A Tale of Two Cores:
Biostatistics in Aging at JHU

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I have ?? years of experience

- **Depends on how you count!**
- **First Biostat Core:**
  - P01 on Vision/Aging, 1991
- **NIH “Center” Cores**
  - OAIC, 2003-present
  - ADRC, 2004-present
- **Center on Aging & Health (COAH)**
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COAH/OAIC

- **COAH Vision:**
  
  … be the world leader in *discovery* to optimize the health and quality of life of the older population; and, to see our discoveries *pay off* as added years of health life for older adults, and thereby, *position the University for leadership* in transitioning to an aging society.

- Research, education, translation
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COAH/OAIC

- 12 interdisciplinary faculty: 4 statisticians!
- 6 support staff; many research staff
  - 4 ScM statisticians; 2 data managers
- Student training program
- Embedded within Geriatrics; SOM, SON, SPH
- Funding: NIH, foundations, philanthropy
  - Research studies
  - OAIC
    - Leadership, Research Cores (2), Pilot Core, Career Development
    - Biostatistics: 0.35 Ph.D. FTE; 1 Sc.M. FTE; 0.40 data man. FTE
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COAH/OAIC

- Aims—to provide / develop
  - Data management and analytic support
  - Data and analytic infrastructure
  - New statistical methods
  - Mentorship of junior faculty: access / training
  - Collaboration: other cores, extra-OAIC
  - Attract new collaborators
  - Website
  - Translation
  - Leadership
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COAH/OAIC

- What works
  - Center leader with a ton of vision (former 😊)
  - Interdisciplinarity not just a buzzword
  - Statistics at the table
  - An awesome deputy: Qian-Li Xue
  - Tracking-as-you-go procedures
  - Methods built-in
  - Critical mass
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- What doesn’t work
  - Project leaders who miss benchmarks
  - The funding
  - Senior time

- What ???
  - Most primary appointments in Center home (not Biostatistics)
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ADRC

- What works
  - Great scientists

- What doesn’t work
  - New collaboration culture
  - Statistics not actively sought
  - Insufficient critical mass (Core)
  - Insufficient initiative on our (statisticians’) part
  - Insufficient mutual vision
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One burning question:

How integrated should Biostatistics Cores be within academic departments of Biostatistics?

- Funding issues?
- Culture issues?
- Opportunity issues?