

***Department of Biostatistics Responses, Formulated at our 2004 Retreat, to
Recommendations from the Committee to Review Biostatistics***

Action Items

1. *We create a Departmental Management Committee (DMC) comprising:*
 - *Chair*
 - *Administrator*
 - *Academic coordinator*
 - *Director of Graduate Programs*
 - *Director of Biostatistical Education for Public Health Scientists and Professionals*
 - *Chair of the Biostatistics Information Technology Committee*
 - *Chair of a new Committee on Intellectual Environment (CIE) to manage and coordinate: seminar series; working group meetings; annual retreat; annual Hopkins Biostatistics symposium*

This committee would meet quarterly in place of a full faculty meeting to coordinate departmental management.

2. *We will better document the steps taken each year to mentor junior faculty.*
3. *We will also consider at an upcoming faculty meeting whether to appoint a non-statistical scientist to mentor each new biostatistics faculty member with regard to establishing themselves as leaders in public health/biomedicine.*
4. *The Committee on Graduate Education will bring forward recommendations to the entire faculty within the next 3 months about how best to enhance communication and public health leadership skills in our students.*
5. *The Committee on Graduate Education has implemented a new student recruitment plan and will be presenting an update to the faculty in an upcoming faculty-student meeting.*
6. *The retreat discussion pointed out:*
 - *There is substantial demand for our ScM graduates around the medical institutions and beyond.*
 - *Even if we decide not to admit ScM students, we should retain the degree so that PhD students who decide not to continue can earn a masters degree.*
 - *Our ScM curriculum is equivalent to the first year of our PhD program. The courses are too theoretical as reported by the review committee interviews with students.*
 - *We need to revise the curriculum to make it more applied and to permit students to complete the program in 18-24 months.*

The Committee on Graduate Education will make specific recommendations at an upcoming faculty meeting

7. The brief discussion at the retreat led to consensus that we must continue to strengthen and build our statistical computing environment. We referred this specific recommendation to the BIT for their discussion and proposal as how best to do so.

8. Jody Gatuso has volunteered to investigate how the other departmental libraries are managed and to recommend a more efficient strategy in time for our move to the new library space in the early fall.

9. The department agrees that the Johns Hopkins Biostatistics Center can usefully expand its service to the School and beyond. To do so, it needs a full-time director and more staff. It also needs contiguous space of roughly 5 offices. Jody Gatuso will prepare a request for space to be submitted to the Dean. A search committee will be appointed to find a director. Specific steps will be discussed at an upcoming faculty meeting and at the next meeting of the Center Advisory Board.

10. There was agreement with the suggestion that we create a Biostatistics Learning Advisory Committee (BLAC) comprising one faculty member from each department, with representatives of the MPH/DrPH programs. The Director of Biostatistical Education for Public Health Scientists and Professionals (Marie Diener-West) will serve as Chair. The committee's purpose is to advise the Department about skills public health students need and how best to address them in our courses, seminars, and other learning programs.

We propose to create this committee immediately and to seek their advice about the best approach to supporting lab science PhD students.

11. The Department also proposes creating a once per month teaching seminar like the one called "The Top Ten Things to Know about Analyzing Microarray Data" that can be used by faculty and students around the School and medical campus to learn about particular statistical topics. This might be recorded and form the basis for a teaching program on the web directed at particular topics.

12. The Department will collaborate with other departments to recruit and mentor excellent PhD statisticians who would have primary appointments in another department with active joint appointments in Biostatistics. We would welcome qualified individuals to teach in the Biostatistics curriculum and would reward them as we do our current faculty. Teaching faculty are already included in most departmental activities, including faculty meetings, retreats, seminars, working groups and student mentoring.

13. We think it best for students to build relationships with Biostatistics faculty whom they ultimately ask to join their thesis committees. The Department does not want to interfere with that process. However, the Committee on Biostatistical Education will consider ways to make it easier for students to match with a statistical expert.

14. With regard to big science opportunities, the discussion at the retreat led to the following principles:

1. We will participate as co-investigators on teams from across the medical institutions to compete for big science projects that require statistical expertise.

2. We can lead big science projects when they do not require a substantial in-house investment in data acquisition personnel and infrastructure. We are unlikely to be competitive with large industry and academic programs already in this business.