needs more space, it is becoming increasingly clear that SAMSI needs space that is better suited to its mode of operation, which involves more people, but for fewer hours per week each, than NISS. In addition, NISS and SAMSI both suffer from the lack of a large multi-purpose room able to handle 100-person events. While the Radisson Hotel (to those who know the history, the Governors Inn) has served us well, events there cost us visibility, take staff out of the building and deprive us of the technological features that could be in a new facility.

The conceptual design developed by O'Brien Atkins provides:

- A multi-purpose room with a flat floor but high ceiling that can accommodate 100 people seated at tables ("seminar" style) and more without the tables ("theater" style). The room would be dividable in two for smaller events, such as the courses that are now part of every SAMSI program.
- Two conference rooms, one or both of which could be equipped to enable remote participation in NISS projects

or SAMSI working groups, as affiliates have long been requesting. (See the page 1 story for more on this.)

- More, and more flexible, office space for SAMSI, which would in turn relinquish part of the second floor of the existing building to NISS, in order to accommodate the larger NISS.

Architecturally, as you will see from the sketches, the proposal for the extension echoes but does not copy the distinctive architecture of the building.

So is this all just a fantasy? No, provided that the need is real and the project is affordable. The determining factor for need is SAMSI, which initially received funding for five years (2002-07) from NSF. Two weeks ago, SAMSI underwent its third-year review and site visit. We expect to receive feedback from NSF by mid-to-late April. The SAMSI directorate is optimistic that we will be invited to submit a (non-competitive) proposal to fund SAMSI for 2007-12. Were the recommendation from NSF less positive, obviously the entire case for the building expansion would have to be revisited. But if things turn out as we hope and expect, there would be a basis for optimism about SAMSI's future.

The question of whether we can afford an expansion is one to which at this point we just do not know the answer. We do not have firm cost estimates yet, and the Triangle construction market is extraordinarily tight. Points potentially in favor are the current financial health of NISS, the fact that we own the building outright—it was built with funds provided by the state of North Carolina—and the overall positive trajectory of NISS. But no one, most of all I, can fail to be daunted by a commitment that represents 1+ years of our entire cash flow. Moreover, there are strong arguments in any small organization for investing in program rather than facilities.

And then, of course, there is the sheer imponderable: can we afford not to do it?

So stay tuned, and of course as always I welcome your comments, reactions and thoughts.

NISS Newsletter

Katherine Kantner, Editor

Published quarterly by the

National Institute of Statistical Sciences

PO Box 14006

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

919.685.9300

www.niss.org

© 2005, National Institute of Statistical Sciences

All Rights Reserved

The New NISS Building?



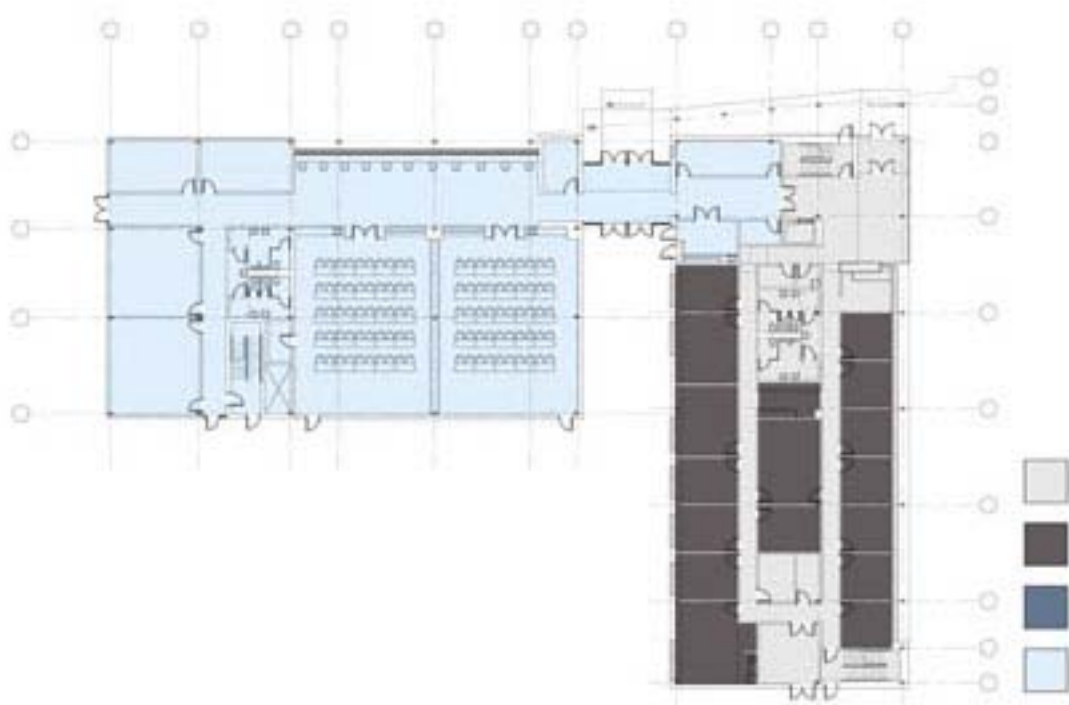
NISS
National Institute of Statistical Sciences
Research Triangle Park, NC

O'BrienAtkins Associates, PA

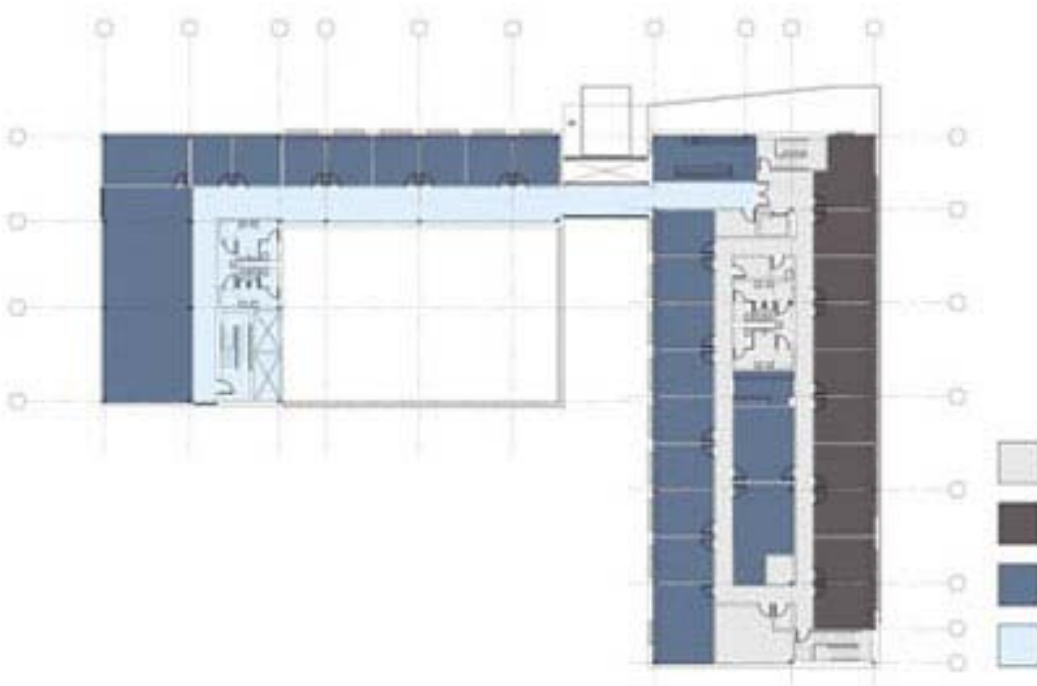
South Elevation



North Elevation



First Floor



Second Floor

Obrien/Atkins Associates, PA

NISS and SAMSI Calendars

Affiliates Technology Day—Metabolomics

Summer, 2005 at NISS

JSM Affiliates Meeting

August 7, 2005 in Minneapolis

NISS/SAMSI JSM Reception

August 8, 2005 in Minneapolis

The Future of Data Analysis (A Conference in Honor of Jon Kettenring)

September 30, 2005 at Avaya Labs Research, Basking Ridge, NJ

Affiliates Workshop on Overarching Issues in Risk Analysis

October 27-29, 2005

Hosted and co-sponsored by Iowa State University, Ames, IA

Affiliates Workshop on Statistical Disclosure Limitation for Geospatial Data

Fall, 2005 at NISS

SAMSI Events

Workshop: Latent Variable Models and Survey Data for Social and Health Sciences Research

May 4-6, 2005, Montreal; hosted and co-sponsored by
the Canadian National Program on Complex Data Structures

LVSS Closing Workshop

May 19-21, 2005, RTP

CompBio Closing Workshop

May 22-24, 2005, RTP

Undergraduate Workshop

May 30 - June 3, 2005, NCSU

Data Assimilation Summer School

June 11-17, 2005, Boulder, CO; hosted and co-sponsored by NCAR

Workshop: Random Graphs and Stochastic Computation

June 13-14, 2005, NISS/SAMSI

Technology Transfer Course: Data Mining and Machine Learning

June 20-24, 2005, NISS/SAMSI

IMSMW '05: Industrial Mathematical and Statistical Modeling Workshop for graduate students

July 25 - August 2, 2005, NCSU

NISS Affiliates

Corporations

Avaya Labs (Basking Ridge, NJ)
Aventis Pharmaceuticals (Bridgewater, NJ)
General Motors (Detroit, MI)
GlaxoSmithKline (RTP, NC and Collegeville, PA)
Golden Helix, Inc. (Bozeman, MT)
ICAGEN, Inc. (Durham, NC)
Merck & Co. (West Point, PA)
Metabolon, Inc. (Research Triangle Park, NC)

MetaMetrics (Durham, NC)
Nuevolution (Copenhagen, Denmark)
Pfizer Inc. (Groton, CT)
RTI International (Research Triangle Park, NC)
SAS Institute (Cary, NC)
SPSS, Inc. (Chicago, IL)
Telcordia Technologies (Piscataway, NJ)

Government Agencies and National Laboratories

Bureau of the Census (Washington, DC)
Bureau of Labor Statistics (Washington, DC)
Bureau of Transportation Statistics (Washington, DC)
Los Alamos National Laboratory (NM)
National Agricultural Statistics Service (Fairfax, VA)

National Center for Education Statistics (Washington, DC)
National Center for Health Statistics (Hyattsville, MD)
National Institute of Standards and Technology (Gaithersburg, MD)
National Security Agency (Fort George Meade, MD)

NISS/SAMSI University Affiliates

American University (Mathematics and Statistics)
University of California, Los Angeles (Statistics)
Carnegie Mellon University (Statistics)
Duke University (Statistics and Decision Sciences, and Mathematics)
Emory University (Biostatistics)
University of Florida (Statistics)
Florida State University (Statistics)
University of Georgia (Statistics)
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (Statistics)
Iowa State University (Statistics)
University of Iowa (Statistics)
Johns Hopkins University (Mathematical Sciences)
University of Maryland Baltimore County (Mathematics and Statistics)
University of Michigan (Statistics and Biostatistics)
University of Missouri - Columbia (Statistics)
North Carolina State University (Statistics and Mathematics)
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Biostatistics, Stat-OR, and Mathematics)
Oakland University (Mathematics and Statistics)
Ohio State University (Statistics)
Pennsylvania State University (Statistics)
Purdue University (Statistics)
Rice University (Statistics)
Rutgers University (Statistics)
University of South Carolina (Statistics)
Southern Methodist University (Statistical Science)
Stanford University (Statistics)
Texas A&M University (Statistics)