Fall 2021 NISS Career Fair

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September 8, 2021
1 Department of Statistics/University of South Carolina

2 Available positions at USC

3 General topics for discussion
Created in 1985; grew out of the Department of Mathematics

- **Founding Chair:** Joe Padgett
- **Guiding principles:** Excellence in research, teaching, and service to the profession

**Current composition**

- 12 TT faculty
- 6 full time instructors
- 38 graduate students
- 99 undergraduate majors

**NISS affiliate member/active in the profession**

**Popular host for regional conferences**

- Reliability and survival analysis
- Nonparametrics
- Latent variable modeling

**BS/MS/PhD degrees offered**
University of South Carolina

- State’s flagship university (founded in 1801)
- “Very High Research Activity,” Carnegie Foundation
- 35,000+ students on main campus
- Located in Columbia, SC
  - state capital
  - intersection of I-26, I-77, and I-20
  - short drive to Charlotte, Charleston, and Atlanta
  - mountains/beach for “down time”
  - excellent restaurants
  - cost of living is ridiculously low
Our department is housed in the **College of Arts and Sciences**
- with 18 other departments (e.g., PSYC, SOCY, ENGL, THEA, CHEM, BIOL, etc.)

**CAS is one of 13 colleges/schools at USC**
- Medicine, Pharmacy, Public Health, Nursing
- Law, Music, Journalism, Business
- Education, Engineering, Social Work, HRSM

This means a lot of collaboration
- Department of Biostatistics: located in Public Health
- excellent relationship

**Honors College: Ranked #1 nationally**
- 20% of our majors (highest in CAS)
Our department’s future

- Retaining **core strength** in statistical methodology and theory
- Moving towards data science
  - modernizing graduate and undergraduate requirements;
  - offering more courses in
    - visualization
    - modern statistical learning
    - analysis of big data
- enhancing collaboration with other departments and colleges
- “Department of Statistics and Data Science”
Available positions

- We are currently hiring for **4 positions**:
  - **Two** visiting positions
    - 1-2 year positions; primary emphasis on teaching undergraduate majors
    - encourage collaboration/methodological research
    - all areas of statistical science encouraged to apply
    - **Start date**: Immediately (Spring 2022)
  - **Two** tenure-track positions
    - emphasis on modern data science
    - methods and applications in all areas considered
    - one position is “open rank”
    - **Start date**: Fall 2022
      - review of applications begins in November
      - on campus interviews in January/February
Q: What are the preferred qualifications for a tenure-track/tenured faculty position in your institution?

- **Visiting Assistant Professor**
  - primary interest is teaching undergraduate students
  - not low-level service courses; upper-level courses in statistics and data science
  - “Teaching post-doctoral position”
  - ideal for candidate who envisions teaching as a career

- **Tenure-track Assistant Professor**
  - strong consideration for research potential
  - at USC, excellence in teaching is critical
    - research and teaching receive “nearly equal” weight in evaluation process
  - strong leadership potential
Q: What are the potential distinguishing characteristics of candidates for a tenure-track/tenured faculty position in your institution?

- TT positions both emphasize modern data science
  - “quite broad;” all areas of statistics will be considered
- Post-docs encouraged but not necessary
- Strong potential for excellence in both research and teaching
- “Team player” attitude
  - we are a smaller department (and highly collegial)
  - everyone does their part
  - celebrate our successes together
- Willingness to advise PhD students immediately (e.g., co-advise, etc.)
Q: *What advice would you give to job candidates?*

- Be prepared to invest an enormous amount of time
  - application process
  - pre-interview process
  - interviews
- Do your homework!
- Do not interview if you have no desire to go there
- Be ready to ask questions when interviewing
  - pretend they are your colleagues already
  - don’t be afraid to talk about “normal” things
  - “Can I see myself working with this person?”
  - “Will this person make our department a better place?”
- Negotiate initial offer
- Go with your gut
Q: What advice would you give about how Ph.D. students or post-docs should prepare for the future?

- Effective communication is the key to success
  - publishing papers and getting grants funded
  - becoming an effective teacher
  - if these skills are poor, your future will likely be limited
- Get involved in the profession
  - volunteer for an ASA committee
  - attend conferences and present your research
  - build a network of colleagues
- Find time for yourself to think about research and ideas
  - if you think you are busy now, just wait
- You cannot work all the time; you must have outlets to regroup and regenerate
A wise academic mentor once told me,

“Every day you should wake up and think about how you can make your department a better place.”
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