

# WSS



## The Washington Statistical Society

SINCE 1926

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# 100 YEARS OF WSS!

## A Century of Statistical Excellence: WSS Celebrates Its 100th Anniversary

On January 19, 1926, the Washington Statistical Society (WSS) was officially organized and its constitution approved. Exactly one hundred years and one day later, on January 20, 2026, the WSS hosted a historic celebration to honor this milestone.

The WSS 100th Anniversary Founding Party, held at NORC's beautiful office space, was a resounding success, with approximately 80 members and friends in attendance despite the cold weather. The evening perfectly bridged the society's storied past and its vibrant future.

### Honored Guests and Reflections

We were privileged to welcome several top ASA leaders, including Executive Director Ron Wasserstein, Associate Executive Director Donna LaLonde, ASA President Jeri Mulrow, and ASA Vice President Susan Paddock. Also present were 11 past WSS presidents, whose service spanned 1986 to 2022, as well as WSS President-elect Lisa Mirel.

Glenn White and current WSS President Benmei Liu opened the evening with welcome remarks. The brief program featured moving reflections from three past presidents—**Dan Kasprzyk, Mary Batcher, and John Czajka**—who shared memorable stories from their tenures.

Dan Kasprzyk noted that over the last 40 years, the concerns of the WSS have remained remarkably consistent, focusing on seminars, outreach, and encouraging young statisticians. "Key to the success of the organization are the volunteers who work tirelessly to make the WSS a successful chapter," Dan remarked. "These volunteers were critical to my presidential term in 1986-87, and they continue to be critical now."

Mary Batcher reflected on her time leading the society and her long-standing history with the chapter, including her role in welcoming Glenn into the WSS fold early in his career—a testament to the society's long-standing tradition of peer mentorship and professional support. John Czajka shared a lighthearted yet poignant memory of the chapter's physical history, recalling how he volunteered to house 8-10 boxes of WSS materials in his own office in 2005 when the Census Bureau moved buildings and the chapter's archives were left without a home.

**Ron Wasserstein** congratulated WSS on its century of achievements and its contributions as an ASA chapter. **Jeri Mulrow**, for whom WSS is her "home chapter," offered thoughtful remarks on her presidential initiative encouraging statisticians to volunteer their skills in local communities. She emphasized that "Chapters are an important part of the ASA. They are

places where local statisticians and data scientists can gather, create connections, learn from one another, and share innovations."

The WSS community supports its members and our local community through mentoring, quantitative literacy, and science fair judging. It also supports our federal statistical agencies and the data infrastructure that is part of our DC community yet supports the nation. As Jeri noted, "WSS members benefit greatly from these community connections," and we can extend and broaden our support as we enter our second century.

### **A Spirit of Dedication**

The "WSS Spirit" was on full display throughout the night. Dan Kasprzyk (President, 1986-1987) previously celebrated the WSS 60th anniversary 40 years ago; Fritz Scheuren (President, 1991-1992), has been a WSS member for more than 60 years, which is truly an amazing legacy. Indeed, many of the attendees have been WSS members for more than 30 or 40 years. Mark Otto, 2021-2022 president and mentoring program founder, traveled from Colorado to attend and even arranged for several mentor-mentee pairs to meet in person for the first time. Gary Cline, our Social Committee Chair, showed similar dedication by traveling back from out of state. Both arrived directly from the airport to join the festivities. Attendees enjoyed excellent food and drink and received commemorative gifts of WSS-branded charging cables or t-shirts to mark the occasion.

### **Gratitude to Our Partners**

A celebration of this magnitude is made possible only by the generosity of our community. We extend our deepest thanks to:

- **NORC at the University of Chicago** for providing their stunning venue and dedicated volunteers.
- **Gabi Aden**, NORC's Associate Director of Events, for her invaluable coordination.
- **Glenn White and Ed Mulrow**, past social chairs and long-term members, stepped up to lead and coordinate the planning of this milestone event.
- **The WSS Board, the Social Committee, and our on-site volunteers**, including Jonathan Auerbach, Lisa Mirel, Lloyd Hicks, Wei Fu, Gary Cline, Patrick Roney, and Maura Bardos, whose behind-the-scenes support and on-site help were essential.

### **Looking Toward the Next Century**

Since its founding, the WSS has been powered by the tireless dedication of our members. The roster of leaders and volunteers at the celebration was a powerful reminder that the WSS story is not written by any one individual but by a community of leaders who care deeply about our mission.

Over the past 100 years, as our field has evolved from early survey and traditional statistical methods to the frontiers of data science, machine learning, and AI, our core mission has

remained constant: providing a professional home for exchanging ideas, recognizing excellence, and mentoring the next generation. The WSS serves as a vital bridge among government, academia, and industry, ensuring rigorous statistical thinking is applied to the public good. Perhaps most importantly, it remains a place where lifelong friendships form. While we honor the contributions of long-standing members, we also fully embrace new voices and young spirits who will carry us forward. We look toward the next century with profound gratitude for our past and optimism for our future.

### **Happy 100th Birthday, WSS!**

Benmei Liu  
WSS President, 2025–2026



WSS Presidents and ASA Leadership. Front Row (L-R): Mary Batcher (1999–2000), Fritz Scheuren (1991–1992), Phillip Kott (1996–1997), Clyde Tucker (2005–2006), Michael Cohen (2007–2008). Back Row (L-R): Benmei Liu (2025–2026), Mark Otto (2021–2022), Dan Kasprzyk (1986–1987), Chris Moriarity (2015–2016), ASA President Jeri Mulrow, John Czajka (2004–2005), David Marker (2003–2004), and President-elect Lisa Mirel.

### **WSS 100th at JSM 2026 (Boston, August 1-6)**

Topic-contributed session, *A Century of Washington Statistics*, featuring five past WSS presidents—Dan Kasprzyk, Phil Kott, John Czajka, Linda Young, and Michael Cohen. Past president Jonathan Auerbach will serve as Chair and Organizer.

## Taking the Opportunities the WSS has Given

**Mark C. Otto**

In 1989, I took a small step by volunteering at WSS for the quantitative literacy project. Wendy Rotz was the chair, and we met monthly at her house. We taught Girl Scouts more about probability using M&Ms than anyone thought possible. I ran booths for the ASA and WSS at STEM Festivals and helped judge science fairs—a good way to meet other statisticians. The WSS 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary reminded me that my chapter and the ASA have given me more opportunities for collaboration and leadership than I have had in my jobs. Here are some small steps and opportunities I found and took advantage of—something you could try as well.

Next, I tried career talks at schools and created an interactive exhibit for [STEM and STEAM festivals](#), integrating work from the Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge with statistical experiments using banding data. I conducted sample surveys in elementary school classes, letting students choose the questions they asked their peers. I was scared to find that the average wake time for school commutes was 5 AM, and that the average weekly television hours (20) were likely biased high by March Madness and students' ability to estimate hours. I helped the WSS effort judge science fair projects at several regional fairs around the Washington Area.

[Judging science fairs](#) was as easy as answering an ad in the WSS newsletter, and then one thing led to another. In 2013, Dhuly Chowdhury and I helped bring the [Meeting within a Meeting](#) to the ASA headquarters. I [recruited teachers](#) from around the Washington Metro Area. I met two science teachers at the workshop and began helping teachers and students create better science fair projects using the ASA's Quantitative Literacy materials. Teachers were already overwhelmed by teaching requirements but were interested in their students doing well in science fairs. I developed materials that presented statistics as a formalization of the scientific method, explained how to manage data, and showed how to write good tables and draw good graphs. I taught these in a research class for teachers at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. I worked with high school year-long research classes at the DC School Without Walls and TC Williams High School in Alexandria, VA. In both places, students worked to enter national and international science fairs.

One of my most successful students, whom I mentored for three years, Ana Humphrey, won first place and the \$250,000 prize in the [2019 Regeneron Science Talent Search](#). In her junior year, I connected her with [Dr. Elisa Quintana](#) at the Goddard NASA Space Flight Center. The next summer, Ana worked with Dr. Quintana and the exoplanet team. They are writing a paper exploring how more planets might fit into exoplanet systems. She graduated from Harvard with a degree in Astronomy. Often, the mentor learns more than the mentee.

Although I was unable to develop materials for a professional teachers' workshop, the ideas were incorporated into Steve Pierson's (ASA) This is Statistics science fair guidance. I could have used the collaboration skills I was introduced to later on.

In 2010, I was appointed to the Committee on Applied Statistics (CAS). I helped the committee with its 2012 membership initiative to build and sustain mentoring programs in the ASA. The committee found that programs lasted only two years on average. They developed a system that works by building a program and a committee and by matching mentors to mentees—the small,

hard decisions that trip up a budding program. This became the American Statistician article titled "[Eight Steps to Building and Sustaining a Mentoring Program.](#)"

In September 2014, David Morganstein proposed that the Washington Statistical Society start a chapter mentoring program. I joined the board call to encourage the chapter to use the tools CAS developed. Since introducing the tools, I have been asked to chair both the pilot and official committees. The program is documented in this [Amstat News article](#) as an example of a chapter mentoring program. In 2015, I won an at-large member position on the WSS board, and much of my term focused on the mentoring program. This is our tenth year.

In 2017, I was selected to serve as ASA Vice Chair of the Membership Council, overseeing its nine committees. I worked to increase the diversity of committee members, including early-career statisticians, and some of them became our strongest chairs. Many of us older leaders asked what those years of experience bought us.

As vice chair, I learned from CAS and its new chair, [Allison Florance](#), as they put together an ambitious schedule of 10 [webinars on various aspects of collaboration](#). This also included a [collaboration workshop](#) with the Council of Sections in 2017. I used [CAS's collaboration initiative](#) to help committees work more closely with presidential initiatives and to foster greater collaboration among committees and with other parts of the ASA. Those ideas and skills proved valuable when I later became WSS President.

I also worked with Gary Sullivan's Ad Hoc Committee on Statistical Leadership Training. I contributed articles to Amstat News: a humorous [article on management](#) and another with Gary Sullivan on [Leadership Journeys](#). At that time, the ASA was trying to farm out leadership activities to the ASA chapters. Jennifer Parker, Eileen O'Brien, and I organized a [WSS Statistical Leadership class](#). At the end of 2018, Gary Sullivan taught the two-day course, and past ASA presidents Barry Nussbaum and Sally Morton shared their leadership stories. The class was very successful for the 34 participants. In 2022, Eileen and I organized [Tuesday lunch talks](#). Some have kept the discussions going in peer mentor groups.

As my wife and I were moving to Colorado, I was asked to run for WSS President. Syd thought I was crazy because we wouldn't be living in the area, but it would be my last chance to make that kind of contribution. As it turned out, my three-year term coincided with COVID. The board barely realized I wasn't local. The social committee did a great job hosting a Zoom holiday party and annual awards dinner. I kept Jill Dever's idea of the three presidents meeting before board meetings to share leadership. Those discussions provided better direction. I learned a lot. My Membership Council work helped me understand what was going on with the ASA and access its resources.

I don't think members realize how much the WSS board does and how our programs engage so many volunteers. It is amazing to see young statisticians grow in their careers and leadership. I would love to see a study comparing ASA, AAPOR, and WSS volunteers with those who focus solely on their careers. I am definitely biased toward my WSS network.

Now we have Jeri Mulrow, another WSS member and ASA President. She wants to bring our statistical work to our local communities. Look at the ways the WSS already affects our communities, including QL, science fair judging, professional communities, and the state of our federal data, which affects all our communities and lives. Thank you to Johnathan Auerbach for his [project](#) tracking the state of our federal data and statistical agencies and how that integrates with Steve Pierson's ASA policy support. We are at a time when we can expand our work and consider small changes that affect those around us. What small steps could you take to volunteer?

## **GIVING DAY SUCCESS**

### **WSS Takes Top Honors on ASA Giving Day!**

Thanks to your generosity on November 21, 2025, the WSS was named the **Region 1 Winner** of the ASA Giving Day Chapter Challenge. You can see our victory featured on the ASA [Contests Page](#) and [LinkedIn](#). As a reward for this achievement, we were honored to host ASA Executive Director Ron Wasserstein at our 100th Anniversary Celebration on January 20, 2026!

## SEEKING AWARD NOMINEES

### **New ASA Award: Katherine K. Wallman Award**

The [Katherine K. Wallman Award](#), administered and funded by the ASA, has opened its call for [nominations](#), which are due by March 1, 2026. The selection committee is composed of six members, which includes one Chair, one GSS representative, one WSS representative, and three at-large members. Jonaki Bose has been selected as the WSS Representative on the committee for a three-year term (January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028).

# BE ENLIGHTENED!

## The 33rd Annual Morris Hansen Lecture and Reception

### Combining Information from Multiple Data Sources Using Statistical Modeling and Methods

**Monday, March 30, 3:30-6:30pm**

Participation is free, but prior registration is required. Please register [here](#).

**Location (in-person only):** Summit Consulting LLC, 2nd Floor Conference Room  
[777 6th Street Northwest, Washington, DC 20001](#)

#### **Keynote Speaker:**

Dr. Partha Lahiri, Professor of the Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM) and the Department of Mathematics at the University of Maryland College Park (UMD)

#### **Discussants:**

Dr. Beka Steorts, Associate Professor of the Department of Statistical Science at Duke University and affiliated faculty in Computer Science, Biostatistics and Bioinformatics, the information initiative at Duke (iiD), and the Social Science Research Institute

Lisa Mirel, Statistical Advisor, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics within the National Science Foundation

#### **Abstract**

The demand for statistics on diverse topics—including socio-economic conditions, agriculture, health, and transportation—is on the rise, while governments and survey organizations have strived to address the increasing costs of conducting high-quality surveys. Along with technological advancements, the increasing accessibility of various data sources, including administrative records, geospatial data, social media data, and AI-generated data, presents researchers with new opportunities to produce improved estimates. In addition, this allows for the investigation of complex problems that would be challenging using only a single data source. Recently there has been a significant surge in statistical methodological research for diverse applications that is focused on combining information from multiple data sources. In this presentation I will begin by briefly discussing the scope of statistical modeling to harness information from multiple data sources for precise estimates at a granular level, conducting multivariate analysis when a single data source lacks all relevant variables, reducing nonsampling errors in probability samples, mitigating self-selection biases in nonprobability samples, and addressing other emerging challenges. The remainder of my presentation will focus on recent statistical methodological developments for combining information from multiple data sources in the context of small area estimation for poverty mapping—a topic of significant interest to various national statistical offices and international agencies.

# SCIENCE FAIR



## WSS ANNUAL DATA VISUALIZATION POSTER COMPETITION FOR K-12 STUDENTS



Entries **must** be submitted **online** by: **April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026**

Are you in grades K-12 in the Washington, D.C. metro area and interested in explaining data visually?

Would you like to win a cash award?

Then enter the Washington Statistical Society (WSS)'s Data Visualization Poster Competition!

Even more exciting, this year we're partnering with GMU to host an **in-person judging event** for grades 10–12 candidates during the first weekend of May!

**What is a data visualization poster?** A data visualization poster is a display containing **two or more related graphics** that **summarize a set of data**, look at the data from **different points of view**, and answer **specific questions** about the data. You tell the story of your data with graphs and tables.

### Judging

Posters will be judged on the following criteria:

- ▶ **Overall Impact (Design)** – Poster design aspects, colors/patterns, grammar, spelling, dimensionality, readability, neatness
- ▶ **Technical Aspects (Statistical Correctness)** – Age-appropriate use of statistical methods, calculations, and interpretation
- ▶ **Clarity of the Message (Statistical Process)** – How well is a story told? Formulate and answer statistical questions that account for uncertainty. (Use [GAISE II](#) as a resource.)
- ▶ **Appropriateness** – Appropriate, original graphics for the data
- ▶ **Creativity!** – A unique statistical question, original dataset, or novel approach

The best posters answer an interesting statistical question using appropriate data. Although explanatory text is important, posters with more than 25% text will be penalized—this is a *data visualization* competition!

### Prizes

	<b>Total Entries</b>	<b>Team Entries</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Prize</b>	\$125	Each team member can divide the \$125 among themselves
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Prize</b>	\$75	Each team member can divide the \$75 among themselves
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Prize</b>	\$50	Each team member can divide the \$50 among themselves

All are encouraged to attend the WSS annual dinner to present their poster to a group of statisticians. Tickets may be purchased later in spring.

#### **Other Useful Information:**

- ▶ Winners will be awarded among Grades K-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12.
- ▶ Entry form, evaluation/judging criteria, rules for submission, and information about the national competition: <https://www.amstat.org/asa/education/ASA-Statistics-Poster-Competition-for-Grades-K-12.aspx>

***IMPORTANT NOTE: All the submission and judging will be online for 2026.***

***See the link above for important entry information.***

- ▶ Please find the 2025 national winners' information here: [ASA 2025 Data Visualization Poster and Statistics Project Competition Winners](#). WSS winners will also have their submissions sent to the national ASA poster competition. National winners will receive up to another **\$300** for first place!
- ▶ *Questions? Contact Sabrina Zhang ([SabrinaZhang@westat.com](mailto:SabrinaZhang@westat.com))*

## Call for Judges for the 2026 DMV-area Science and Engineering Fair

The WSS is excited to announce the start of the 2026 DMV-area Science and Engineering fair season! We are seeking judges to review and evaluate the next generation of pioneers. Judges can leave a lasting impact on these young professionals by offering constructive feedback and encouraging the pursuit of statistical literacy and scientific thinking. Your involvement helps shape the future of STEM while also serving your community! So consider becoming or returning as a judge this year!

### Details

Fairs will be held in person at:

- **DC** Stem Fair; **March 28th** (Paul Laurence Dunbar Senior High School)
- **Fairfax** County Regional Science and Engineering Fair; **March 14th** (Robinson Secondary School)
- **Montgomery** County Science Fair; **March 21st** (FDA White Oak Campus)
- **Northern Virginia** Regional Science and Engineering Fair; **February 28th** (Wakefield High School)
- **Prince George's** Area Science Fair; **March 21st** (Charles Herbert Flowers High School)
- **Prince William-Manassas** Regional Science and Engineering Fair; **March 7th & May 2nd** (Kelly Leadership Center)

### Judging

Volunteer Judges commit between 2 and 4 hours on the day of the event (morning hours) to evaluate and score student projects across multiple disciplines (math, physics, biomedical engineering, computer science, etc.).

Volunteer Judges may choose to participate in multiple fairs (but should disclose if a student relative is participating).

### Qualification requirements:

To ensure the highest level of academic integrity, we require all volunteer judges to hold a Master's degree or higher in Statistics, Data Science, or a related field. No prior judging experience is required.

An orientation session will be provided before the fair.

WSS participation depends on securing at least 2 volunteers. If you are interested in serving as a Science Fair Judge through the WSS or would like to know more, contact Denisse Olarte at [olarte.denisse@gmail.com](mailto:olarte.denisse@gmail.com) as soon as possible, and no later than **February 28**.. Please indicate the event(s) you are interested in.

## STUDENT'S CORNER

### **Congratulations to the 2025 Student Travel Award Winner!** **Charlotte Clapham**



I am deeply grateful to have received the Washington Statistical Society Student Travel Award, which gave me the opportunity to attend the 2025 Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) in Nashville. This support made it possible for me to fully immerse myself in one of the largest and most dynamic gatherings of statisticians in the world, an experience that was rewarding and energizing.

One of the most valuable aspects of JSM was the chance to reconnect with people at different stages of my academic and professional journey. I was able to catch up with faculty and peers from my undergraduate institution, reconnect with colleagues from my summer internship, and strengthen relationships with faculty and students from my current graduate program. At the same time, I expanded my network by meeting new statisticians from a wide range of institutions and subfields. Attending mixers, social events, and networking sessions provided a welcoming environment to share experiences, exchange ideas, and gain insight into possible career directions as I prepare to transition from student to professional.

As a fifth-year PhD student, JSM's Career Service center was particularly invaluable. Having the chance to meet employers face-to-face, learn more about open positions, and even engage in on-site interviews gave me a much clearer picture of the opportunities available after graduation. These conversations not only built my confidence as I prepare for the job market but also helped me refine my career goals.

Equally meaningful was the exposure to cutting-edge research across so many areas of statistics. I especially enjoyed the poster sessions, which offered an interactive setting for in depth discussions with presenters. The breadth of topics-- from applied work to methodological innovations-- was inspiring, and several projects sparked ideas for tackling challenges in my own dissertation research. Since my work spans topics such as aging, mental health, and addiction, it was exciting to connect with others who share overlapping interests and to discover potential avenues for future collaboration.

Perhaps most importantly, JSM renewed my sense of enthusiasm for my field. By the fifth year of a PhD program, it's easy to feel weighed down by the long process of dissertation work, which can at times feel isolating. Being surrounded by such a vibrant community of statisticians was incredibly refreshing. The energy, exchange of ideas, and sheer passion for research at the conference was great to experience. I returned home with new motivation for my dissertation and excitement about launching the next stage of my career.

I am truly thankful to WSS for making this experience possible. Attending JSM 2025 was not only professionally valuable, but it was a reminder of the supportive, innovative, and inspiring community that defines statistics.

## Washington Statistical Society Student Travel Competition 2026 Winner

**Okšana Balabay**

The Washington Statistical Society (WSS) is pleased to announce the winner of the 2026 Student Travel Award competition. This year, the award goes to **Aditi Sen**, a 5th year Ph.D. Candidate in Applied Statistics at the Department of Mathematics, University of Maryland, College Park (UMD).

Aditi's research interests lie at the intersection of survey statistics, data integration, small area estimation, Bayesian methods, and machine learning methodologies. She has already shown quite some achievements in these fields: three published articles and an insightful discussion that she wrote on the 2023 Morris Hansen Lecture paper. This was not all she impressed us with: apart from her research, internship, and teaching obligations, she managed to find time to serve the statistical community as a reviewer for *Survey Methodology* and the *Calcutta Statistical Association Bulletin*.

### **Congratulations on this well-earned award, Aditi!**

As a winner, she is entitled to an \$800 travel support to one American Statistical Society (ASA) meeting or conference between July 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027, as well as an early-bird student conference registration fee covered. A one-year student membership to the ASA and a one-year student membership to the WSS are also granted to the winner.

Every year, the WSS extends this award to one student attending a statistics or related discipline program at a school local to the DMV-area. As part of the application, students submit an essay describing their interest in statistics and any project work, internships and/or assistantships, as well as other activities that help improve the field of statistics, such as teaching, mentoring, advising, collaborating, and service. They should have a genuine interest in attending and presenting at an ASA meeting or conference. It is always a challenge to choose a winner as our area has so much talent, but that also means you should always try - you may very well find yourself in this very tight race, with good odds of winning this award! Stay tuned for an upcoming WSS Newsletter featuring Aditi's essay about her experience at one of the ASA conferences supported by the WSS student travel award, as well as for the 2027 WSS student travel competition announcement to be published on the WSS webpage in the fall of 2026!

Many thanks to all 2026 applicants, congratulations to the 2026 winner, and best wishes to all future applicants!

## WHO'S IN THE SPOTLIGHT?

### Member Spotlight

## Introducing Your Fellow Members And Showcasing The Diversity Of The WSS

### Meet WSS Member Flora Sheng ...

Flora (Yaou) Sheng is a methodologist and policy researcher at RAND, contributing to over a dozen projects in public health and healthcare, with a focus on the opioid crisis, Medicaid, and Medicare.

She collaborates with multidisciplinary teams to develop innovative methods, integrating insights from epidemiology, statistics, and economics. Her work, funded by federal and state agencies, universities, and foundations, and she has led to numerous publications and impactful government reports.

Flora excels at communicating complex scientific concepts to the public and providing timely evidence for policymakers. She holds a medical degree from Sichuan University and a Master of Public Health from Tulane University.

Originally from China and having worked in Switzerland, Flora now calls Washington, D.C. home, where she volunteers to food services supporting unhoused individuals and those with serious illnesses.



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

I am a policy researcher and a statistical analyst at RAND, who tries to understand human society through crunching numbers.

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

The opportunities to learn variety of things, to work with experts from multiple disciplines and to be able to do science for making the policies about achieving public good.

#### 3. What skills are most important for the next generation of statistics professionals?

- Mathematics,
- Computer Science, and
- Communication.

**4. Finish this sentence: "I joined WSS to..."**

Meet the brilliant minds, keep up with the cutting edge developments in statistic field, open eyes and ears for innovative ideas, and make friends with the brightest.

**5. What was your first job?**

First job defined as getting paid and paying taxes: I worked as a research assistant in a research lab at Tulane Cancer Center to cultivate cells and amplify RNAs.

**6. Why did you join the statistics profession?**

I love finding clues in numbers and happen to be good at applying statistical tools I learned from school and work to solve practical problems.

**7. What is the most interesting statistical project you have worked on recently?**

I developed an event-frame work to assessing concurrent policies effects on opioid outcomes. I learned so much from that project and gained wisdoms from statistician, economist, physician and lawyer. By the way, the paper was recently published.

**8. If you could have dinner with 3 people from history, who would they be?**

- Carl Jung,
- Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and
- Huiyin Lin.

**9. What is your favorite meal or local restaurant?**

It's an impossible question for a foodie to pick her favorite. The order depends on season and mood. If I can name one, I'll choose Bostan Uyghur Cuisine, a restaurant serving authentic Uyghur dishes. I'd like to order food there whenever nostalgia hits me.

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

Cooking, playing piano, and a newish hobby: Salsa dance (believe it or not, I'm getting pretty good).

**11. What is your greatest accomplishment?**

To be able to have the life I'm having today.

**12. What other information would you like to share?**

Keep your eyes open, because the world has so much to offer.

## **WSS WANTS YOU IN THE SPOTLIGHT!**

### **Call for Volunteers: WSS Member Spotlight**

WSS is seeking volunteers to be featured as a WSS Spotlight Member in the WSS Newsletter. The WSS Spotlight is a great opportunity for members to get to know one another by sharing their professional path, research interests, and advice for others in the field.

If you're interested, please complete this short form: <https://forms.gle/Pjvir8eYT5VzdZtcA>

For any questions, feel free to contact Sungjoo Cho ([sungjoocho7@gmail.com](mailto:sungjoocho7@gmail.com)).

You can also browse [past newsletters](#) to see how other members have been highlighted.

Thank you in advance for your interest. We look forward to featuring you in an upcoming Spotlight!

# WSS MENTORING PROGRAM: KEEP THE TRADITION ALIVE!

## WSS/GSS Mentoring Program Update

We are excited to kick off the New Year by welcoming participants to a fresh and inspiring round of the WSS/GSS Mentoring Program! Each year, this program brings together a vibrant community of statisticians, analysts, and data enthusiasts, and 2026 is no exception. Despite the challenging environment we continue to navigate, we are proud to share that we successfully matched **26 mentor–mentee pairs**—a testament to the remarkable dedication and enthusiasm within our community.

As in previous years, our cohort represents a wonderfully diverse community, including students, government employees, private-sector professionals, and members of academia. The breadth of interests represented is equally inspiring — ranging from finance analytics and environmental statistics to clinical trials, data science, survey methodology, and many other areas that continue to shape the future of our field.

We extend our deepest appreciation to our mentors, who generously contribute their time, expertise, and encouragement to guide the next wave of statisticians. Your commitment strengthens our professional community and creates meaningful pathways for growth, collaboration, and discovery.

As we embark on this new cycle, we are energized by the curiosity and ambition of our mentees and excited to see the connections, insights, and opportunities that will emerge. Together, we look forward to a year of shared learning, mutual support, and lasting professional relationships.

~ Amy Lin  
WSS/GSS Mentoring Committee Chair

## **WSS BOARD OF DIRECTORS, PROGRAMS & COMMITTEES**

For the up-to-date list, please see the link: <https://washstat.org/documents/board.pdf>.

### **WSS 2026 Board Election**

The WSS Election Committee is assembling names of potential candidates (full WSS members only) for the positions of President-elect, Treasurer, Methodology Program Chair, Communications Chair, and two Representative-At-Large. Please reach out to Jonathan Auerbach ([jauerba@gmu.edu](mailto:jauerba@gmu.edu)) by February 27, 2026 to nominate a candidate. Self nominations are accepted.

## The JOB SEEKER'S ALLY

The Job Seeker's Ally column aims to support job seekers by sharing job-hunting experiences and resources with the statistical community. If you are interested in sharing your experience, please contact Tiandong Li at [tiandongli2012@gmail.com](mailto:tiandongli2012@gmail.com).

### Advice from a Fellow Job Seeker

Jennifer Kali

After serving 22 years in federal contracting as a survey statistician, I was laid off in the first wave of DOGE cuts in March 2025. I was unemployed for nine months and finally started a new job in January 2026. I wanted to share a few reflections from my job search process in case it's helpful to others in the same position. Here are a few things that worked for me:

1. **Take advice from everywhere.** Some of the most helpful resources I found were:

\*Career coaching services included in my severance package, which offered live large and small group classes, resume support, and 1:1 coaching. If you have access to these services, take full advantage of them before the time runs out.

\*The career counselor at my undergraduate career center. Most alumni career centers are available for life. The level of support varies, but it's worth checking out. My career counselor provided resume advice, interviewing help, and valuable networking connections.

\***[we are wellfed](#)**, an organization supporting former federal employees and contractors since layoffs began in February 2025. They offer virtual classes three times a week and host in-person career workshops throughout the DC area.

\*Follow career coaches on LinkedIn. Most will post job searching advice. I found Emily Wordon's advice to be the most helpful.

\***[Insight; Career Network](#)**, a community of marketing, consumer, user, and business research professionals volunteering their tools, experience, and networks to help each other develop their careers. They meet biweekly and share job search strategies and are very welcoming to former feds.

2. **Search across multiple job sites.** I checked LinkedIn, ZipRecruiter, Hiring Café, Indeed, and Glassdoor daily, and set up alerts on all of them. While LinkedIn has the largest share of postings, it still doesn't capture everything. I prioritized sites that let me filter roles posted in the last 24 hours.

3. **Search by both titles and skills.** I searched for job titles (e.g., Research Director) and specific skills (e.g., survey methodology). Skill-based searches surfaced roles I never would have considered otherwise. I also set up LinkedIn alerts using keywords.

4. **Network**, even when it doesn't lead directly to a job. Networking helped me build a list of people across companies who were willing to submit internal referrals when roles opened. I did land an interview this way. Even more valuable, though, was learning how different teams work, what challenges they face, and how roles vary across organizations. I referenced this insight often during interviews. I found it easiest to connect with people who had worked at places I had worked before.

5. **Networking isn't everything.** I got my current role through a cold application, and I know many others who did, too. While some advice suggests only networking, the reality is that when you network, many people will tell you there are no open roles right now. You still need to apply for positions that are actively posted.

6. Come to interviews with **thoughtful, specific questions**. Do your research. Questions like, "I saw on your website that your mission is X. How does that show up in your day-to-day work?" demonstrate genuine interest and preparation and lead to fruitful discussions.

7. **Your resume matters**, a lot. I took all the resume advice I could get. I ended up with over 150 resume bullets tied to very specific achievements. For each application, I used ChatGPT to select the bullets that best matched the job description, allowing me to tailor my resume very precisely. Think of your past work as both the what and the how. For the what, I conducted large scale research for the federal government. For the how, I managed staff, met with clients, wrote briefings, managed budgets, etc. Use both the what and the how to build your resume bullets. Additionally, think of both big and small for your resume bullets. For example, I managed a team to implement a health survey for four years (big) or I delivered a report to the client on a specific health topic (small).

8. Build a **job search support group**. Having people who understand what you're going through, and who can offer perspective, encouragement, or practical help, makes a huge difference.

9. Treat job searching as a **full-time job**. When you are laid off, many people will tell you to take time for yourself every day, but I found that the more work you put into it, the more you get out of it. It was only when I started job searching full-time that I started getting interviews consistently.

Job searching is hard, lonely, and demoralizing. If you're in it right now, I'm rooting for you.

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