



## **WSS NEWS**

# **WASHINGTON STATISTICAL SOCIETY**

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## WSS ELECTION SLATE

2023 Washington Statistical Society (WSS) Election Announcement in accordance with the bylaws, please see the slate of nominees for the upcoming 2023 election of WSS Board members. The election will open for voting in early May for approximately three weeks. Candidates other than those proposed by the Nominating and Election Committee—Erin Tanenbaum (President), Jeff Gonzalez (President-Elect), and Mark Otto (Past President)—may be nominated by petition of at least 2 percent of the members (at least 15 signatures), and must be submitted at least two weeks prior to when the election begins. Petitioned names should be submitted to Mark Otto, Past President, [mark.ot2o@gmail.com](mailto:mark.ot2o@gmail.com).

### President

#### Jonathan Auerbach (George Mason University)



Jonathan Auerbach is an assistant professor in the Department of Statistics at George Mason University, where he conducts research on a wide range of topics at the intersection of statistics and public policy. Prior to his appointment, Jonathan served as the ASA Science Policy Fellow and before that, the ASA/STATS.org Public Understanding of Statistics Fellow.

In these positions, Jonathan worked closely with DMV statisticians across government, industry, and academia to organize events that promote our field. For example, he conducted research and drafted amicus briefs for the ASA Office of Science Policy to advocate for a stronger federal statistical system—much of it published or under review. He participated in the review of the 2020 Census, overseen by the ASA Census Quality Indicators Taskforce. He co-organized two Cherry Blossom prediction competitions—which promote statistics using D.C.’s most iconic event—and organized Mason’s statistics seminar, which included local speakers such as Karen Kafadar, Tom Louis, and Wendy Martinez.

Jonathan started his career in government and considers himself a public servant at heart. While pursuing his PhD at Columbia University, he co-organized the NYC Statistics in Government Working Group with Joe Salvo and Public Data Day at the Brown Institute for Media Innovation with Mark Hansen, among other events. If elected, he would use his position to raise the profile of government statistics—particularly smaller statistical agencies and behind-the-scenes units in government, industry, and academia.

Jonathan’s interest in the position comes from a genuine desire to pay it forward to a community that has become central to his professional and personal identity. In addition to the ASA Science Policy and ASA/STAT.org Public Understanding of Statistics fellowships, he received the ASA Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship in 2015, won the ASA Government Statistics

Section Data Challenge in 2016, and judged the ASA GSS data challenge in 2017 and the ASA Fall Data Challenge in 2020.

Jonathan enjoys volunteering at events demonstrating the power of statistics, from Girls Science Day to Engineers Week. For these and similar efforts, he was an inaugural recipient of the Trailblazer Award from the George Mason University CEC Office of Diversity, Outreach, and Inclusive Learning in 2022.

### **Lloyd Hicks (Westat)**



Lloyd Hicks is a senior statistician with over 25 years of experience in designing and applying survey sampling. He is actively involved with the WSS communications committee in modernizing the WSS website. He served on the mentorship committee and has been a mentor for a number of years, a role that Lloyd feels is critical to the continued evolution of statisticians in both public and private sectors. Recognizing the changes that have occurred in survey work as a result of the 2019 COVID pandemic, Lloyd believes mentoring new statisticians, and growing the network of statisticians within

WSS will facilitate the development and application of new or modified approaches in sampling and estimation that address the changing survey environment. His belief in the importance of mentorship began decades ago as an informal mentor at the Census Bureau and continues today in his current position at Westat as the coordinator of the statistical internship program and mentorship of new staff. Lloyd has worked in a wide variety of survey research areas, including sample design, frame development, sample selection, survey sample and composite weighting, missing data imputation, and variance estimation. He currently serves as a statistical team director for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) program. Lloyd started his career as a mathematical statistician at the US Census Bureau working on the CPS and NHIS. He jumped to Price- Waterhouse-Coopers to do audit sampling work and has been with Westat since 1999. Lloyd has a bachelor's in mathematics from Randolph-Macon College and a master's in statistical computing from American University.

## Methodology Program Chair

### **Katherine Irimata (NCHS)**



**Katherine Irimata** is a mathematical statistician in the Division of Research and Methodology at the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). She is a technical lead on the NCHS Research and Development Survey (RANDS) and the newly developed Rapid Surveys System, two web-based panel survey platforms used for methodological research and data collection. Her research interests include survey estimation and calibration weighting methods for panel and nonprobability surveys. She has published articles in several journals and is the author of the book “Fundamental Statistical Methods for Analysis of Alzheimer’s and Other Neurodegenerative Diseases”. Katherine has a PhD in statistics and a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering from Arizona State University. She has been a member of the American Statistical Society since 2012 and is the former president and founder of the ASA Arizona State University student chapter. She looks forward to getting further involved in WSS and bringing together statisticians in the DMV area through seminars and workshops.

### **Walter Hill (St. Mary’s College of Maryland)**



Walter Hill is a professor at St. Mary’s College of Maryland. He has been an ASA member for several decades. He worked on the Human Rights Committee before 2000 and he worked 2 terms on the ASA Energy Committee ending in 2010. He published in mathematical models of arms races early in his career. He uses public opinion polling data in classes and in research. Classroom materials include sections on structural equations and small simulations of social systems. His recent work has concentrated on the analysis of national elections in the United States notably on structural issues such as funding or voting rules.

## Secretary

### **Dan Liao (RTI)**



Dan Liao is a senior research statistician at RTI International. She has dedicated more than 15 years to developing innovative statistical techniques for national surveys and administrative records. In her role at RTI, she is responsible for overseeing the design of sampling methodologies, survey weighting, data quality assessments, and data analyses for large-scale individual, household, and establishment surveys. She also pioneered in expanding official statistics by integrating survey science and statistical learning techniques with administrative data.

Dan has always been passionate about building and supporting the statistical community for the past decade. She served as the WSS Methodology Program Chair from 2012 to 2014, the Newsletter Editor for the ASA Survey Research Methods Section (SRMS) from 2015 to 2020, and the Publication Officer for the ASA SRMS from 2021 to 2022. She also serves as an associate editor for the Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology (2018 to present) and teaches graduate-level statistical courses at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health (2019 to Present). Dan recently moved back from New Jersey to the DC area in 2022 and would love to continue her involvement with WSS.

### **Adriana Victoria Resendez (George Washington University)**



Adriana obtained her bachelor's degree in sociology with minors in psychology and social work from Elmhurst University in Elmhurst, Illinois. Over ten years later, she graduated with a Master of Public Health degree in epidemiology from the George Washington University (GW) in August 2022. After graduation, Adriana was promoted to an administrative assistant role in the Office of International Medicine Programs at the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences. She is interested in public health surveillance, disability, chronic disease, and improving population health outcomes in the United States.

Adriana was inspired to pursue a public health degree while recruiting and enrolling English and Spanish-speaking participants as a clinical research assistant in the west side of Chicago for the National Institutes of Health study, All of Us Research Program. Adriana is a former Oak



Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) fellow who participated in projects related to abortion surveillance and excess mortality associated with COVID-19 at the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Thanks to the Washington Statistical Society mentorship program, she received incredible professional and personal support throughout her graduate program. This relationship was invaluable to Adriana who is the first person in her family to graduate from college and graduate school. Adriana is committed to paying forward the kindness and mentorship she was graciously given by utilizing her time to support and help professionals from a variety of backgrounds.

Adriana is an active member in the GW Latino Alumni Network, Delta Omega Honorary Society in Public Health, WSS, American Public Health Association, and American Statistical Association. Adriana enjoys weightlifting, reading, and helping people organize their homes in her free time. And yes, Chicago deep dish pizza is the best pizza.

## At Large

### Devi Chelluri (NORC)



Devi Chelluri is a senior statistician for NORC at the University of Chicago in Medicare and Medicaid claims analysis. Her BS in statistics and BSBA in finance are from the University of Pittsburgh and her MS in biostatistics is from the University of Michigan. She develops statistical programs to analyze large datasets, programs sample selection, weighting and other analyses using SAS and R, and consults with other researchers. Prior to joining NORC, she was a statistician for AdvanceMed working on fraud, waste, and abuse management for Medicare Parts A and B and Medicaid.

Devi serves both the ASA as an active member of the Committee on Applied Statisticians and the WSS as a member on the Herriot award committee. She is eager to extend her involvement with WSS by serving as Representative-at Large.

**Maura Bardos (EIA)**

Maura Bardos is a mathematical statistician with the Energy Information Administration (EIA). As a member of the Methods and Research Team, she works with administrative and survey data to support official statistics related to the energy industry. Maura received her MS in Survey Methodology from the University of Michigan and has previously worked at Mathematica Policy Research and the Social Security Administration.

Maura is an active member of the Washington Statistical Society and is currently serving on the Social Arrangements committee. In the past, she served on the Quantitative

Literacy Committee, helping to coordinate volunteer opportunities for WSS members. Outside of WSS, Maura is the website editor for the Survey Research Methods Section of the American Statistical Association.

If elected, Maura is looking forward to increasing her involvement in WSS as a voting member and supporting initiatives that promote WSS in the broader statistical community.

**Ada Harris (EEOC) Enterprise Analytics Team Lead Office of Enterprise Data and Analytics**

Ada is the Team Lead of the Enterprise Analytics in the Office of Enterprise Data and Analytics of the EEOC. Her team supports quantitative and qualitative analyses including managing the development of interactive dashboards of vulnerable worker populations and of employer demographics in comparison to county demographics. Prior to the EEOC she worked for the Department of Defense, training and leading multidisciplinary researchers in using disparate administrative datasets to support Total Force Readiness. She has worked very closely with many diverse clients within the Department of Defense including Military Program and Policy and the Office of the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness.

Previously, she worked Senior Mathematical Statistician position at the Research, Surveys, and Statistics within the Defense Manpower Data Center focusing on sampling, weighting, nonresponse and measurement error for Workplace and Gender Relations Survey, Status of Forces Survey, and Workplace Equal Opportunity Survey.

Ada holds a M.S in Statistics from George Washington University and a B.S. in Mathematics from the University of Maryland. She has the skills and interest to work on diversity equality and inclusion activities. She also would support WSS leadership and mentoring activities.

**Aaron Gilary (Census)**

growth opportunities.

Aaron Gilary has been a statistician with the US Census Bureau for the past 16 years. He is a branch chief in the Decennial Statistical Studies Division working on matching methodology and operations, and record linkage research. Prior to that, he worked on; sample design and estimation for several demographic surveys focused on education and post-scholastic outcomes; on research projects involving small-area estimation, variance estimation, and incorporating alternative data sources; and on survey applications including economic statistics, decennial Census estimation, and employment. He is an active member of WSS and supports mentoring, training, and other WSS



## **2022 HOLIDAY PARTY RECAP**

The Social Arrangements Committee would like to thank all members and friends of WSS that attended the holiday party held on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at the District Chophouse. It was great to get together after several years of virtual gatherings.

We kicked off the event with the presentation of the Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award from the chair of the committee, Raji Sundaram. Congratulations to the winners from the National Cancer Institute: Montserrat Garcia-Closas and Barry Graubard. Here is an article from AMSTAT News about the two awardees: [\*\*Two Honored with 2022 Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award | Amstat News\*\*](#).

The WSS President, Erin Tanenbaum (NORC), revealed the new WSS logo and seal, which is partially inspired by the colors used in the ASA logo.

At the end of the party, we awarded a raffle prize, courtesy of ASA. Congratulations to the raffle winner! We also gave away dozens of mugs with the previous version of the WSS logo, to those that attended the event.

WSS Social Arrangements Committee

Maura Bardos (Energy Information Administration) and Leanna Moron (Westat)



2022 WSS Holiday Party  
December 13, 2022

## CONGRATULATIONS AWARD WINNERS!

### **Jeanne E Griffith Mentoring Award Winners!**

The annual Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award recognizes and encourages the mentoring of junior staff in the statistical community in federal, state, or local government since its establishment in 2001. Only for the second time in its twenty years history, the 2022 Jeanne E Griffith Mentoring Award has two recipients: Dr Montserrat Garcia-Closas, Deputy Director, Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics and Dr Barry Graubard, Senior Investigator, Biostatistics Branch of National Cancer Institute.



**Dr Garcia-Closas**, a world-renowned leader in cancer research with focus on risk prediction for breast cancer was chosen for her exemplary mentoring at all levels from entry level researchers to branch chiefs and for leveraging her leadership position to create opportunities for next generation of federal quantitative scientists in emerging areas of cloud computing and artificial intelligence.



**Dr Graubard**, already recipient of multiple mentoring awards including the American Statistical Association and the National Cancer Institute was chosen for his sustained and dedicated efforts throughout his tenure in federal government in developing the careers of statistics students and early career statistical researchers across federal government and academe.

They will be honored during a virtual ceremony in a closed-door meeting hosted by the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy and an in-person celebration of their award during the annual WSS holiday party on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022. They are also highlighted in the December 1<sup>st</sup> issue of AMSTAT news. Congratulations to them!

## **SEEKING AWARD NOMINEES**

### **The Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award**

The Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award recognizes and encourages the mentoring of junior staff in the statistical community in federal, state, or local government. It is awarded annually to a supervisor, technical director, team coordinator, or other statistical staff member who is nominated by a supervisor or co-workers for his or her efforts in supporting the work and developing the careers of junior staff.

The Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award was established to honor Dr. Griffith, who 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 award recipient will be selected for his or her efforts in supporting the work and developing the careers of junior staff. Preference will be given to nominees with a track record of mentoring government statisticians. 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 the growth and career development of junior staff through attendance and oral presentations at meetings with higher level officials, staff of other agencies, professional associations, training courses, and conferences;
- Motivating junior staff and building self-confidence by providing feedback, 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 regardless of rank, race, ethnicity, gender identity, or seniority.

Nominations for the 2023 Award are now being accepted. The nomination form and guidelines are available from the Government Statistics Section and the Social Statistics Section websites (see <http://community.amstat.org/governmentstatisticssection/home>)



**NOMINATION\$ ARE DUE BY April 30, 2023,** and the Award Committee will determine the award winner by end of June. The award will consist of a \$1,000 honorarium, a citation, and a plaque, which will be presented at a ceremony arranged by the co-sponsors.

The nomination package must be mailed or emailed **no later than April 30, 2023,** to:  
The Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award Committee c/o The American Statistical Association

732 N. Washington Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-1943

Email: [rick@amstat.org](mailto:rick@amstat.org)

If you have questions about the award, please contact **Rick Peterson** at [rick@amstat.org](mailto:rick@amstat.org) or (703) 684-1221, or the chair of the Award Committee: **Raji Sundaram** at [sundaramr2@mail.nih.gov](mailto:sundaramr2@mail.nih.gov).

#### **Previous recipients of the Jeanne E. Griffith Mentoring Award**

- 2004 - Beth A Kilss (Internal Revenue Service)
- 2005 - Renee Miller (Energy Information Administration)
- 2006 - Martin O'Connell (U.S. Census Bureau)
- 2007 - Stephanie Shipp (National Institute for Standards and Technology)
- 2008 - Rosemary Marcuss (Bureau of Economic Analysis)
- 2009 - Kevin Cecco (Internal Revenue Service) and Lillian Lin (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- 2010 - Deborah H. Griffin (U.S. Census Bureau)
- 2011 - Jenise L. Swall (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
- 2012 - William P. Mockovak (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- 2013 - Brian Harris-Kojetin (Office of Management and Budget)
- 2014 - J. Gregory Robinson (U.S. Census Bureau) and Kenneth C. Schoendorf (National Center for Health Statistics)
- 2015 - Aldo "Skip" Vecchia (U.S. Geological Survey)
- 2016 - Diane K. Willimack (U.S. Census Bureau)
- 2017 - Cynthia Ogden (National Center for Health Statistics)
- 2018 - Howard Hogan (U.S. Census Bureau)
- 2018 - Carol Gotway Crawford (U.S. Government Accountability Office)
- 2019 - Sharon Boivin (National Center for Education Statistics)
- 2020 - Rajeshwari Sundaram (National Institutes of Health)
- 2021 - Carol V Caldwell (U.S. Census Bureau)
- 2022 - Barry Graubard and Monserrat Garcia-Closas (National Cancer Institute)



**Sponsors of the Award**

The Government Statistics Section (GSS) of the American Statistical Association manages the award. GSS would like to thank our co-sponsors:

- American Educational Research Association
- American Institutes for Research (AIR)
- Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS)
- Government Statistics Section, ASA
- Interagency Council on Statistical Policy
- Research Triangle Institute (RTI)
- Social Statistics Section, ASA
- Washington Statistical Society, ASA
- Westat

GSS also thanks the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy for its support and championing of this award.

**Please contact Bill Mockovak at [Bmockovak@msn.com](mailto:Bmockovak@msn.com), if your organization would like to co-sponsor the award.**

## **WANTED: PREVIOUS WSS NEWSLETTER EDITIONS**

The project to create PDF scans of the WSS newsletter paper archive began several months ago. PDF scans of WSS newsletters from 1992 to 1995 are now available in the WSS newsletter archive <https://washstat.org/newsletters> . Unfortunately, we have discovered that the paper archive is incomplete. We have discovered both missing issues, and issues with missing pages. As a result, the 1992-1994 PDF scans currently do not include October 1992, November 1993, and December 1994. We anticipate discovering more missing items as we work backward. We would like to hear from you if you have have an archive of WSS newsletters from 1994 and earlier years.

Please contact either John Czajka ([johnlczajka@gmail.com](mailto:johnlczajka@gmail.com)) or Chris Moriarity ([cdm7@cdc.gov](mailto:cdm7@cdc.gov)).

## SEMINAR

| <b>Robust Methods for Biomarker Discovery in Studies with Many Candidate Biomarkers but Limited Sample Size</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Date/Time:</b>   | June 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2023/ 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm ET   |
| <b>Speaker:</b>   | David Kepplinger, Ph.D, Assistant Professor of Statistics, Volgenau School of Engineering, George Mason University   |
| <b>Sponsors:</b>  | WSS Public Health/Biostatistics  |
| <b>Location:</b>  | Zoom <a href="#">link</a>  |
| <b>Abstract:</b>  | <p>Biomarker discovery studies have seen a proliferation with increasingly affordable high-throughput proteomics and genome sequencing. Given the abundance of such studies, the number of generalizable and clinically relevant discoveries is lacking. In particular, many discovery studies are based on samples of limited size and from potentially heterogeneous populations, while at the same time hundreds or even thousands of genes are sequenced. In addition to the heterogeneity of the population, this increasingly large pool of candidate biomarkers also comes with a greater risk of outliers and other forms of contamination. In this talk I will elucidate some of the detrimental effects of such “data-artefacts”, specifically on biomarker discovery and related feature selection tasks, and how they can lead to spurious discoveries. I will then discuss a novel method for reliably identifying relevant biomarkers in the presence of these artefacts. The new method harnesses as much information in the data as possible, while not requiring prior specification of the form or source of data-artefacts. It is shown to outperform other methods commonly employed for biomarker discovery studies and I will demonstrate the usefulness of the method in a proteomic biomarker discovery study.</p> |

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|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Remote<br/>Access:</b> | <p>Join Zoom Meeting<br/> <a href="https://gmu.zoom.us/j/99959778908?pwd=cTZUZFINVXVnMXZ2MmlTZoFDbmTQdzO9">https://gmu.zoom.us/j/99959778908?pwd=cTZUZFINVXVnMXZ2MmlTZoFDbmTQdzO9</a></p> <p>Meeting ID: 999 5977 8908<br/> Passcode: 129259<br/> One tap mobile<br/> +12678310333,,99959778908#,,,,*129259# US (Philadelphia)<br/> +13017158592,,99959778908#,,,,*129259# US (Washington DC)</p> <p>Dial by your location<br/> +1 267 831 0333 US (Philadelphia)<br/> +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)<br/> Meeting ID: 999 5977 8908</p> <p>Passcode: 129259<br/> Find your local number: <a href="https://gmu.zoom.us/j/abORl7hAf">https://gmu.zoom.us/j/abORl7hAf</a></p> <p>Join by SIP<br/> <a href="mailto:99959778908@zoomcrc.com">99959778908@zoomcrc.com</a></p> <p>Join by H.323<br/> 162.255.37.11 (US West)<br/> 162.255.36.11 (US East)<br/> 115.114.131.7 (India Mumbai)<br/> 115.114.115.7 (India Hyderabad)<br/> 213.19.144.110 (Amsterdam Netherlands)<br/> 213.244.140.110 (Germany)<br/> 103.122.166.55 (Australia Sydney)<br/> 103.122.167.55 (Australia Melbourne)<br/> 149.137.40.110 (Singapore)<br/> 64.211.144.160 (Brazil)<br/> 69.174.57.160 (Canada Toronto)<br/> 65.39.152.160 (Canada Vancouver)<br/> 207.226.132.110 (Japan Tokyo)<br/> 149.137.24.110 (Japan Osaka)<br/> Meeting ID: 999 5977 8908<br/> Passcode: 129259</p> |
|---------------------------|---|

## Washington Statistical Society

### Member Spotlight

*Introducing your fellow members and showcasing the diversity of the WSS membership*

#### Meet WSS Member Selina Carter...

##### Where do you work and what do you do?

I'm a data scientist at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Washington DC, where I've worked as a consultant for over five years. I do lots of things as a data scientist: I come up with creative ways to visualize data, help answer business questions about the efficiency of our projects and do lots of coding in R. My biggest project uses machine learning to predict project delays. My team built a visual tool in Tableau that helps IDB managers understand why some projects are executing more slowly than others. I presented this project at the 2020 *R Conference for Government and the Public Sector*.

##### What attracted you to your current position?

My background is in international development. I am a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Ecuador) and worked in Portugal, Turkey and Mozambique. The IDB was a great cultural fit for me since I speak Spanish and Portuguese and love Latin America. Although I started as a business analyst, after starting a master's degrees in math and statistics, many new doors opened for me. I was offered a position as a data scientist and I really wanted it since it offered so much creative control using my quantitative skill sets, but I had the worst imposter syndrome. I almost didn't apply until a manager encouraged me to do so. I interviewed and got the job.

##### Why did you join the Washington Statistical Society?

It was a Christmas gift from my dad! My parents are super supportive of my career and adventures. Being a member of WSS is a great way to keep a sense of community among us nerdy statisticians.

**"I've had so many great mentors...All of [them] respect that I like to ask questions. They are great teachers."**



##### Why did you join the data science and statistics profession?

While working on a master's in Public Administration at Syracuse University, I took an excellent introductory statistics course, sparking an interest that I followed with more quantitative analysis courses. After working in the field for a few years, I realized how useful a statistical background was. I had the chance to further my statistics training after joining the IDB. At first I thought I would just take a few more courses as a non-degree student, but I ended up signing up for the master's degree in math and statistics at Georgetown University. It was the right decision. I love the field of statistics and I'm always trying to learn more. I even decided to pursue a doctorate. This fall, I will attend Carnegie Mellon University to start a PhD in statistics and machine learning.

##### What advice would you give to someone entering the data science and statistics profession?

There's a book by Emily Robinson and Jacqueline Nolis called *Build a Career in Data Science* with great tips. Also, I suggest using the Meetup app to find local (or virtual) events in data science. I met many people by joining the community.



Learning R was something I did by doing, so I suggest starting with an online introductory course and then force yourself to use R whenever you can instead of Excel. For formal statistics training, you will probably want to invest in a university course, since I think most people need guidance from professors to understand the theory. In addition to master's degrees, there are many certificate programs available, such as the Data Science Certificate at Georgetown University, which I've heard great things about.

**Have you had any great mentors? If so, what made them great?**

I've had so many great mentors. At the Maxwell School, Syracuse University, Professor Leonard Lopoo kindled my "stats nerdfire" and is probably still shaking his head about the little statistics monster he created. At Georgetown University, virtually all my professors have been mentors: Professors Mark Meyer, Sivan Leviyang, Kim Sellers and David Caraballo to name a few. All my mentors respect that I like to ask questions. They are great teachers.

**How has COVID19 changed your work environment? What changes do you think will persist post-pandemic?**

We all telework, which is unfortunate because I think we lose the synergy of the office place. I used to knock on my boss' door whenever I had a question or an idea, but now even our online chat tool seems more forced than actual face-to-face interaction. That said, I've become more proficient at using Slack to keep in touch with my team. It's a great way to work across many geographic locations. I'm fairly certain this will be the new norm for most people in data science.

**How do you like to spend your free time away from work?**

I'm really into exercise, which has been my "sanity pillar" during the pandemic. Since the lockdown started, I work out with a group of friends twice a week doing calisthenics and weights. I also like running and pickup soccer. I'm a bit of an artist and keep a sketchbook (you can check out my Instagram at [selina.carter.art](https://www.instagram.com/selina.carter.art)). Drawing and painting help desensitize my brain to math/stats overload (I recently talked about this in a podcast). As I mention in one of my talks, Brian May of the rock group Queen was doing a PhD in astrophysics before he became the lead guitarist (he later finished his PhD in 2007). So I think that art and math complement each other.

(You can learn more about Selina at  
[https://twitter.com/selina\\_carter\\_](https://twitter.com/selina_carter_) and  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/selina-carter-141b2614/>)

## **2023 SPOTLIGHT A WSS MEMBER**

### **Washington Statistical Society's Spotlight on Members Program**

The WSS Board of Directors has established a program to highlight members who have made or are making notable contributions to the work of their organization or their professional field of expertise. We know that WSS members are doing interesting work in the fields of statistics, survey methodology, and the social sciences. Through this program, we hope to spotlight the accomplishments of our fellow WSS members.

This is our first request for nominations, to be featured in an upcoming issue of WSS News. We are interested in featuring members at all levels of the employment spectrum including recent graduates, mid-career employees, and those seasoned veterans.

Please feel free to nominate more than one person or a team working together. You may also nominate yourself as well. The nominees must be members of the WSS and not currently affiliated with the Board.

Please provide us with the following information about your nominee or nominees.

1. Your name, email address, and telephone number
2. Name or names of nominee(s)
3. Organizational affiliation
4. Job title
5. Their contact information including email address and telephone number
6. A brief narrative describing the reasons for your nomination
7. A photo of the nominee, although not required, would be greatly appreciated

Please submit your nominations or direct any questions to Nick Hart ([nhart@bipartisanpolicy.org](mailto:nhart@bipartisanpolicy.org)) or Natalia Weil ([NataliaWeil@westat.org](mailto:NataliaWeil@westat.org)).

We look forward to hearing from you.

## **2024 DATA CAMP**

### **Applications for free NCHS Data Detectives Camp (6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> graders) in DC area due April 28**

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is offering a free Data Detectives Camp for rising 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders this summer in Hyattsville, Maryland. Taught by CDC Scientists, this camp teaches statistical concepts to children to get them to think like a data detective by asking the right questions, collecting the needed information, analyzing the data, and displaying the results.

This year, we are back in person for this free, 1-week commuter day camp. Space is limited, so apply by the April 28 deadline at [NCHS Data Detectives Camp \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/datacamp).

#### **Camp Information**

Date / Time: August 21 – 25, 2023 9am – 4pm EST

Eligibility: Rising 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders

Location: Hyattsville, MD

Cost: Free

Contact: [datadetectives@cdc.gov](mailto:datadetectives@cdc.gov)

Camp Director: Ryne Paulose, Ph.D.

# **PRESIDENT'S INVITED TALK AND RECEPTION**

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

3:00 – 5:00 PM

Mathematica Policy Research Conference Center

1100 First Street, NE, 12TH Floor

(near Noma-Gallaudet metro station off red line or PMI Parking Garage on L St.)

## **ACCOUNTING FOR BIAS IN BIG DATA**

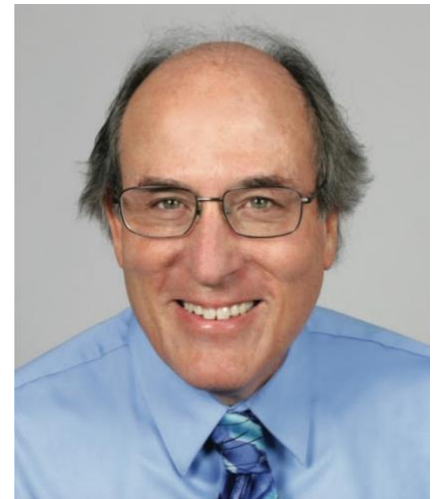
Speaker: David Marker, PhD  
(Marker Consulting, retired Westat)

Discussant: Jennifer Parker, PhD (NCHS)

### **Register by May 12th**

In-Person Attendance: **EVENTBRITE** registration and submit a **COVID-19 FORM** to [KWesson@Mathematica-Mpr.com](mailto:KWesson@Mathematica-Mpr.com)

Remote Attendance: **WEBEX** registration and **EVENTBRITE** registration required



## **ACCOUNTING FOR BIAS IN BIG DATA**

**DAVID MARKER, PhD**

### **Abstract**

Government agencies are excited by the prospect of using Big Data sets to supplement and/or replace surveys in the production of official statistics. But Big Data are known to suffer from many sources of potential bias. Do their large sizes overcome these biases so that they can be useful for official data? Recent research by Xiao-Li Meng and others has demonstrated the limitations of Big Data with examples from COVID-19 vaccinations and elections. This talk will summarize some of that research and then look at whether electronic health records can be used to improve on the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) estimates of diabetes prevalence and control at the state level. This research has wide application to Big Data in general, and the potential usefulness of a wide range of EHR data sets like All of Us and IQVia.

**Dr. David Marker** has consulted to government offices for over 40 years, retiring from a long career at Westat in 2021. His dissertation topic was on small area estimation, leading to an ongoing interest in improving survey's ability to produce state-level estimates. David continues to do some consulting and this presentation grows from research he has been conducting for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with staff from the Georgia Tech Research Institute. He is a Past President of the Washington Statistical Society, Fellow of the American Statistical Association (ASA) and American Academy for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and an Elected Member of the International Statistical Institute. In 2022 he received the ASA's Founders Award for his career of service to the organization.