NISS Parameters

A newsletter from the National Institute of Statistical Sciences

Sedransk Named New Director of NISS

NISS announced that its new Director is Dr. Nell Sedransk. The announcement was made by Chairwoman Mary Batcher.

"The search committee felt that Nell was the best person for this position. She brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the role of Director and has done a tremendous job restructuring the organization this past year to help ensure its future success," noted Batcher.

In her new role, Sedransk will lead the institute into its second quarter century with its current foundation of statistical research and of service to the NISS Affiliate organizations from academia, government and industry. "I am very pleased to have this opportunity to help NISS continue to grow and thrive," said Sedransk. "I look forward to the coming months as we begin to focus on increasing research activities, expanding the postdoctoral fellowship program and engaging with new collaborators and clients for NISS."

Sedransk served as Acting Director since September 2014, having been Associate Director since 2005. She came to NISS from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) where she was Chief of the Statistical Engineering Division. Since receiving her PhD from Iowa State University, she has spent much of her career in academia where she directed 5 MS and 7 PhD students. Her research contributions in the areas of statistical theory and application of statistics to medicine, immunology, engineering, social science and education

Nell Sedransk and NISS Chair Mary Batcher at the NISS/SAMSI reception at JSM2015 in Seattle, Washington.

include more than 100 primary research publications and co-authorship of 4 books. At NISS she has continued to mentor postdoctoral fellows (10 NISS, 1 SAMSI and 1 prior to NISS) and to engage in statistical methodological research. She also serves as Associate Director of the Statistical and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute. As NISS Director she will be based in the Washington DC office.

Inside:

NISS Debuts Its New Website

NISS has just updated its new website after seven years. The new website was developed by Design Hammer, a website design team located in Durham, NC.

As most projects of this type, the redesign was a true team effort. Staff members Katherine Kantner, Kyle Hayes, Jamie Nunnelly and Nell Sedransk all worked on various aspects of the website. The infrastructure and resources committee, led by Roger Hoerl, along with members Tim Hesterberg and Jim Booth and a marketing/communications committee, led by Fritz Scheuren, and members Gabriel Huerta and Ron Wasserstein, were also responsible for working through many aspects of the new website. Members of our affiliates and the Board of Trustees were asked to fill out surveys and work on certain exercises during the design process so the website would be constructed with the users in mind.
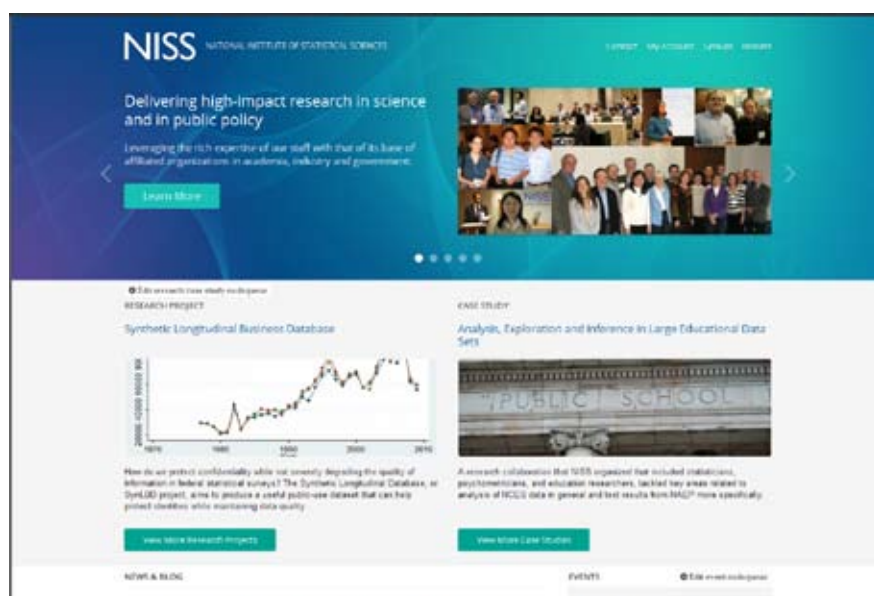
The new design is more externally focused, drawing in new people who may be potential users of NISS.

The website features all the major research projects that NISS has conducted, along with case studies of some of these research projects, research papers and presentations, and the various people who have been involved on a particular research project.

The affiliates section highlights the affiliates in industry, government and academia.

The people section has a list of the current staff, postdoctoral fellows, Board of Trustees and Members of the Corporation. It also has a new section highlighting our former postdocs.

The events section features upcoming and past events from NISS along with co-sponsored events.

The new NISS website.

NISS News Bytes

Former postdoctoral fellow **Jun Feng** started working for Biogen as a Computational Chemist.

We are happy to hear from former postdoc **Hailin Sang** who is now an Assistant Professor in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Mississippi! He

Hailin Sang with his children, Jeffrey and Raymond.

said he is busy teaching classes and mentoring two Ph.D. candidates. He tells us he now has two sons, Jeffrey and Raymond, who are 3 and 6.

NISS Board of Trustees member **Fritz Scheuren** is writing the second edition of the Springer book, *Data Quality and Record Linkage Techniques*, which will be published this winter.

Laura J. Steinberg, one of NISS' former postdocs who received the Achievement Award (see pg. 4), will conduct a

Fienberg Awarded the NISS 2015 Jerome Sacks Award for Cross-Disciplinary Research

Mary Batcher, chair of the Board of Trustees of NISS, announces that Dr. Stephen E. Fienberg received the 2015 Jerome Sacks Award for Cross-Disciplinary Research. The announcement was made at the Joint Statistical Meetings in Seattle, Washington.

Batcher said Fienberg is receiving this award, "For a remarkable career devoted to the development and application of statistical methodology to solve problems for the benefit of society, including aspects of human rights, privacy and confidentiality, forensics, survey and census-taking, and more; and for exceptional leadership in a variety of professional and governmental organizations, including in the founding of NISS."

Fienberg is Maurice Falk University Professor of Statistics and Social Science in the Department of Statistics, the Machine Learning Department, and Cylab, and co-Director of the Living Analytics Research Center at Carnegie Mellon University. He has authored more than 20 books and 500 papers and related publications. Fienberg's interest in confidentiality and disclosure limitation ties both to surveys and censuses and also to categorical data analysis. It also led him to work on a multiple year project with NISS entitled "NISS Digital Government Project."

Fienberg is originally from Toronto, Canada. He received his bachelor's degree in mathematics

Steve Fienberg with Mary Batcher at the NISS-SAMSI reception in Seattle, Washington.

and statistics from the University of Toronto, then earned his master's degree and his doctorate in statistics from Harvard University. He joined the CMU faculty in 1980.

Amongst his many accolades, he has served as the co-Chair of the National Academy of Sciences Report Review Committee from 2008-2016. He is the co-Founder of the *Journal of Privacy and Confidentiality,* and the Editor-in-Chief of the *Annals of Applied Statistics* and Founding Editor of the *Annual Review of Statistics and its Application.* He is a fellow of the International Society for Bayesian Analysis and was President from 1996-1997; a fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics and President from 1998-1999; and he is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Statistical Association, the American Academy of Political and Social Science, and a member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.

The Jerome Sacks Award for Cross Disciplinary Research was created in 2001 in honor of Jerome (Jerry) Sacks, the founding director of NISS. As Sacks award recipient, Fienberg receives $1,000, and his name is added to a plaque at NISS that lists all recipients of the award.

Jiang and Steinberg Receive First NISS Former Postdoc Achievement Awards

As part of the 25th anniversary celebration at the NISS-SAMSI reception, NISS initiated a new award to recognize the extraordinary achievements of some of its former postdocs. NISS announced that Jiming Jiang, Professor of Statistics at the University of California - Davis received this award, which was presented at the NISS-SAMSI reception at the 2015 Joint Statistical Meetings in Seattle, Washington on August 10. Laura Steinberg, Professor, LCS College of Engineering and Computer Science at Syracuse University, also received this award.
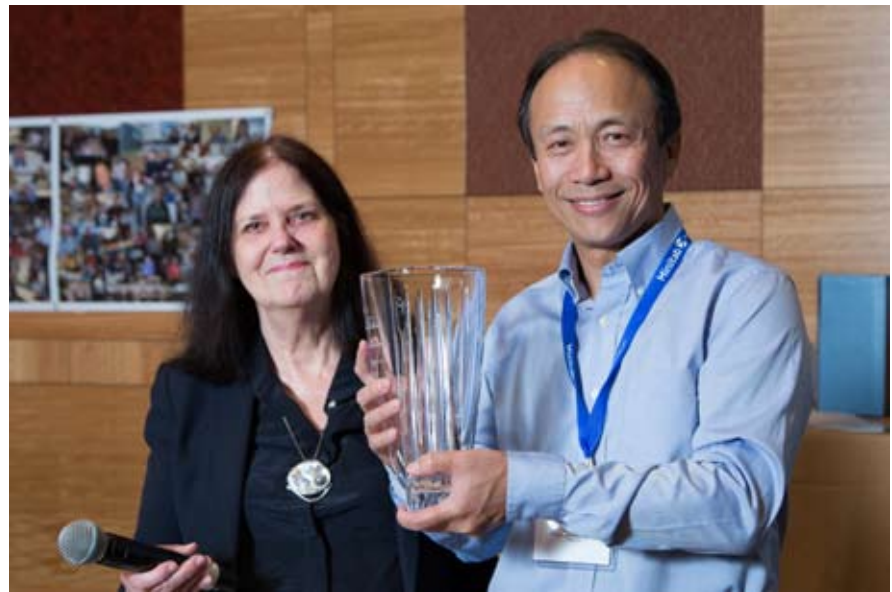
NISS started mentoring postdoctoral fellows and associates in 1993. Since that time, more than 70 people have been postdocs at NISS.

Jiang received the NISS Postdoctoral Achievement award for "Honoring his distinguished career and excellence in leadership through research, through education and through example as a role model for the profession of statistics," said Nell Sedransk, Director of NISS, during her presentation of the award.

Jiang graduated with a Ph.D. in Statistics from the University of California Berkeley in 1995, after earlier receiving bachelors and masters degrees in Mathematics and Probability and Statistics respectively, from Peking University. After graduating from Berkeley, Jiang spent a summer as a Postdoctoral Associate at NISS. He later held academic positions at Case Western University and the University of Nebraska before

being appointed as an Associate Professor in 2001 and Director of the Statistical Laboratory at UC Davis from 2004-2007. He was promoted to Professor in 2004.

He has published more than 80 peer reviewed papers, and three books. He is particularly well

Jiming Jiang accepts the former postdoc achievement award from Director Nell Sedransk.

known for his work on generalized linear mixed models, which was the subject matter of his first book. Other interests include small area estimation with applications to survey data, asymptotics and large sample statistics, and model selection.

Jiang has served on the editorial boards of several of the mostly highly regarded journals in statistics, including the *Annals of Statistics*, *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, and *Journal of Multivariate Analysis*. He is an elected member of the International Statistical Institute, and a Fellow of both the Institute of Mathematical Statistics and the American

Statistical Association.

Steinberg received the award "Honoring her distinguished career and impact through her leadership in realizing a vision for the intersection of environmental science and statistics," said Nell Sedransk, Director of NISS during her presentation of the award.

Steinberg credits her experience at NISS with broadening her ability to apply statistics to interdisciplinary problems. "Much of my growth as a researcher and collaborator came from the intense research environment at NISS," Steinberg says. "I had a set of incredibly talented post-doc peers to work with, and the privilege of being personally mentored by Director Jerry Sacks and Associate Director Alan Karr."

Steinberg is Professor and Special Assistant to the Chancellor at Syracuse University, where she had previously been serving as

Bytes (Continued)

comprehensive assessment of the University's Campus, Planning, Design and Construction (CDPC) operations. Steinberg started the assessment this summer and serves as Special Assistant to the Chancellor. She will complete her assessment and submit her recommendations to the Chancellor at Syracuse University by Dec. 31.

Former postdocs **Adrian Dobra** and **Jennifer Clarke** are finishing up a collaboration project for NSF/DTRA entitled, "ATD Collaborative Research: Statistical Ensembles for the Identification of Bacterial Genomes." Dobra is currently Associate Professor of Statistics and Nursing at the University of Washington, and Clarke recently started working as Associate Professor, Department of Food Science and Technology for the University of Nebraska Lincoln.

Achievement Award (Continued)

Dean of the College of Engineering and Computer Science. In her new, university-wide assignment, she will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the University's Campus, Planning, Design and Construction operations. Prior to her becoming dean at Syracuse University, she served as professor and chair of Environmental and Civil Engineering at Southern Methodist University. She received her Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from Duke University and was a NISS postdoctoral fellow from 1993 - 1995. Her areas of expertise include environmental modeling and policy, diffusion of innovation, and critical infrastructure protection.

Eltinge and Nunnelly Receive 2015 Distinguished Service Awards

John Eltinge and Jamie Nunnelly have been presented the 2015 Distinguished Service Awards from NISS. Nell Sedransk, Director of NISS, announced the awards on August 10, 2015 at the NISS/SAMSI reception held at the 2015 Joint Statistical Meetings in Seattle Washington.

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.

Eltinge, who is Associate Commissioner for the Office of Survey Methods Research for the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, received the award for bringing insight and implementing the vision for NISS as a multi-sector institute, especially through his leadership in the Affiliates Program.

Nunnelly, who is Communications Director for NISS and the Statistical and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute (SAMSI), received the award for

John Eltinge accepts the Distinguished Service Award from NISS Director Nell Sedransk.

her role in "dramatically increasing the visibility of NISS, for engaging the next generation of statisticians in NISS and for modernizing NISS communications, especially through design of the new website." said Sedransk.

Eltinge and Nunnelly'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.

Alan Karr, RTI International; and Wendy Barboza, NASS.

Getting ready for a champagne toast.

Nell Sedransk, NISS.

Cutting the cake.

Ingram Olkin (Center, front) and many of his mentees that were at the celebration.

Linda Young, NASS, Ingram Olkin and Karen Kafadar, U. Virginia.

Phil Kott, RTI International

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