



# WSS NEWS

March 2007

WASHINGTON  
STATISTICAL  
SOCIETY

## HERRIOT AWARD SEMINAR

Nathaniel Schenker of NCHS, winner of the 2006 Roger Herriot Award for innovations in Federal Statistics, will present a seminar at a special session of WSS to be held on Monday, April 16, 2007 from 12:30 – 2:00 PM in the BLS Conference Center. A presentation ceremony will precede the talk, and a reception will be held following the session. Additional information about the session will be forthcoming in the April WSS newsletter.

## NEW NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2007 WRAY JACKSON SMITH SCHOLARSHIP APRIL 15, 2007 DEADLINE

Nominations are now being sought for the 2007 Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship. The award is intended to reward promising young statisticians for their diligence and encourage them to consider a future in government statistics. The 2006 recipient of the scholarship will be chosen by a committee of representatives of GSS and SSS. Applicants are not required to be members of GSS, SSS or ASA. Dr. Smith was strongly supportive of these organizations during his career and actively mentored younger statisticians. The scholarship of \$1,000.00 can be used for activities like the following:

- Attendance at a conference, short course, or long course
- Travel to a conference
- Purchase of government data
- Costs associated with research

Please note the Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship Eligibility Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent
- Participation in the advancement of government statistics, whether as a government employee, researcher under government contract or using government statistics, or student involved with government statistics

To apply, you will need to complete and submit the following:

- The original copy of an application (available in MS Word format:  
<http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/wjsapp07.doc> and Adobe pdf format:  
<http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/wjsapp07.pdf>)
- Original transcripts, performance reviews, or alternate proof of superior job
- Project proposal
- Two reference letters

For more information, contact Juanita Tamayo Lott, 2007 Chair of the Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship Committee, 301.763.3127 or [juanita.t.lott@census.gov](mailto:juanita.t.lott@census.gov). The other committee members are Michael P. Cohen and Bob Kominski. All necessary materials must be submitted by April 15, 2007. Electronic submissions are permissible.

All materials should be mailed before April 15, 2007, to:

Juanita Tamayo Lott  
Human Resources Division  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Washington, D.C. 20233-1400

## **2007 Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) Research Conference, November 5-7, 2007**

### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

The 2007 FCSM Research Conference will be held at the [Sheraton Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia](#), on November 5-7, 2007. The conference provides a forum for experts from around the world to discuss and exchange current research and methodological topics relevant to Federal government statistical programs. Each day of the conference will offer papers on a wide range of topics. The conference will feature mostly contributed papers with formal discussion and software demonstrations on topics related to a variety of statistical research issues. Papers and demonstrations should address methodology, empirical studies, relevant issues, or needs for statistical research. Papers must be original and not previously published or disseminated.

Overall Topic Areas Include:

Survey Design and Data Collection  
Statistical Analysis  
Evaluation  
Cross-Cutting Topics

To submit a paper or demonstration for consideration, submit the abstract online by **March 8, 2007**.

CONFERENCE INFORMATION INCLUDING A FULL LIST OF POSSIBLE TOPICS CAN BE FOUND AT THE FCSM SITE: [www.fcsm.gov/events](http://www.fcsm.gov/events)

### **THE JEANNE E. GRIFFITH MENTORING AWARD**

On receiving the Roger Herriot Award in June 2001, Jeanne E. Griffith said:

**One of the most rewarding aspects (of Federal statistics) for me was the opportunity to promote creative activities and energies among my staff...When I have had the blessing to mentor young people in their careers, I have tried to emphasize.....(that) only they, themselves, can make the most of (the)....chances that life presents.**

Dr. Griffith died in August 2001 after working for more than 25 years in the Federal statistical system. Throughout her career, and especially in her latter senior management positions at the National Center for Education Statistics and the National Science Foundation, one of Jeanne's *highest* priorities was to mentor and encourage younger staff at all levels to learn, to grow, and to recognize and seize career opportunities as they came along.

The Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award has been established to encourage mentoring of younger staff in the Federal statistical system. It is presented annually, beginning in 2003, to a supervisor who is nominated by co-workers and supervisors, and chosen by the Award Selection Committee.

The award is co-sponsored by the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy, the Council for Excellence in Government, the Washington Statistical Society, the Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections of the American Statistical Association, and the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics.

Nominations for 2007 will be accepted beginning in February 2007. The last date for submission of nominations is March 30, 2007, and the Award Committee will make its determination of the award winner by May 4, 2007. The award will consist of a \$1000 honorarium and a citation, which will be presented at a ceremony arranged by the co-sponsors in June 2007.

The winning mentor will be selected for his or her efforts in supporting the work and developing the careers of younger staff. Examples of typical mentoring activities include:

- Advising junior staff to help them create career opportunities, networking skills, and contacts for growth and development;
- Counseling junior staff and providing resources to help develop their technical writing, analysis, presentation and organizational skills and knowledge;
- Encouraging junior staff growth and career development through attendance and oral presentations at meetings with higher level officials, staffs of other agencies, professional associations, training courses, and conferences;
- Motivating junior staff and building self confidence through feedback on their efforts, being a listener when that is needed, and creating a caring and supportive environment;
- Serving as a role model for junior staff through professional expertise, information and insights, balancing collegial and personal roles, and including everyone across rank, race, ethnicity, and seniority.

For further information on the award, contact Ed Spar, Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS) by phone: 703-836-0404; fax: 703-836-0406; or by e-mail at [copafs@aol.com](mailto:copafs@aol.com). The nomination cover sheet and guidelines form-or a photocopy of it-should be attached to a nomination memorandum or letter. Forms can be obtained by contacting Ed Spar, or by downloading from the COPAFS website at <http://www.copafs.org>. All nominations should be returned to the Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award Committee, c/o COPAFS, 2121 Eisenhower Avenue, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314 no later than March 30, 2007.

## **Nominations Sought for 2007 Julius Shiskin Award**

Nominations are invited for the annual Julius Shiskin Memorial Award for Economic Statistics. The Award is given in recognition of unusually original and important contributions in the development of economic statistics or in the use of statistics in interpreting the economy. Contributions are recognized for statistical research, development of statistical tools, application of information technology techniques, use of economic statistical programs, management of statistical programs, or developing public understanding of measurement issues. The Award was established in 1980 by the Washington Statistical Society (WSS) and is now cosponsored by the WSS, the National Association for Business Economics, and the Business and Economics Statistics Section of the American Statistical Association (ASA). The 2006 award recipient was J. Steven (Steve) Landefeld, Director of the Bureau of Economic Analysis, for his leadership in improving the U.S. economic

accounts and related statistics through effective management, collaboration with domestic and international users, and scholarly research.

Because the program was initiated many years ago, it is little wonder that statisticians and economists often ask, "Who was Julius Shiskin?" At the time of his death in 1978, "Julie" was the Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and earlier served as the Chief Statistician at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Chief Economic Statistician and Assistant Director of the Census Bureau. Throughout his career, he was known as an innovator. At Census he was instrumental in developing an electronic computer method for seasonal adjustment. In 1961, he published *Signals of Recession and Recovery*, which laid the groundwork for the calculation of monthly economic indicators, and he developed the monthly Census report *Business Conditions Digest* to disseminate them to the public. In 1969, he was appointed Chief Statistician at OMB where he developed the policies and procedures that govern the release of key economic indicators (Statistical Policy Directive Number 3), and originated a *Social Indicators* report. In 1973, he was selected to head BLS where he was instrumental in preserving the integrity and independence of the BLS labor force data and directed the most comprehensive revision in the history of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which included a new CPI for all urban consumers.

Nominations for the 2007 award are now being accepted. Individuals or groups in the public or private sector from any country can be nominated. The award will be presented with an honorarium of \$750 plus additional recognition from the sponsors. A nomination form and a list of all previous recipients are available on the ASA Website at <[www.amstat.org/sections/bus\\_econ/shiskin.html](http://www.amstat.org/sections/bus_econ/shiskin.html)> or by writing to the Julius Shiskin Award Committee, Attn: Monica Clark, American Statistical Association, 732 North Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-1943.

Completed nominations must be received by April 1, 2007. For further information contact Steven Paben, Julius Shiskin Award Committee Secretary, at [paben.steven@bls.gov](mailto:paben.steven@bls.gov).

## **WSS and Other Seminars**

(All events are open to any interested persons)

### March

- 7 Wed. New Methods and Satellites: A Program Update on the NASS Cropland Data Layer Acreage Program
- 8 Thur. Measurement and Statistical Analysis of Human Rights: A Model
- 16 Fri. Use of a Visual Programming Environment for Creating and Optimizing Mass Spectrometry Diagnostic Workflows
- 23 Fri. Bayesian Diagnostics for Detecting Hierarchical Structure
- 27 Tues. President's Invited Panel Discussion on Finite Population Correction Factors
- 28 Wed. Applications of the Johnson SB Distribution to Environmental Data

Also available on the Web at the following URL: <http://www.scs.gmu.edu/~wss/>

## **Announcement**

### **2007 CDC & ATSDR Symposium on Statistical Methods**

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!!!

<http://www.cdc.gov/od/ads/sag/index.htm>

Analyzing and Mapping Health Inequities to Impact Policies for Eliminating Disparities

Eleventh Biennial CDC & ATSDR Symposium on Statistical Methods

April 17-18, 2007

Statisticians, social and behavioral scientists, epidemiologists, economists, policy analysts, and others are invited to participate in the Eleventh Biennial Symposium on Statistical Methods, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (CDC & ATSDR), the American Statistical Association (ASA) and the Biostatistics Department at Emory University Rollins School of Public Health. The Symposium will be held in Atlanta, GA. The theme for the 2007 Symposium is “Analyzing and Mapping Health Inequities to Impact Policies for Eliminating Disparities.” Two short courses (Bayesian Small Area Estimation and Statistical Analysis Using GIS Data Measuring Disparities) will be offered on April 16, 2007 in conjunction with the Symposium.

### **NEW BTS DIRECTOR**

Dr. Steven D. Dillingham is the new Director for the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS). BTS is a part of the Research and Technology Administration (RITA) in the U.S. Department of Transportation, and Dr. Dillingham is also a RITA Associate Administrator. Dr. Dillingham has an extensive background in research and statistics. His previous government service includes serving as the Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and directing research and planning for the Department of Justice's U.S. Trustee Program. He also served as Chief Administrator of the American Prosecutors Research Institute. Recently, he has been Chief Counsel for the Vice Chairman of the Merit Systems Protection Board. He holds graduate degrees in government (PhD, MPA), law (JD, LLM), and business (MBA).

#### **Note from the WSS NEWS Editor**

Items for publication in the May issue of the WSS NEWS should be submitted no later than March 27, 2007. E-mail items to Michael Feil at [michael.feil@usda.gov](mailto:michael.feil@usda.gov).

## Program Announcement

**Title:** New Methods and Satellites: A Program Update on the NASS Cropland Data Layer Acreage Program

**Speaker:** Rick Mueller, National Agricultural Statistics Service

**Chair:** Mike Fleming

**Date/time:** Wednesday, March 7, 2007 / 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

**Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center. To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to [wss\\_seminar@bls.gov](mailto:wss_seminar@bls.gov) (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.

**Sponsor:** WSS Agriculture and Natural Resources Section

**Abstract:** The USDA/National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) annually produces remote sensing based crop specific classifications and acreage estimates over the major growing regions of the United States using medium resolution satellite imagery. The classifications are published in the public domain as the Cropland Data Layer (CDL) after the publication of the official release of county estimates. This program has mapped 24 total states since 1997 and is currently mapping 11 states annually (AR, IA, IL, IN, LA, MO, MS, ND, NE, WA and WI). This program previously used Landsat TM and ETM+ satellite imagery, the NASS June Agricultural Survey (JAS) segments for the ground truth information, and NASS public domain Peditor software for producing the classification and regression estimates. The unpredictability of the aging Landsat program assets, the labor intensive nature of digitizing June Agricultural Survey input for the Cropland Data Layer program, and the potential efficiency gains using commercial software warranted the need to investigate new program methods.

In 2004, NASS investigated alternative sensors to the Landsat platform, annually acquiring ResourceSat-1 Advanced Wide Field Sensor (AWiFS) data over the active Cropland Data Layer states. Additionally, evaluations were carried out on alternative ground truth methodologies to the June Agricultural Survey, using data collected through the USDA/Farm Service Agency (FSA) Common Land Unit (CLU) program. Testing and comparisons with regression tree See5 software against Peditor began in 2006 to produce the Cropland Data Layer. The goal was to determine which application was more efficient and delivered the most accurate estimates.

Accuracy assessments and acreage indications determined that the AWiFS significantly reduced the statistical variance of acreage indications from using the June Agricultural Survey area sampling frame, delivering a potential successor to the Landsat platform. In 2006, pilot testing was complete and the AWiFS sensor was selected as the exclusive source of imagery for the production of the Cropland Data Layer and acreage estimates. The Farm Service Agency Common Land Unit program provides a comprehensive national digitized and attributed GIS dataset collected annually for inclusion into programs like the Cropland Data Layer. Commercial image processing programs such as See5 were tested in 2006 against the AWiFS imagery and Common Land Unit datasets, providing evidence of efficiency gains in statistical accuracy, scope of coverage, and time of delivery.

## Program Announcement

- Title:** Measurement and Statistical Analysis of Human Rights: A Model
- Speaker:** Brian J. Grim, Ph.D.  
Senior Research Fellow, Religion and World Affairs  
Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life  
1615 L Street, NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036  
[bgrim@pewforum.org](mailto:bgrim@pewforum.org)
- Discussant:** Art Kindall
- Date/Time:** Thursday, March 8, 2007/ 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center in Room 9. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsors:** WSS Human Right's, AAAS, DC-AAPOR, and CASPA
- Abstract:** The study of human rights violations and the development of statistical models that can offer explanations are severely handicapped by a lack of adequate data. Most information on human rights is embedded in qualitative reports. Quantitative data that do exist tend to be limited to rough counts of violations or numeric indexes with little if any methodological transparency. This presentation will describe an extensive and rigorous coding project which uses the annual U.S. State Department's *International Religious Freedom Reports* as the primary information source and the procedures developed to check the coded data against alternative sources. The usefulness of these coded data will be demonstrated by testing an explanatory theory of religious persecution using structural equation modeling. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of how this research could be extended to the measurement and statistical analysis of other human rights.

## Program Announcement

**Title:** Use of a Visual Programming Environment for Creating and Optimizing Mass Spectrometry Diagnostic Workflows

**Speaker:** Maciek Sasinowski, PhD  
CEO and Founder of INCOGEN, INC.  
Williamsburg, VA

**Date/Time:** Friday, March 16, 2007 / 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. (refreshments will be served at 9:45)

**Location:** Georgetown University  
Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center  
3800 Reservoir Road, NW  
New Research Building, E501 Conference Room  
Washington, DC 20057

Phone: 202-687-4114

**Abstract:** The use of mass spectrometry for clinical applications has extraordinary potential for accurate, early, and minimally invasive diagnoses of complex diseases, such as cancer, which require sensitive diagnostic tools for prognosis and development of flexible treatment strategies. Unfortunately, current mass spectrometry data analysis options available to researchers often require improvised combinations of tools provided by instrument manufacturers, third-parties, and in-house development. The lack of unified interfaces to access existing resources presents a significant bottleneck in the research and discovery process.

In this seminar, we present a modular software tool for the analysis of mass spectrometry profiling data that aims to address this bottleneck. The modules that comprise the analysis workflows can be broadly classified into three categories: signal processing tools, variable selection algorithms, and classification utilities. The software tool provides a platform that allows researchers to construct, validate, and optimize classification workflows of serum samples analyzed with time-of-flight mass spectrometry. Our work suggests that this type of flexible and interactive architecture is highly useful for 1) the development of mass spectrometry workflows and 2) biomarker discovery and validation in clinical environments.



## Program Announcement

- Title:** Bayesian Diagnostics for Detecting Hierarchical Structure
- Speaker:** Guofen Yan, University of Virginia
- Chair:** Donald Malec, U.S. Bureau of the Census
- Date/Time:** Friday, March 23, 2007 / 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center in G440. To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to [wss\\_seminar@bls.gov](mailto:wss_seminar@bls.gov) (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** Methodology Section, WSS
- Abstract:** Motivated by an increasing number of Bayesian hierarchical model applications, we investigate several diagnostic techniques when the fitted model includes some hierarchical structure, but the data are from a model with additional, unknown hierarchical structure. We start by studying the simple situation where the data come from a normal model with two-stage hierarchical structure while the fitted model does not have any hierarchical structure, and then extend this to the case where the fitted model has two-stage normal hierarchical structure while the data come from a model with three-stage normal structure. Our investigation suggests two promising techniques: distribution of individual posterior predictive p values and the conventional posterior predictive p value with the F statistic as a checking function. Finally, we apply these two techniques to examine the fit of a model for data from the Patterns of Care Study, a two-stage cluster sample of cancer patients undergoing radiation therapy.

## **Program Announcement**

- Title:** President's Invited Panel Discussion on Finite Population Correction Factors
- Chair:** Gary Shapiro, Westat
- Panel Members:** Keith Rust, Westat and Joint Program on Survey Methodology  
Barry Graubard, National Cancer Institute  
Phillip S. Kott, National Agricultural Statistics Institute  
John Eltinge, Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Date/Time:** Tuesday, March 27, 2007/2:00 pm to 3:30 pm (please note the atypical start time)
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center in Room 9. To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to [wss\\_seminar@bls.gov](mailto:wss_seminar@bls.gov) (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** Methodology Program, WSS
- Abstract:** It is common practice to use finite population correction factors (fpc) in estimating variances when sampling from a finite population. Various approximate fpcs are used with more complex designs sometimes. When the interest is in a wider population than the specific finite sampling frame, many argue that it suffices to drop the fpc from the variance estimates, but others maintain this is appropriate only in a limited number of contexts.

## Program Announcement

Title: **Applications of the Johnson SB Distribution to Environmental Data**

Speaker: David T. Mage, (Retired), Institute for Survey Research, Temple University

Chair: Mel Kollander

Date/time: Wednesday, March 28, 2007 / 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Room 1. To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to [wss\\_seminar@bls.gov](mailto:wss_seminar@bls.gov) (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.

Sponsor: WSS Agriculture and Natural Resources Section

Abstract: In analyzing environmental data, it is common practice to assume that such data are from a 2-parameter lognormal if right skew and from a normal distribution if symmetrical. It is not generally recognized that the Johnson SB Distribution provides a continuum of distributions between the normal and lognormal distributions that constitute SB asymptotes. The Johnson SB transforms experimental data bounded by a minimum value ( $X_{min}$ ) and a maximum value ( $X_{max}$ ) into a normally distributed variable  $Y = \ln [(x - X_{min}) / (X_{max} - x)]$  which is bounded as  $-\infty < Y < +\infty$ . As  $X_{max}$  goes to  $+\infty$  and  $X_{min}$  goes to 0, the distribution is asymptotically 2-parameter lognormal. As  $X_{max}$  goes to  $+\infty$  and  $X_{min}$  goes to  $-\infty$  the distribution is asymptotically normal.

Methods of objectively determining 4 optimal parameters for the SB distribution ( $X_{min}$ ,  $X_{max}$ ,  $\mu$ ,  $\sigma$ ) by the maximum likelihood estimation procedures are reviewed. Bruce Hill (1963) showed that the maximum likelihood solution for the three parameter lognormal yields degenerate and absurd solutions as  $X_{min}$  goes in the limit to the minimum observation; the likelihood of the minimum observation tends to infinity, as the likelihood of all other observations tend to zero. Although somewhat surprising, Hill's result conforms with known general problems with likelihood methods when the support points of the probability distribution are a function of the parameters of the distribution, in this case the parameters  $X_{min}$  and  $X_{max}$ . Several modifications of the maximum likelihood methods are proposed. It is also shown that for the standard likelihood function a local maximum occurs within natural parameter space.

Different methods of resolving this problem are discussed along with other methods of obtaining the SB parameters, by fitting to 4 percentiles, by method of moments, and by a graphical technique that plots the data and minimizes the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic.

## Announcement

### **SHORT COURSES PRESENTED BY THE JOINT PROGRAM IN SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

JPSM HOME PAGE: [www.jpsm.org](http://www.jpsm.org) Click on "Short Courses"

SPONSOR AFFILIATE LIST:

<https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/sponsorlist.cfm>

COURSE LISTS, INFORMATION, REGISTRATION, PAYMENT AND CANCELLATION:

<https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/>

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March 27, 2007 (Open for Registration)

Introduction to National Accounts

Barbara Fraumeni

Registration Deadline: March 13, 2007

Information: <https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/materials/2007-0327.html>

April 12-13, 2007 (Open for Registration) Questions for Standardized Measurement in Surveys Nora

Cate Schaeffer Registration Deadline: March 29, 2007

Information: <https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/materials/2007-0412.html>

May 15-16, 2007 (Forthcoming)

Analysis and Presentation of Economic Data Katharine G. Abraham and Deborah P. Klein

Information: Forthcoming

May 22-23, 2007 (Open for Registration)

Applied Structural Equation Modeling

Patrick Sturgis

Registration Deadline: May 8, 2007

Information: <https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/materials/2007-0522.html>

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JPSM HOME PAGE: [www.jpsm.org](http://www.jpsm.org) Click on "Short Courses"

SPONSOR AFFILIATE LIST:

<https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/sponsorlist.cfm>

COURSE LISTS, INFORMATION, REGISTRATION, PAYMENT AND CANCELLATION:

<https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/>

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Primary Funding for JPSM is from the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy

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## Washington Statistical Society - Short Course Announcement

R and analysis of complex surveys  
March 15-16, 2007  
**Registration Due By March 5, 2007**

R is an open-source extension of the S statistical and graphical system. Along with the add-on "survey" package, the software provides a fairly advanced repertoire of survey analysis methods including multistage designs, two-phase designs, calibration and generalized raking, and regression modeling. Advantages of the R survey package include the cost, the visibility of all the code for verification purposes, and the integration with a powerful programming language and graphics system. The course will be taught in the form of a lecture; however, participants may bring their own laptop computers with the software already installed. (The software may be obtained at <http://cran.r-project.org/>.)

*Day 1: An introduction to R.*

Reading in data; simple calculations; graphics; merging and reshaping data; simple programming; using objects; using packages.

*Day 2: The R survey package.*

Specifying design information; computing summary statistics; using and creating replicate weights; domain estimations; graphics; ratio and regression estimators; post-stratification, raking, calibration; two-phase designs; simple simulations.

**About the instructor:** Thomas Lumley is Associate Professor of Biostatistics at the University of Washington, Seattle. He developed and maintains the R "survey" package and is one of the core developers of R itself.

**Who Should Attend:** The course does not require any prior knowledge of R or S-PLUS, but some experience with statistical analysis and data management and knowledge of survey techniques is assumed.

**Schedule for Course:** The course will be held over two days March 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Registration will begin at 8:30 AM and the class will run from 9 AM to 4:30 PM. There will be coffee and Danish in the morning before class both days and at the morning break, with beverages and cookies in the afternoon. Lunch will also be provided both days.

**Location:**

BLS Conference Center (near Union Station Metro stop), Postal Square Building, 2 Massachusetts Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20212-0001

**Registration Fee: (Please send fee and registration form to Brenda Boateng by March 5).  
*Class size will be limited, so please register early.***

Full-time students (Provide copy of student ID with registration—only 5 student slots available)  
\$ 50

WSS members	\$ 200
All other registrants	\$ 210

**For more information on this course,** please contact the WSS short-course co-chairs:  
Sylvia Dohrmann – [SylviaDohrmann@westat.com](mailto:SylviaDohrmann@westat.com)  
Trena M. Ezzati-Rice – [trena.ezzati-rice@ahrq.gov](mailto:trena.ezzati-rice@ahrq.gov)

**WSS Short Course**  
**R and analysis of complex surveys**  
**March 15-16, 2007**

Name:			
Firm/Agency:			
Job Title:			
E-mail:			
Mailing Address:			
Home Phone:			
Work Phone:			
Registration Fee:	_ \$50 (student)		
	_ \$200 (WSS members only)		
	_ \$210 (Non-WSS members)		
	Non-members may join WSS by applying a portion of the course fee to membership. Would you like to join WSS? _ Yes _ No <i>By selecting "Yes" you will be enrolled automatically. For more information on membership, see <a href="http://www.scs.gmu.edu/~wss/">http://www.scs.gmu.edu/~wss/</a>.</i>		
Please check your payment method:			
_ A check in the amount of \$ _____ is enclosed.			
_ A credit card payment in the amount of \$ _____ is enclosed			

Please make check payable to Washington Statistical Society. **Mail, FAX, or e-mail this registration form and send payment by March 5, 2007 to:**

Brenda Boateng  
AHRQ  
540 Gaither Road  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

E-mail: [Brenda.boateng@ahrq.gov](mailto:Brenda.boateng@ahrq.gov)  
Phone Number: 301-427-1803  
Fax Number: 301-427-1276

## Employment

As a service to local statisticians, *WSS News* provides notification of employment opportunities and description of those seeking employment here in the Washington, DC, area. Readers are encouraged to take advantage of this feature of the newsletter. The deadline for inserting notices is five (5) weeks before the publication date. Those interested should email or call Anne Peterson, at [apeterson@insightpolicyresearch.com](mailto:apeterson@insightpolicyresearch.com) or (703) 373-6645.

### **CLINICAL TRIAL BIOSTATISTICIANS M.S. and Ph.D. Level Positions**

With an opportunity for substantial leadership responsibility in studies of international public health import.

The Biostatistics Center of The George Washington University, founded in 1972, is a leader in the statistical coordination of clinical trials conducted by the National Institutes of Health. We enjoy over \$45 million per year of NIH research funding for major studies in cardiovascular disease, diabetes, maternal/fetal medicine, osteoporosis, urology, and the genetic basis for various diseases. The center has a staff of over 100 with 27 biostatisticians/epidemiologists, including 10 faculty. We are recruiting M.S. and Ph.D. level staff to participate in these and future studies. Please visit our web site (below).

**Master's Level Research Positions:** These positions require a Master's in Biostatistics or Statistics and 1-5 years experience in analysis, supervision of data management and study design for biomedical applications. Good written and oral communication skills, and detailed knowledge of SAS required. Send CV to address below.

**Assistant to Full Research Professorial Positions** are available immediately to serve as Co-Investigator or Principal Investigator (Project Director) and to provide statistical direction of the design, conduct and analysis of studies and the conduct of methodologic research to meet the projects needs. We are seeking individuals who want to join a highly competent team of academic biostatisticians and epidemiologists; who desire to contribute to the design and analysis of major medical studies, seek substantive scientific and statistical responsibility, enjoy interacting with medical investigators; take pride contributing to the publication of major papers in leading medical journals, and desire to make an impact on the public health. Our faculty also participate in graduate programs in biostatistics, epidemiology and statistics which afford opportunities for teaching at the graduate level. The research projects also provide an environment rich in methodological problems, with opportunities for collaboration with research active Center faculty and graduate students.

**Minimum Position Requirements:** Doctorate in Biostatistics, Statistics or Epidemiology, or alternatively an M.D. or Ph.D. in Biological Science, Physical Science or Computer Science with a Masters in Biostatistics or Statistics, 1-5 years' experience with clinical trials, especially study design and statistical analysis of study results using SAS, excellent oral and written English communication skills, and supervisory experience.

**Application Procedures:** Applicants must send a Curriculum Vitae and three letters of reference; a letter to include a synopsis of their role in collaborative medical research that has led to medical scientific presentation or publication and a statement of career purpose indicating their career goals and how this position can help you achieve those goals; and applicants for Assistant Research Professor positions must send an Official Transcript of graduate coursework leading to the doctoral degree to: Sarah Fowler, Research Professor and Director, The George Washington University Biostatistics Center, 6110 Executive Blvd., Suite 750, Rockville, MD 20852.

Review of applications is ongoing until the positions are filled. Rank/position title and salary commensurate with experience and qualifications. Tuition benefits for employees (including Ph.D. in Statistics, Biostatistics and Epidemiology) and for spouse and dependent children.

All research and regular faculty at the rank of Assistant Professor in Biostatistics or Statistics may apply for the Samuel W. Greenhouse Biostatistics Research Enhancement Award. For a period of 1 year, the award will provide 20% effort for methodological research and a discretionary fund to support professional activities, travel to professional meetings, supplies and equipment. Applicants for the research faculty position may also apply for the Greenhouse Award while their faculty application is being considered. For complete information including Award Application Materials Requirements, please visit our website at: [www.bsc.gwu.edu](http://www.bsc.gwu.edu).

The George Washington University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer

### **Survey Sampling Statistician**

#### **WESTAT AN EMPLOYEE-OWNED RESEARCH CORPORATION**

Westat is an employee-owned corporation headquartered in the suburbs of Washington, DC (Rockville, Maryland). We provide statistical consulting and survey research to the agencies of the U.S. Government and to a broad range of business and institutional clients. With a strong technical and managerial staff and a long record of quality research, Westat has become one of the leading survey research and statistical consulting organizations in the United States.

Our company was founded in 1961 by three statisticians. The current staff of more than 1,800 includes over 60 statisticians, as well as research, technical, and administrative staff. In addition, our professional staff is supported by data collection and processing personnel situated locally and in field sites around the country. The work atmosphere is open, progressive, and highly conducive to professional growth.

Our statistical efforts continue to expand in areas such as the environment, energy, health, education, and human resources. Westat statisticians are actively involved in teaching graduate-level courses in statistical methods and survey methodology in collaborative arrangements with area colleges and universities.

We are currently recruiting for the following statistical position:

Survey Sampling Statistician (Job Code WSS/DRM/7001)

Three or more years of relevant experience in sample design and selection, frames development, weighting, imputation, and variance estimation. Must have a master's or doctoral degree in statistics and have excellent writing skills. Coursework in sample survey design is highly desirable.

Westat offers excellent growth opportunities and an outstanding benefits package including life and health insurance, an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), a 401(k) plan, flexible spending accounts, professional development, and tuition assistance. For immediate consideration, please send your cover letter, indicating the Westat Job Code, and resume by one of the following methods to:

Job Code is **REQUIRED** to apply.

Westat • Attn: Resume System • 1650 Research Boulevard • Rockville, MD 20850-3195

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### **Statistician/Biostatistician**

Information Management Services (IMS) Inc, a biomedical software company, with over 30 years of experience, located in Silver Spring and Rockville, MD invites applications for a statistical programmer. Candidates must have an MS or PhD in statistics or math, plus familiarity with spatial analysis, survival analysis methods, mixed models, or item response theory and good interpersonal and communication skills. Experience with statistical analytic packages and C/C++ or Splus is a plus. Opportunities exist for collaborative publications and the development of software products which have wide distribution and impact.

This position collaborates with nationally recognized statisticians within the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences, NCI: the (<http://www.srab.cancer.gov>), Surveillance Research Program (SRP) (<http://www.surveilliance.cancer.gov>), the Applied Research Program (ARP) (<http://www.appliedresearch.cancer.gov>), and the Statistical Research and Applications Branch (SRAB) (<http://www.srab.cancer.gov>) on the analysis of epidemiologic studies and the development of state-of-the-art methods and software for the analysis and presentation of cancer statistics. The SRP Biostatisticians conduct research related to the surveillance of cancer patterns in the US and collaborate on epidemiologic studies to assess these patterns. Research within SRAB is targeted at improving and developing statistical methods and models for use in the analysis and presentation of population-based cancer statistics within the framework of cancer surveillance and cancer control. The ARP biostatisticians evaluate patterns and trends in cancer-associated health behaviors, practices, genetic susceptibilities, health services, and outcomes. Examples include: modeling the effect of new cancer control activities; monitoring risk, health and cancer screening behaviors in populations; developing new analytic approaches for the presentation and estimation of incidence, survival, mortality, and related cancer statistics. For more information and to apply see [www.imsweb.com](http://www.imsweb.com) or contact:

**Mary Lamb**  
**Information Management Services, Inc.**  
**12501 Prosperity Drive, Suite 200**  
**Silver Spring, MD 20904**  
**(301) 60-9770**  
**1 (888) 680-5057 (Toll Free)**

### **Sampling Statistician**

ICF International is currently seeking a sampling statistician to direct and supervise all aspects of sampling, variance estimation and weighting for large, complex survey research projects. The candidate should have 5 or more years of relevant experience in sample design, to include selection, stratification, and weighting, development of sampling frames, variance estimation and data imputation. The candidate should possess a doctoral degree in statistics or related discipline. The sampling statistician must provide expert guidance on these topics using current, state-of-the-art methodologies. Strong quantitative analytical and writing skills are also desired, as is experience in survey/questionnaire design.

#### **Specific Responsibilities**

- Oversee sample design, sample stratification, weighting and variance estimation for large survey projects
- Define population and specify the appropriate sample frame and sample size for complex surveys
- Work with other research staff members on the design and implementation of the sampling and weighting plan for complex survey projects, but also on questionnaire development and analysis of survey data
- Develop weighting methods appropriate for analysis and reporting and guide the implementation of weighting adjustments.
- Prepare sampling, stratification and weighting methodology content for proposals

- and project reports.
- Provide budget estimates for the execution of all aspects of the chosen sampling strategy.
- Interact with third-party representatives on sampling/data subject matter (such as data vendors).
- Develop written products and discuss issues of sampling, variance estimation and weighting with other team members.

If interested, please send a resume and cover letter to:  
[resumesjs@icfi.com](mailto:resumesjs@icfi.com)

ICF International (Nasdaq: ICFI) partners with government and commercial clients to deliver consulting services and technology solutions in the energy, environment, transportation, social programs, defense, and homeland security markets. The firm combines passion for its work with industry expertise and innovative analytics to produce compelling results throughout the entire program life cycle, from analysis and design through implementation and improvement. Since 1969, ICF has been serving government at all levels, major corporations, and multilateral institutions. More than 2,000 employees serve these clients worldwide. ICF's Web site is <http://www.icfi.com>

**Instructor**  
**The Department of Statistics**  
**George Mason University**

The Department of Statistics, GMU, is seeking a Visiting Term Instructor from August 25, 2007 to May 24, 2008. The candidate should have a Ph.D. in statistics or a related discipline and experience in teaching statistics at the undergraduate level. The teaching load is 4 courses in Fall 2007 and 4 courses in Spring 2008 - both calculus and non—calculus based undergraduate statistics and probability courses.

Interested individuals should submit a CV, letter of intent (including statements of research and teaching interests and accomplishments), and names and contacts of two references on-line at <http://jobs.gmu.edu>. Please enter Position number F8971Z. Review of applications began in mid-February and will continue until the position is filled. [Click on the Search Postings link on the left. Enter F8971Z in the Position Number] Additional information can be obtained from [statistics@gmu.edu](mailto:statistics@gmu.edu).

George Mason University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Women and minority candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.



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