

NISS Parameters

Summer/Fall 2014

A newsletter from the National Institute of Statistical Sciences



Alan Karr Takes Position at RTI, Search for New Director Underway

Alan Karr, Director of NISS since 2000, has announced that he will leave NISS at the end of August. In September, he will become Director of the Center of Excellence for Complex Data Analysis (CoDA) at RTI International.

Informing the Board of Trustees of his departure, Karr said that, "My new position at RTI is a unique opportunity for me to help shape the future of statistics at one of the world's premier statistical organizations, and I look forward to it with great excitement.

"My twenty-two years at NISS have been immensely challenging and satisfying. What has made the experience truly special is the people with whom I have been privileged to work. Among them are several dozen collaborators on NISS projects, from academia, government and industry; more than 75 eager and talented postdoctoral fellows; an extraordinary staff; and more than 200 community leaders who have served on the Board of Trustees and Corporation since I came to NISS in 1992."

Susan Ellenberg, former chair of the NISS Board, "Speaking for the Board, we all have been really impressed with what Alan has been able to accomplish as NISS Director. He has been a wonderful partner to the Board, a highly effective leader, and a responsible steward of NISS. We wish him the best in his new role at RTI."

A search committee has been put in place to search for the new director of NISS. It is co-chaired by outgoing and incoming Board vice-chairs Roger Hoerl and Robert Rodriguez; the other members are Daniel Solomon, Jessica Utts and Karr. More information about the search can be found at the NISS website: <http://www.niss.org/jobs/niss-seeks-director>.



Jim Berger and Alan Karr at the first NISS JSM Reception, in Indianapolis in 2000.



Alan thanks his wife, Senora, for being a great support during his career at NISS at his final NISS /SAMSJ reception as director, at the 2014 JSM in Boston.

New Board of Trustees Members

NISS is happy to announce the new members and officers of its Board of Trustees.

Mary Batcher of Ernst and Young is the new chair of the Board of Trustees. She started her new duties in July. Robert



Mary Batcher, Ernst and Young, is the new Chair of NISS.

Rodriguez of SAS Institute, Cary, NC, has been elected as vice-chair. Also serving on the executive committee will be Christy Chuang-Stein (Pfizer), Rebecca Doerge (Purdue), Susan Ellenberg (U. of Pennsylvania), Roger Hoerl (Union College) and Fritz Scheuren (NORC at U. Chicago).

Ellenberg and Hoerl have served as chair and vice-chair of the Board since 2011. Alan Karr, director of NISS, said "It has been great for NISS to have Susan and Roger lead the Board for the past three years, and it is equally great to have Mary and Bob guiding the Board in its efforts to help NISS move forward. Susan and Roger's willingness to remain on the executive committee ensures continuity, and allows NISS to continue to benefit from their wisdom."

Christy Chuang-Stein, Tim Hesterberg of Google and Tommy Wright of the U.S. Census Bureau have been elected to three-year terms on the Board of Trustees. Chuang-Stein and Wright are joining the board for the first time.

Mary Batcher is Executive Director, Quantitative Economics and Statistics, at Ernst & Young LLP, in Washington, DC. She has responsibility for all aspects of statistical sampling used in tax filings, including the technical merits of firm samples, the review of IRS proposed samples, and the review of samples developed by other firms for its audit clients. Batcher joined the board in July 2013.

Robert Rodriguez is Senior Director of R&D for SAS Institute, Cary, NC. He has long been active with the NISS affiliates program, of which SAS is one of the original members.

Christy Chuang-Stein is Vice President, Head of the Statistical Research and Consulting Center at Pfizer. She was a Founding Editor and serves on the Editorial Board of *Pharmaceutical Statistics*. Christy is a member of many collaborative working groups and has been promoting good statistical practice in the pharmaceutical industry for more than two decades.

Tommy Wright is chief of the U.S. Census Bureau's Center for Statistical Research and Methodology. He earned a master's and Ph.D. degrees in statistics from The Ohio State University. He received a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Tennessee, and a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Knoxville College.

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Ellenberg and Soper Win 2014 NISS Distinguished Service Awards

Susan Ellenberg and Keith Soper received the 2014 NISS Distinguished Service Awards. Alan Karr, Director, presented the awards on August 4 at the NISS/SAMSI reception, which was part of the 2014 Joint Statistical Meetings held in Boston, Massachusetts.

The NISS Distinguished Service Awards were established by the Board of Trustees in 2005 to recognize individuals who have given extraordinary service that significantly advances NISS and its mission.

Ellenberg, who was the NISS Board of Trustees chair until this past July, was given the award for helping lead NISS through “exciting and challenging times, always with common sense, wisdom and good humor,” noted Karr. Ellenberg is Professor of Biostatistics, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine.

Soper, Senior Director at Merck, was recognized for his long-term service to NISS as a two-term member of the board of Trustees. He served on the executive committee and was also chair of the affiliates committee. Karr said, “You have helped NISS re-invigorate the Affiliates Program, and to move it in new and important directions.”

Ellenberg and Soper’s names will be added to a plaque that is displayed in the lobby of the NISS building in Research Triangle Park, which lists the names of all recipients.

Terry Speed Receives 2014 Jerome Sacks Award for Cross-Disciplinary Research

Dr. Terry Speed, head of bioinformatics at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research in Melbourne, Australia, is this year’s recipient of the 2014 Jerome Sacks Award for Cross-Disciplinary Research. The award is given by NISS to recognize “sustained, high-quality cross-disciplinary research involving the statistical sciences.” It was announced at the 2014 Joint Statistical Meetings in Boston,

notable for its creativity, rigor, and relevance.”

Professor Speed’s research focuses on the application of statistics to problems in genetics and molecular biology. He has spent years looking at the mapping and expression of genes in mice and humans, including disease genes and genes contributing to other traits.

He spent much of his career at the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Sheffield, the University of Western Australia and the CSIRO. Speed’s mathematical expertise also has been used in many high-profile court cases including the 1994 O.J. Simpson trial. He is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Computational Biology*, *JASA*, *Bernoulli* and the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Statistics*.

Speed was recently awarded the prestigious Australian Prime Minister’s Prize for Science.

The Jerome Sacks Award was created in 2001 in honor of Jerry Sacks, the founding director of NISS. As Sacks award recipient, Speed receives \$1,000, and his name is added to a plaque at NISS that lists all recipients of the award, of which there are now fourteen.



Terry Speed and Mary Batcher, Chair of NISS, at the NISS-SAMSI reception at JSM in Boston.

Massachusetts.

The Awards Committee of the NISS Board of Trustees selected Speed as this year’s award winner, citing him as “a pioneer in the development and application of statistical methods for the analysis of biomedical and genomic data. His work exemplifies the best of applied statistics in cross-disciplinary research and is

He and Cui Moving Into New Jobs

Zhulin He, who has been a NISS-AIR postdoctoral fellow working on Project Talent, is becoming a research assistant professor in the Department of Statistics at Iowa State. She will start her new position this Fall. Her new job will focus on conducting and developing research in survey statistics at Center for Survey and Statistics Methodology (CSSM) in the Department of Statistics.

She will work on National Resources Inventory project, which provides updated information on the status, condition, and trends of land, soil, water, and related resources on the Nation's non-Federal lands. Zhulin's research interest will be applying statistical techniques and developing new methodologies to complex survey data.

"It was an exciting experience to study and work at NISS," said

Zhulin.

According to Alan Karr, her mentor, "Zhulin, like all NISS postdocs, has become an independent, self-guided researcher. During her two years



Zhulin He (standing) and Weiwei Cui (sitting).

here, she made major contributions to Project Talent."

Weiwei Cui, who has worked for NISS in Washington DC, will be a researcher at the College Board, in Pennsylvania. She was

initially part of the Statistical Standards Project, under the auspices of the Education Statistics Services Institute of the National Center for Education Statistics.

Later she participated in the Online Reading Comprehension Assessment (ORCA) project, which was led by Nell Sedransk. Funding for this project was from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the parent organization of NCES.

NISS News Bytes

George Luta, a former postdoctoral fellow for NISS, was promoted to Associate Professor at the Department of Biostatistics, Bioinformatics and Biomathematics at the Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center at Georgetown University in Washington DC. Congratulations George!

Alan Karr published an article, "Why data availability is such a hard problem," in the June issue of the *IAOS Statistical Journal*. You can read the [article here](#).

NISS postdoc **Hang Kim**; **Jerry Reiter**, Duke; **Q. Wang**, Duke; **Larry Cox**, NISS; and **Alan Karr**, NISS recently submitted an article entitled "Multiple imputation of missing or faulty values under linear constraints" to the *Journal of Business and Economic Statistics*. The article will appear in the near future.

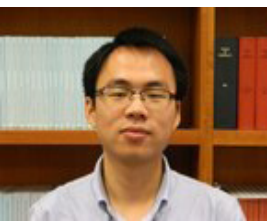
Former postdoc **Alex Stark** has taken a new position at Google in Los Angeles.

Former postdoc **Michael Robbins** (picture on page 5) is now working at RAND Corporation and is engaged to Katherine Hastings. They will be getting married this November.

Assistant Director for Bioinformatics **Stan Young** has been quoted in several news articles including the *Harvard Business Review* and *Forbes*, talking about potential problems with replication that may arise when conducting observational studies.

Yu Receives the 2014 y-BIS Award

Guan Yu, a Ph.D. candidate from the Statistics and Operations Research Department at the



University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), is this year's recipient of the Young

Statisticians in Business and Industry (y-BIS) Award. The award recognizes the best paper, based on both content and delivery, presented by an early career researcher at the International Symposium on Business and Industrial Statistics Conference

(ISBIS), which held in June in Durham, North Carolina.

The paper was "Sparse Regression Incorporating Graphical Structure Among Predictors." According to the abstract, the paper focuses on using the structure information among predictors to improve sparse regression models. This structure information can be modeled by the connectivity of an undirected graph.

Yu was awarded \$500 for his paper by NISS and the American Statistical Association (ASA).

Photos from 2014 JSM



Linda Young, Lorraine Denby, Pat Tendick and Jessica Utts.



Keith Crank and Dipak Dey.



Keith Soper and Richard Landis.



A mini NISS-NASS reunion! Sujit Ghosh, Josh Habiger, Michael Robbins and Katherine Hastings.



Cliff Spiegelman and Don Strickert.

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