

The Department of Statistics

Fall 2025 Newsletter



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DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS

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A Message from the Department Head



Welcome to the 28th issue of our *Department Newsletter*. Currently, the department has 25 tenure and tenure-track faculty members, 2 Assistant Professor in Residence, three Lecturers, 6 adjunct faculty members, and 13 faculty members from Allied Health Science, Mathematics, Nursing Instruction and Research, UCHC, Computer Science & Engineering, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and Electrical & Computer Engineering, who have affiliated appointments with Statistics. In fall 2025, we have 90 graduate students enrolled in our graduate program, of whom 61 received financial support, 117 graduate students in

MS in Data Science, 121 Stat major or double major undergraduate students, 59 Math-Stat major or double undergraduate students, 47 Statistical Data Science (BS), 13 Applied Data Science (BA) and 59 Stat minor undergraduate students.

I would like to congratulate both Yao Zheng and Yuwen Gu to be promoted to Associate Professor with tenure, and Xiaojing Wang to be promoted to Full Professor. Our faculty members continue to be successful to obtain external and internal research grants. In particular, I would like to congratulate Yao to receive the NSF CAREER award. A detailed list of our faculty's achievements can be found in the section entitled "Faculty Awards and Achievements" in this newsletter. In 2025, we had 11 PhD students graduate. Our graduate and undergraduate students had continuously received many prestigious awards from various statistical associations and statistical conferences. A list of student awards and recognitions can be found in the section entitled "Student Awards and Achievements" in this newsletter. I am very proud of our students for their outstanding achievements.

After 25 years of service at UConn, our beloved staff, Tracy Burke, will retire at the end of December 2025. I would like to thank Tracy for her countless contributions to the department. All of our faculty, staff, and students will miss Tracy dearly. At the same time, we wish Tracy a very healthy, relaxing, and enjoyable retirement.

I would like to thank Professor James Grady, Director of Biostatistics in the Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, for providing financial support and research opportunities to our PhD students from the Department of Statistics. We enjoy close research collaboration with School of Nursing, UConn Facilities Operations, UConn Office of Vice President Division of Student Life & Enrollment, and Institute of Materials Science. The Director of the Statistical Consulting Services (SCS), Timothy Moore, has continuously done a great job to lead SCS for another successful and productive year. This year, the UConn team, consisting of two PhD students and two BIST MS students, led by me, had an on-site visit to Regeneron at Tarrytown, NY, from June 18th to June 20th, 2025. Our team gave a short course, "Bayesian Designs of Clinical

Trials Using Historical Data: From Theory to Practice,” and the presentation, “Enhancing Decision Making with Historical Data: An Overview of Power Priors” at the Stanford CISD-Regeneron BDM Elite Forum. Our students enjoyed the trip to Tarrytown. The department also has several active student fellowship or collaborative programs with the local industries, including Biogen, Pfizer Inc., REGENXBIO, Inc., Servier Bio-Innovation LLC, and Vertex. Many of our graduate students had summer internships in summer 2025.

In 2025, the department organized or hosted 3 national and international conferences on UConn Storrs campus, and 4 off-campus conferences. The 31th Distinguished Statistician Colloquium (<https://statistics.uconn.edu/pfizer-colloquium/>) was held on October 29, 2025. The speaker was Thomas A. Louis, Professor emeritus, Department of Biostatistics at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The conversation with Professor Louis was led by Susan Paddock of NORC at the University of Chicago and J. Sunil Rao of the University of Minnesota. We also hosted a successful UConn Alumni & Friends Luncheon in the 2025 JSM on Wednesday, August 6, 2025 at the Omni Nashville Hotel in Nashville, TN from 12 PM to 2 PM with 43 guests. This year, we have two new recipients of the UConn Statistics Department Distinguished Alumni Awards, Dr. Deepak Agarwal (Ph.D. 2001) and Dr. Rongwei (Rochelle) Fu (Ph.D. 2003). Both recipients will visit the Storrs campus in spring 2026 to deliver their Distinguished Alumni Lectures.

In spring 2025, the Department undertook the 8-year academic program review. The external review committee provided a very positive evaluation of the Department’s broad impact across education, research, and outreach and recognized the Department as a vibrant and research-intensive academic unit with a growing national and international reputation. Looking ahead, the Department will host the 39th New England Statistics Symposium on May 27-30, 2026. I would like to invite our alumni to visit us and also attend the 2026 NESS symposium. Also, I would like to note that this will be the last message I write as the head since my 10-year term will be ended in August 2026. Finally, I wish all having a happy, healthy, and productive 2026.

Ming-Hui Chen
Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor and Head
December 9, 2025

A Message from The Undergraduate Program Director



The Department of Statistics is now in its third year of offering the Statistical Data Science major alongside the Mathematics-Statistics major (offered jointly with Mathematics) and Statistics major. We continue to see great interest in all three majors among both current and prospective students. We have nearly 300 students across the three majors and 40 Statistics minors at the Storrs campus. All our course offerings remain in high demand with near-full enrollments. This year, we will begin offering STAT 3025Q during the Winter session and STAT 3375Q during the Summer session (in addition to STAT 1000Q/1100Q in Winter and STAT 1000Q/1100Q, STAT 2215Q, STAT 3025Q, and STAT 3115Q in Summer) to accommodate interest and allow more students, particularly those switching or adding a STAT-related major late, the opportunity to complete their degrees on time.

We remain committed to connecting students with undergraduate research opportunities, internships, career networking events, and other resources. In particular, in partnership with CLAS and UConn Athletics, we are excited by the growth of the Sports Statistics Experiential Learning Program, now in its second year, with additional participating athletic teams and student positions. The program provides undergraduate students with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with sports analytics through UConn athletic teams. Students majoring in Applied Data Analysis, Actuarial Science, Mathematics-Statistics, Statistics, and Statistical Data Science who have met certain STAT or MATH course prerequisites are eligible to apply for these internship positions.

Please visit the department website at www.statistics.uconn.edu for more information about our undergraduate program, and information for prospective majors and minors.

Elizabeth Schifano (elizabeth.schifano@uconn.edu)

A Message from The Graduate Program Director



In this age of big data, statistical knowledge, skills, and way of thinking are becoming increasingly important. Our department's vibrant graduate programs provide excellent learning and research experiences to prepare students for a successful career in statistics and beyond. In addition to the Ph.D. and M.S. programs in Statistics, we have the Professional M.S. program in Biostatistics. We also participate in UConn's M.S. in Data Science program. These programs offer a broad spectrum of modern courses on advanced statistical theories and methodologies, statistical computing, data science, consulting, and exciting "hot" topics in statistics. We have extensive

collaborations with faculty members in educational, medical, biological, health and environmental sciences, and our graduate students have the opportunity to be employed as research assistants on many of their funded research projects. Our graduate students are well equipped and are highly sought after by industries and academics.

I am glad that you visit our web pages and highly recommend that you learn more about our graduate programs. For more information, including course offerings, research and other academic activities, news updates, and admissions, please go to the department website: <https://statistics.uconn.edu/>.

Zhiyi Chi (Zhiyi.chi@uconn.edu)

Welcome to Our Visiting Scholars



Cláudia M Miranda-Paiva is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at the Federal University of São João del-Rei (UFSJ), Brazil. Member of the Mental Health Research Laboratory (LAPSAM/UFSJ). She obtained her Ph.D. in Neuroscience and Behavior from the University of São Paulo. Her research interests include cognitive behavior therapy, drug addiction, psychopathology and bivariate regression models. She is currently a visiting scholar in the Department of Statistics at the University of Connecticut, collaborating with Professor Dr. Victor Hugo Lachos.



Carlos A. R. Diniz is a Full Professor in the Department of Statistics at the Federal University of São Carlos. He received his Ph.D. in Statistics from the University of South Carolina in 1993. His research interests and expertise are in Statistics and Data Science, with an emphasis on modeling. He works primarily in the following areas: Regression, Multivariate Analysis, and Matrix Distributions. He is a faculty member of both the Interinstitutional Graduate Program in Statistics (PIPGEs) between UFSCar and USP, and the MBA in Data Science at ICMC-USP, both located in São Carlos, SP, Brazil. He is currently a visiting scholar in the Department of Statistics at the University of Connecticut, where he collaborates with Professor Victor Hugo Lachos on the development of matrix distributions, mixtures of matrix distributions, and matrix regression models.



Edwin Ortega is Professor of Statistics in the Department of exact sciences, “Luiz de Queiroz” college of agriculture, the *Universidade de São Paulo*, Brazil. Graduate at Statistics from *Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos*, Lima, Peru, (1993), master's at Probability and Statistics from *Universidade Estadual de Campinas* (1997), and PhD. at Probability and Statistics from *Universidade de São Paulo* (2001), Brazil. He has published more than 275 research papers in several relevant Journals. Has experience in Probability and Statistics, focusing on Statistics, acting on the following subjects: diagnostic

analysis, distribution theory, machine learning, regression models, residual analysis, sensitivity analysis, survival analysis, reliability analysis. He is currently a visiting scholar in the Department of Statistics at the University of Connecticut, collaborating with Professor Dr. Victor Hugo Lachos.



Dr. Zan Li is currently an assistant professor at Nankai University. She obtained her Ph.D. in Science from the Academy of Mathematics and Systems Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences (AMSS, CAS) in 2022 and earned her B.S. in Mathematics from the University of Science and Technology of China (USTC). Her primary research interests include industrial statistics, reliability mathematics, deep learning, and subsampling methods. She has published papers in high-impact journals such as IEEE Transactions of Reliability and European Journal of Operational Research. She is currently a visiting scholar in the Department of Statistics at the

University of Connecticut, collaborating with Dr. HaiYing Wang.



Spencer Wadsworth earned his PhD in Statistics at Iowa State University in 2024 and is currently a postdoc in the Department of Statistics at UConn, working with Dr. Ofer Harel. My research interests include Bayesian hierarchical and nonparametric modeling with applications to disease outbreak forecasting and brain imaging data.

A Message from the Director of the Statistical Consulting Services



The Statistical Consulting Services (SCS) has had another successful year. Since February 2025, SCS has assisted more than 150 clients through full consultations, walk-in sessions, and online meetings. These clients represent the Storrs and regional campuses, UConn Health, and include individuals and organizations not affiliated with UConn.

This semester, SCS has been staffed by Ph.D. students from the Department of Statistics: Zoe Gibbs, Chaeyeon Yoo, Fusheng Yang, Manjun Yu, Shiyong Xiao, Jongwoo Choi, and Loreina Gou. Their expertise and dedication have been instrumental in supporting the wide range of projects brought to SCS.

One of the highlights from the past year was the hiring of Boming Chen as an additional consultant to work on a UConn OVPR-supported grant awarded to Professor Hannah Dostal and SCS, totaling \$49,446. In addition, SCS collaborated with Dr. Casey Cobb on a proposal that was accepted by the Connecticut State Department of Education. This project will examine and provide recommendations on the State's Magnet School program.

SCS has also continued to contribute to research dissemination, with 13 manuscripts published since 2024. Beyond publications, the team has actively supported numerous grant proposals, helping researchers secure funding for their work. Training and education remain a priority as well. Since January 2025, Director Tim Moore and Postdoctoral Research Associate Eric Bae have conducted 11 workshops covering topics such as introductions to R and statistical analysis in R, survey design and statistical analysis, generalized linear models, and mixed-effects models.

Despite a challenging funding environment, SCS remains committed to providing high-quality statistical support to the UConn community and beyond. Our services span all stages of the research process, from experimental design and grant proposals to thesis writing and manuscript preparation. Through these services, we help faculty secure funding, support graduate students in completing theses, and assist external organizations in making data-driven decisions. In the coming year, we aim to expand our workshop offerings and strengthen partnerships across disciplines to further enhance research excellence. We look forward to continuing this mission and embracing new challenges and opportunities in the year ahead.

Timothy Moore (timothy.e.moore@uconn.edu)

Undergraduate Student News

As the President of the Joint Statistical Club, I'm excited to continue fostering a community of undergraduate students passionate about statistics. Our E-Board this year consists of Vice President Joann Jun (UG Senior), Treasurer Vladislav Lagutin (UG Junior), Secretary Kaya Dua (UG Senior), Public Relations Coordinator Sia Gbondo (UG Senior), and Service Chair Vlad Lagutin (UG Sophomore). We also have the indispensable support of graduate students such as Sana Gupta (Ph.D. student). This year, we hope to continue growing our club and bringing more opportunities to our members. Our club currently has over 80 registered members, including students in statistics, computer science, business, mathematics, and engineering. The Joint Statistical Club's mission is to connect undergraduate and graduate students interested in statistics through social events, workshops, and community engagement. We are affiliated with the American Statistical Association as an official student chapter. Our club meets biweekly to discuss internship and research opportunities, career planning, and skills development. In the Fall 2025 semester, we have led a resume workshop, an R programming workshop, and a graduate student panel for which we invited alumni of Joint Statistical Club and current PhD students in the statistics department. We have had student participation in several conferences: the 2025 Connecticut Sports Analytics Symposium (CSAS), DaShu 2025, NextGen Data Science Day 2025. The Joint Statistical Club has been invaluable to my personal growth as an undergraduate statistics student. It has connected me with amazing students on campus, including both undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty and professionals. Our club provides a space to ask questions about the field of statistics and offers resources to support each student's goals. As a junior, I'm excited to continue improving our club in the future. On behalf of the whole E-Board, we look forward to organizing more events and opportunities for our members in the coming Spring 2026 semester. Lucy Liu (lucy.liu@uconn.edu)



Short course instructors from the 2025 Connecticut Sports Analytics Symposium (CSAS)

Graduate Student News

The Graduate Student Committee – Statistics (GSC) continues to serve as a voice for the graduate students of the Department of Statistics, acting as a bridge between students, faculty, and staff to enhance both academic and social life within the department.

The year 2025 has been another exciting one for our community: 11 new PhD students and 9 new master's students joined the department this fall. The GSC has been working hard to make sure that every new student feels welcomed and that our continuing students remain engaged and supported throughout the semester.

We kicked off the semester with our annual Ice Cream – Ice Breaking event on August 29, where students gathered to celebrate the start of the academic year with a variety of Dairy Bar ice cream flavors. The event offered a relaxed atmosphere for both new and returning students to connect, share experiences, and get to know one another outside the classroom.



We continued the time of fellowship by regrouping on October 30 for our Halloween event. Students were able to get a breather after midterm exams by coming together to paint pumpkins, take pictures, and enjoy holiday-themed snacks.

These efforts were made possible thanks to the dedication of GSC members Max Sun, Sana Gupta, and Zhe Guan.

As we look ahead to the coming semester, the GSC plans to continue fostering community through more educational workshops, career-oriented events, and potentially a book club where students can meet to discuss practical topics in an informal and social setting.

As always, the GSC remains committed to enriching the academic and social fabric of our department. We invite all graduate students to join us in building a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive community.

Max Sun

(max.sun@uconn.edu)

Makuch Lecture 2025

The Department of Statistics at the University of Connecticut (UConn) hosted the 2025 Makuch Lecture, featuring an engaging and insightful presentation by Prof. Hongtu Zhu, a pioneering figure in statistical theory and methodological advances in imaging genomics, medical imaging analysis, big data integration, and reinforcement learning. The lecture, held on April 9 at UConn Statistics Department, brought together students, faculty, and practitioners to discuss genome-wide association analysis for large-scale imaging studies, which are on the frontier of biostatistical research.

Purpose and Honoree



The **Makuch Lecture Series** commenced in 2013 at UConn in honor of our alumnus **Robert Makuch**. He graduated in 1972 from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) and is now a distinguished biostatistician and Professor Emeritus of Biostatistics at Yale University. The series was established to recognize the contributions of Dr. Makuch to the field of biostatistics. His expertise extends to statistical and regulatory consultations for the pharmaceutical industry and governmental regulatory agencies. Dr. Makuch is an elected Fellow of ASA, lauded for his statistical consultation and innovative work in clinical trial design and analysis.

Lecture Format

Each year, the Makuch Lecture features a distinguished speaker who shares insights on statistical and biostatistical topics. The lectures cover a wide range of subjects, including methodological advancements, data analysis, and statistical inference. The Makuch Lecture Series serves as a platform for intellectual exchange, fostering collaboration and advancing statistical knowledge.

Year 2025 Speaker



This year marks the 13th Makuch lecture, and the UConn Statistics Department was proud to host Prof. Hongtu Zhu. Dr. Zhu is the Kenan Distinguished Professor of Biostatistics, Statistics, Radiology, Computer Science and Genetics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was a DiDi Fellow and Chief Scientist of Statistics at DiDi Chuxing between 2018 and 2020 and held the Endowed Bao-Shan Jing Professorship in Diagnostic Imaging at MD Anderson Cancer Center between 2016 and 2018. He is an internationally recognized expert in statistical learning, medical image analysis, precision medicine, biostatistics, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics. He received an established investigator award from the Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas in 2016, the INFORMS Daniel H. Wagner Prize for Excellence in Operations Research Practice in 2019, the IMS 2027

Medallion Award and Lecture, and the COPSS 2025 Snedecor Award. He has published more than 345 papers in top journals, including Nature, Science, Cell, Nature Genetics, Nature Communication, PNAS, AOS, JASA, Biometrika, and JRSSB, as well as presenting 58+ conference papers at top conferences, including meetings for Neurips, ICLR, ICML, AAAI, and KDD. He is the coordinating editor of JASA and the editor of JASA ACS.

His talk was titled “Computation and Resource Efficient Genome-Wide Association Analysis for Large-Scale Imaging Studies”. The talk was well received by the audience with live discussions. The audience was left with a deeper understanding of the current advancements in biostatistics and the future directions for statistical research.

The Makuch Lecture series continues to serve as a platform for bringing renowned statisticians to UConn, inspiring learning and discussion within the academic community. We look forward to next year’s installment and the continued exploration of emerging topics in statistical science.

34th ICSA Applied Statistics Symposium at UConn



The 34th annual ICSA Applied Statistics Symposium was successfully held at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT, from June 15–18, 2025. The symposium, themed *“Insights into Complexity: Empowering Policy through Statistical Learning and Data Analytics”*, brought together over 440 participants from academia, government, and industry to explore how cutting-edge statistical methods can inform policy and address real-world complexities. This marked the second time UConn hosted the symposium, following its first hosting in 2006.



Over three and a half days, the symposium offered a rich and diverse scientific program. Highlights included 3 keynote speeches, 1 banquet speech, and 97 invited sessions covering a broad range of methodological and applied topics. Participants also engaged in 4 short courses, 24 poster presentations (including 16 posters in the poster competition), and 12 oral presentations by student paper award recipients and honorable mentions. The enthusiasm, active discussions, and high-level intellectual exchange underscored the vitality of the statistical community and its commitment to addressing complex societal challenges through data and rigorous methodology.

The symposium also showcased the strong engagement of students and early-career researchers. Student award sessions and the poster competition provided valuable opportunities for emerging scholars to present their work, receive feedback from experts, and build professional networks. Faculty and student volunteers from UConn’s Department of Statistics played an essential role throughout the event, helping to ensure a smooth and welcoming experience for all attendees.





The success of the 34th ICSA Applied Statistics Symposium was made possible by the generous support of many organizations. In particular, the organizers are deeply grateful to the National Science Foundation, whose funding enabled participation from individuals with diverse backgrounds and helped broaden the impact of the symposium. The symposium also benefited from the support of numerous industry and professional sponsors, including:

Gold Sponsors: AbbVie, Pfizer

Silver Sponsors: Amgen, Astellas, BeOne, BioPIER, The Lotus Group, Mathematics (an Open Access Journal by MDPI), Merck, Regeneron, Sanofi

Bronze Sponsors: ASA Biopharmaceutical Section, Boehringer Ingelheim, Eli Lilly, LLX Solutions, Novartis, Servier, Tower Research Capital

On behalf of the organizing committee, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the ICSA Executive Committee, ICSA Program Committee, and ICSA Special Lecture Committee for their guidance and support, as well as to the University of Connecticut for providing outstanding conference venues. We are especially grateful to the faculty and student volunteers from UConn's Department of Statistics, the session organizers, and all symposium committees for their dedication and hard work.

We also thank every speaker and participant whose passion, expertise, and engagement helped make the 34th ICSA Applied Statistics Symposium an inspiring and memorable event. We look forward to future collaborations and continued efforts to advance innovation and excellence in statistical science at UConn and beyond.



UConn Alumni & Friends Luncheon at JSM 2025

Wednesday August 6, 2025



The UConn Statistics Department Alumni and Friends Luncheon was successfully held on Wednesday, August 6, 2025, from 12 PM to 2 PM, during the 2025 Joint Statistical Meeting. This warm and welcoming buffet gathering took place at the Omni Nashville Hotel in Nashville, TN, with 43 guests in attendance, including faculty, alumni, current graduate students, and many new and familiar faces from both industry and academia. This event was organized by our department's Alumni and Friends Reception at JSM or other major conferences committee consisting of Yao Zheng (Chair), Mary Salvana, and Ying Zhou, with invaluable assistance from Tracy Burke (Statistics), and Jessica Alexander (Alumni Relations, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences).



Yao Zheng (yao.zheng@uconn.edu)

Statistics in Pharmaceuticals 2025

Charles Liu & Meizi Liu, Co-chairs of the SIP 2025 Organizing Committee



The Statistics in Pharmaceuticals (SIP) conference, also known as the Conference for Students, was conceived by Dr. Ming-Hui Chen from the UConn, along with Qiqi Deng and Dooti Roy. The conference aims to introduce students and professionals in quantitative fields, particularly statistics and data sciences, to drug development and careers in the pharmaceutical industry and regulatory agencies. The SIP conference serves as an excellent platform for

industry, academic, and regulatory organizations to collaboratively enhance the role of statistics in drug development.

In the summer of 2025, the 8th SIP conference was successfully held at UConn again. This year, Dr. Ofer Harel, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (UConn) delivered the opening remarks. The conference featured four keynote speakers: Dr. Xun Chen (AbbVie), Dr. Lei Nie (FDA), Dr. Dean Follman (NIAID) and Dr. Yili Pritchett (MindMed). They offered their insights on artificial intelligence, rare diseases, vaccine trials, and adaptive designs. Additionally, five comprehensive plenary sessions focused on career development in biostatistics, statistical programming, and data science within the pharmaceutical and regulatory sectors. For the second year in a row, SIP offered short courses on its pre-conference day. The three short courses focused on artificial intelligence (Dr. Mark Chang), meta-analysis (Dr. Zhaohui Liu), and Bayesian adaptive designs (Dr. Jack Lee).

In addition to the main conference, the SIP conference features a scholarship program and a student poster competition. This year, we received 33 scholarship applications and granted 8 awards. The recipients were Gogoate Lemea (University at Buffalo, The State University of New York), Yunyi Wang (The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston), Dennis Baidoo (University of New Mexico), Anika Islam (Drexel University), Shrijana Gautam (University of Connecticut), Oluwafunto Aladekomo (The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston), and Yuzhou Peng (Brown University).

The poster competition drew 23 students across various educational levels. Both scholarship applications and poster submissions reached all-time highs for the conference. The poster award recipients were Chuxin Chen (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Yihan Tang (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Xin-Wei Huang (University at Buffalo, The State University of



New York), Himani Yadav (Boston University), Zhe Guan (University of Connecticut), and Romario Joseph (University of Massachusetts Boston).

The organizing committee for SIP 2025 includes members from Gilead, Takeda, BMS, FDA, UConn, Pfizer, BU, Amgen, Cytel, UMich, Alexion, Vertex, Moderna, Servier, Astellas, OSU, Lilly, Merck, Regeneron, and UMass Dartmouth. This year was the first SIP to introduce a mentoring program, where 14 experienced professionals volunteered to meet with 35 participating students over an extended lunch period. Participants enjoyed expanding their networks, fostering stronger relationships, and discussing specific career-development questions in a friendly social atmosphere. The mentoring program was a fantastic success, organized by our three student committee members: Ruoyuan Qian (Ohio State University), Vindyani Herath (Boston University) and Leo Li (Boston University).

We extend sincere gratitude to our sponsors this year: Amgen, ASA Biopharmaceutical Section, BeOne, Gilead, Lotus Group, Pfizer, Regeneron, and Servier. We are also deeply appreciative of the UConn volunteers - Max Sun, Sana Gupta, Zhengqi (Elsa) Gu, Shike Xu, Zhe Guan, Min Hee Seo, and Mingye Chen (webmaster), as well the supporting UConn staff, Juliet Kapsis and Tracy Burke. Their contributions have been invaluable, and without their dedication, the conference would not have been possible.

We are proud of the achievements of SIP 2025 and are committed to further enhancing the activities for next year. For more information, please visit <https://stat4pharma.org/index.html>

2025 Welcome Back Picnic with Student Awards



The Department of Statistics' annual Welcome Back Picnic was held on Sunday, September 28, 2025, at the beautiful Patriots Park Lodge by Coventry Lake. Nearly 60 members of our department—including students, faculty, staff, and their families—gathered to celebrate the start of a new academic year. The weather couldn't have been better, making it a perfect day to reconnect, relax, and enjoy good food and company.

This year's picnic once again offered something for everyone. Some attendees joined in a friendly but competitive basketball game, while others opted for a more laid-back afternoon indoors, playing board games and catching up with friends in the lodge. The potluck buffet was a highlight, showcasing a wonderful variety of dishes from around the world. From savory favorites to sweet homemade desserts, the spread reflected the rich diversity and creativity of our department—everything was delicious, and nothing stayed on the table for long!

A special moment of the afternoon came with the announcement of our graduate student awards, recognizing outstanding achievements in academics and service. The celebration of these dedicated students brought pride and excitement to everyone present, underscoring the sense of community and accomplishment that defines our department.

The success of the event was made possible through the efforts of many. Sincere thanks go to our program secretary, Tracy Burke, the Department Events Committee (Mary Lai Salvana, Ying Zhou, Wenrui Li, and Xingche Guo), and the Graduate Student Committee for their planning and organization. We're also grateful to the volunteers—both graduate students and faculty—who helped with setup, cleanup, and activities throughout the day.

It was a joy to see everyone come together in such a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The picnic was a wonderful way to kick off the new semester, and we're already looking forward to next year's gathering! Mary Lai Salvana (marylai.salvana@uconn.edu)

DahShu Data Science Symposium 2025

The [2025 DahShu Data Science Symposium](#) (DSDSS 2025) was held October 16–18, 2025, at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT. Centered on the theme *“Innovative Frontiers: AI and Data-Driven Advances in Drug Development, Precision Medicine, Healthcare,”* the symposium brought together researchers and practitioners from academia, industry, and regulatory agencies to showcase how AI and data science are reshaping biomedical research, drug development, and healthcare.



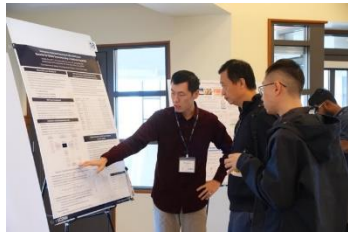
The first two days of the symposium, October 16–17, opened with remarks from Barry Wells, UConn CLAS Associate Dean, and Rui (Sammi) Tang of Astellas Pharmaceuticals. Keynote lectures by **Dr. Haiyan Huang** (University of California, Berkeley) on the first day and **Dr. David Madigan** (Northeastern University) on the second day highlighted cutting-edge challenges and opportunities in modern data science, biostatistics, and regulatory science.

The scientific program was organized into five themed sessions. Presentations in **“AI in Genetics, Computational Biology & Biomedical Studies”** and **“Medical Imaging, Neuroimaging & Dependent Data”** showcased advances in multi-omics integration, computational biology, and the analysis of high-dimensional, structured, and dependent data. The **“Innovative Trial Design & Real-World Evidence”** session highlighted new approaches to clinical trial methodology, including the use of real-world data in trial design and evidence generation. On the second day, sessions on **“Machine Learning & AI in Healthcare”** and a two-part **“AI for Drug Development”** track demonstrated how AI and machine learning were being embedded across the drug development pipeline, from early discovery and translational research to later-phase clinical development and post-marketing evaluation.



In addition to the scientific talks, the symposium featured two well-attended panel discussions. The first, **“Thriving in the AI Era: Challenges, Tools, and New Frontiers for Data-Centric Professionals,”** explored how statisticians, data scientists, and quantitative scientists could adapt to rapid advances in AI, manage evolving tools, and position themselves for leadership roles. The second panel, **“AI in Drug Development: Governance, Organizational Readiness, Training, & Business Impact Evaluation,”** focused on practical questions of implementation, such as building governance frameworks, preparing organizations to use AI responsibly, training the workforce, and measuring business impact. Lively discussion and audience questions reflected strong interest in both the technical and organizational dimensions of AI.

A highlight of the social program was the Thursday evening banquet, held at the Rome Ballroom on the UConn campus. The banquet talk, **“From Data to Leadership: My Path to Chief Data & AI Officer,”** delivered by DauShu President Jing Huang (CareDx), offered a personal and inspiring perspective on career development and leadership in data- and AI-driven organizations. Throughout the meeting, coffee breaks, lunches, and the banquet provided rich opportunities for networking, mentoring, and cross-disciplinary conversations among participants at different career stages.



Another particularly vibrant component of the meeting was the **student poster competition**. The symposium received **20 student poster submissions**, spanning topics aligned with the major themes of the conference. During the poster sessions, students had the opportunity to present their work, engage in lively discussion with attendees. Several students received awards in recognition of the quality and impact of their research, and an award ceremony during the closing session honored the winners and highlighted the depth of emerging talent in the field.



The symposium’s educational mission was further advanced by a full day of short courses on Saturday, October 18. Participants chose from four offerings: a full-day course on **“Causal Generalist Medical AI,”** a half-day course on **“Precision Medicine and Companion Diagnostics: Statistical and Design Considerations,”** a half-day course on **“Bayesian Clinical Trial Designs and Their Implementation,”** and a full-day course on **“Highly Adaptive Lasso and Targeted Learning.”**

We also extend our sincere thanks to all the committee members and our sponsors, whose efforts and generous support made the symposium possible. Platinum Sponsors included **BeOne Medicines, Insilicom, and CareDX**. Gold Sponsors were **Amgen, the ASA Biopharmaceutical Section (BIOP), and BioMarin**. Silver Sponsors included **Astellas, Daiichi Sankyo, Pfizer, Regeneron, and Sentieon**. We were also grateful for the support of the **Biostatistics Symposium of Southern California (BSSC)** as our Nonprofit Sponsor.

Kun Chen (UConn) and Zhenming Shun (Daiichi Sankyo) are co-chairs of the program committee. The steering committee consists of Kun Chen, Ming-Hui Chen (UConn), Zhenming Shun, Rui (Sammi) Tang (Astellas Pharmaceuticals), and Peng Yang (Clindata Insight).

31st Distinguished Statistician Colloquium

October 29, 2025 UConn Storrs

The Department of Statistics at the University of Connecticut hosted the 31st Distinguished Statistician Colloquium, sponsored by ASA, Pfizer and UConn. The Pfizer colloquium series range from 1978 until 2012 and was renewed in 2018. The colloquium series featured C. R. Rao, Bradley Efron, D.R. Cox, Grace Wahba and many more. For a complete list, see <https://statistics.uconn.edu/pfizer-colloquium/>. The



purpose of the Colloquium is to provide a forum for a distinguished statistician to share and disseminate their unique perspective and work in the theory and/or application of statistics. Starting from 2018, the series has been co-sponsored by Pfizer, the American Statistical Association, and the Department of Statistics at the University of Connecticut. This year's speaker was Dr. Thomas Louis, Professor Emeritus of Biostatistics, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Professor Louis gave a presentation entitled, "*Trade-offs in Statistics: There is no free lunch, but reduced-price meals abound*", under the auspices of the Pfizer Colloquia by Distinguished Statisticians in Honor of Dr. David S. Salsburg. Following the lecture was a "Conversation with Distinguished Statisticians in Memory of Professor Harry O. Posten". This discussion with Professor Louis was led by, Susan Paddock, EVP and Chief Scientist at NORC at the University of Chicago and J. Sunil Rao, Professor Division of Biostatistics & Health Data Science, University of Minnesota and Director of Biostatistics, Masonic Cancer Center (MCC). For more information, please visit <https://statistics.uconn.edu/pfizer-colloquium/>



We thank Pfizer and the ASA for their generous financial support. We also thank the members of the selection committee –Demissie Alemayehu and Kannan Natarajan from Pfizer, Ron Wasserstein and Nancy Flournoy from the ASA, and Dipak Dey (Chair), Haim Bar, Elizabeth Schifano and Yao Zheng from UConn. Our staff and student volunteer for their continuous help for the great success of the event.

Dipak Dey (dipak.dey@uconn.edu)

Statistics Spring 2025 Colloquium Series

(<https://statistics.uconn.edu/statistics-colloquium/>)

Wednesday, January 29

“A Practical Interval Estimation Method for Special Density Function”
presented by Haihan Yu, University of Rhode Island

Wednesday, March 12

“SyNPar: A Data-Prevention Framework for High-Power False Discovery
Rate Control in High-Dimensional Variable Selection”
presented by Jingyi Li, UCLA

Wednesday, March 26

“Differential Privacy over Riemannian Manifolds”
presented by Carlos Soto, University of Massachusetts

Wednesday, April 2

“Nonparametric Neighborhood Selection in Graphical Models”
presented by Yuedong Wang, University of California, Santa Barbara

Wednesday, April 9

“Computation and Resource Efficient Genome-Wide Association
Analysis for Large-Scale Imaging Studies”
presented by Hongtu Zhu, University of North Carolina

Friday, April 11

“A Systematic Design Construction and Analysis for Cost-Efficient
Order-or-Addition Experiment”
presented by Frederick Hing Phoa, Institute of Statistical Science, Academia Sinica

Wednesday, April 16

“A Cannon is Not Necessary to Fly”
Suman Majumdar, University of Connecticut

Wednesday, April 23

“Assessing Spatial Disparities in Disease Maps”
presented by Sudipto Banerjee, University of California, Los Angeles

Wednesday, April 30

“Localized Conformal Inference for Operator Models”
presented by Trevor Harris, University of Connecticut

Statistics Fall 2025 Colloquium Series

(<https://statistics.uconn.edu/statistics-colloquium/>)

Friday, September 5

“A Statistical Framework for Land Change Science Using Dense Satellite Time Series”
presented by Zhe Zhu, University of Connecticut

Wednesday, September 17

“Survival Data Analysis Using Average Hazard with Survival Weight”
presented by Hajime Uno, Harvard University

Friday, October 3

“Analogy-Based Inference: A Universal School of Statistical Inference”
presented by Jamie Bowater, University of Exeter, UK

Wednesday, October 8

“Constructing a Disease Outbreak Forecast Ensemble via Bayesian Gibbs Posterior Stacking”
Presented by Spencer Wadsworth, VRS, University of Connecticut

Wednesday, October 15

“Influence-Guided Subsampling under Measurement Constraints”
presented by Lin Wang, Purdue University

Wednesday, October 22

“The High-Dimensional Asymptotics of Principal Components Regression”
presented by Alden Green, Johns Hopkins University

Wednesday, October 29

(Pfizer Colloquium)

“Trade-offs in Statistics: There is No Free Lunch, But Reduced-Price Meals Abound”
presented by Thomas A. Louis, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Friday, November 7

“Improving the Alignment between Human and Large Language Model Classifications: An Empirical Assessment of Prompt Engineering for Construct Identification”
presented by Kylie Anglin, University of Connecticut

Wednesday, November 12

Presentation by UConn International Students & Scholars, University of Connecticut

Friday, December 5

Cancer Human Disease Networks (cHDNs) via Deep Learning SEER-Medicare
presented by Shuangge Ma, Yale University

Faculty Awards and Achievements

July 2024-June 2025

July 2024

- Prof. Jun Yan co-authored an article in Significance magazine titled 'How to build a gymnastics team'.

October 2024

- Elizabeth Schifano awarded the 2024 Mid-Career Award from Applied Public Health Statistics (APHS) section of the American Public Health Association (APHA).

November 2024

- Dipak Dey received a new Pfizer fellowship to support PhD student Sana Gupta for the 2025-2026 academic year.

January 2025

- Dipak Dey received Lifetime Achievement Award from the Indian Bayesian Society and the International Advisory Committee of the International Conference.

February 2025

- Neil Spencer awarded Makuch Faculty Fund Award in Mathematical Sciences.

March 2025

- Ming-Hui Chen elected as a Member of the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering.
- Yao Zheng has been awarded an NSF CAREER Award for New Frontiers in Time Series Analysis.

April 2025

- Nalini Ravishanker featured in AMSTAT News.

May 2025

- Dipak Dey delivered the Ronald R. Hocking Endowed Lecture Series in Statistics on Breakthrough in Statistical Science and received the award on April 25 at the Department of Statistics, Texas A & M University, College Station, TX.

June 2025

- Xingche Guo awarded FY25 Research Excellence Program Award from UConn for his proposal entitled 'Robust Causal Inference for Functional Responses via Double Machine Learning'.
- Wenrui Li awarded FY25 Research Excellence Program Award from UConn for her proposal entitled 'Federated Causal Inference under Inference'.

Student Awards and Achievements

July 2024-June 2025

August 2024

- Undergrad student Lucy Liu selected as a 2024 Holster Scholar.

November 2024

- Undergrad students Sana Gupta, Mathew Chandy, Isabelle Perez, Joshua Lee & Lucy Liu 'Data Huskies' win 'Best Data-Driven Recommendation' at the ASA 2024 DataFest' held in April, 2024 at Wesleyan.

February 2025

- PhD students Sana Gupta and Alokesh Manna chosen as the recipients of the 2025 AAAS Student Travel Award.
- PhD student Sydney Louit has been selected as a winner of the ASA sponsored SPES-Q&P Student Paper Competition.

March 2025

- PhD student Alokesh Manna has been awarded a Student & Early Career Scholarship to attend the 2025 Symposium on Data Science and Statistics.

May 2025

- Undergrad student Sia Gbondo-Tugbawa awarded UConn IDEA Grant to support 2025-2026 academic year projects.

2024 Annual Statistics Department Awards for Student Achievement

- Zachary Blanchard and Nan Zhang received the Fairfield & Dolores Smith Award
- Zachary Blanchard received the Gottfried Noether Award
- Min Lin, Jieyu Guo received the Best Performance in Biostatistics
- Jongwoo Choi received the Best Performance in Probability
- Aditya Vikram Sett and Jongwoo Choi received the Best Performance in Inference
- Fusheng Yang received the Teaching Award
- Max Sun and Heeju Lim received the Service Award

2025 Statistics Ph.D. Graduates

May and Summer 2025 Graduates:

Jiadong Fang
Sydney Louit
Aolan Li
Jiarui Liu
Min Lin
Zoe McBride
Jing Wang
Zhenyu Xu

December 2025 Graduation Candidates:

Yang Jiao
Heeju Lim
Kelvin Zhong

Alumni Awards and Achievements

July 2024-June 2025

July 2024

- Yeongjin Gwon '18 PhD has been promoted to Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), Department of Biostatistics

August 2024

- Greg Vaughan '17 PhD has been named Chair of the Mathematical Sciences Department at Bentley University
- Sudipto Banerjee '00 PhD has been selected as a recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award of the Department of Statistics at UConn
- Tumulesh K.S. Solanky '90 PhD has been selected as a recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award of the Department of Statistics at UConn

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Stay Connected

The Statistics Department would like to stay connected with all of our alumni. If you would like any of your professional or personal updates to be included in the next newsletter, please send them to Cynthia Chavez at cynthia.chavez@uconn.edu , Please be sure to include the year you graduated and the degree received in your email.

To stay connected with other University of Connecticut alumni or to get involved in alumni events, please visit <https://www.foundation.uconn.edu/alumni-network/> for more information.

Please visit us at <https://statistics.uconn.edu/>

