



The Statistics Community Serving the Nation

National Institute of Statistical Sciences

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NISS Fact Sheet

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Mission NISS is dedicated to strengthening and serving the national statistics community and the nation, most notably by catalyzing community members' participation in applied research driven by challenges facing government and industry.

Formation and Evolution NISS is an institute created by and serving the US and international statistical sciences communities. It was formed in 1991 with the initial vision to identify, catalyze and foster high-impact, cross-disciplinary research involving the statistical sciences. Since then, cross-sector research addressing critical interfaces between industry/government and academia has become increasingly central to the NISS portfolio.

Structure NISS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit North Carolina corporation, with ten owners.¹ Governance is vested in twenty-member Board of Trustees, currently chaired by James Landwehr of Avaya Labs Research.

Facilities NISS owns its headquarters building, which is located on the TUCASI campus in Research Triangle Park (RTP), NC, and shared with its sister institute, the Statistical and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute (SAMSI). The original 16,000 square foot building, recipient of a Design Award from the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, was constructed in 1997 with funds from the State of North Carolina, and the 12,000 square foot addition was occupied in October, 2008. NISS also holds office space in Washington, DC.

Personnel NISS has approximately 16 full-time employees, including postdoctoral fellows, located in RTP and Washington, DC. More than fifty members of the national community currently participate in NISS projects and expert panels. The senior scientific leadership consists of *Alan F. Karr*, *director*, who is also Professor of Statistics & Operations Research and Biostatistics at UNC, *Nell Sedransk*, *associate director*, who is also Research Professor of Statistics at NCSU, *Lawrence Cox*, *assistant director for official statistics*, and *Stanley Young*, *assistant director for bioinformatics*.

¹Five statistics societies—American Statistical Association (ASA), Committee of Presidents of Statistical Societies, Eastern and Western Regions (ENAR and WNAR) of the International Biometric Society, Institute of Mathematical Statistics and Section U of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and five North Carolina organizations—Duke University, North Carolina State University (NCSU), the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), RTI International, and the Triangle Universities Center for Advanced Studies, Inc. (TUCASI).

Research NISS performs high-impact research on important national issues for government and industrial clients, among which are the Census Bureau, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the Institute for Education Sciences of the US Department of Education, the National Cancer Institute, the National Center for Education Statistics, the National Center for Health Statistics, the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics at the National Science Foundation, the Transportation Research Board and the US Department of Health and Human Services. NISS is a partner with the American Institutes for Research and RTI International in operation of the Education Statistics Services Institute and the NAEP Education Statistics Services Institute.

The products of the research include scientific insights that inform both future research and policy, software that implements scientific advances, and strong positive influence on the careers of those who participate in the research. Notable among these are methodology adopted nationwide for calculation of high-school graduation rates, new organizational models for development of complex software, methods to reduce traffic congestion in urban areas and a panoply of techniques that allow government agencies to disseminate data but protect the confidentiality of the data subjects. Concern about the quality of data and its impact on decisions pervades our research.

Affiliates Approximately 60 government agencies, corporations and university departments belong to the NISS Affiliates and NISS/SAMSI University Affiliates programs, which conduct activities targeting research, information dissemination, human resources and networking. The affiliates were honored with the 2005 Statistical Partnerships among Academia, Industry and Government (SPAIG) award of the ASA.

Career Development More than 200 senior researchers from the statistical sciences, as well as such other disciplines as agricultural science, applied mathematics, chemistry, civil engineering, computer science, environmental science, materials science, psychometrics, software engineering and transportation, have participated in NISS projects.

The NISS postdoctoral program, one of the oldest, largest and most successful in statistics, has provided strong impetus to more than 75 early career researchers.

SAMSI NISS, Duke, NCSU, UNC and National Science Foundation (NSF), constitute the consortium that created and manages SAMSI. NISS shares scientific interests, staff and its RTP building with SAMSI. The NISS–SAMSI relationship is extraordinarily synergistic for both institutes.