

Biostatistics Faculty Meeting

April 23, 2013

12:15-1:15 PM

AGENDA

Present: Faculty: Karen Bandeen-Roche; Brian Caffo; Ciprian Crainiceanu; Constantine Frangakis; Harris Jaffee; Hongkai Ji; Martin Lindquist; John McGready; Roger Peng; Fernando Pineda; Chuck Rohde; Michael Rosenblum; Ingo Ruczinski; Dan Scharfstein; Carol Thompson; Rick Thompson; Amy Wozniak; Gayane Yenokyan; Scott Zeger; Vadim Zipunnikov; **Students/Postdocs:** Ani Eloyan; Amanda Mejia; Trang Nguyen; **Staff:** Mary Joy Argo; Debra Moffitt.

Announcements

Karen encouraged everyone to attend today's special seminar, by Claude Brezinski, at 4 PM in Room W2015. Ravi Varadhan is the faculty host. We will also be having our regular Wednesday seminar tomorrow (April 24), with Anastasia Ivanova speaking.

Cristian Tomasetti, who interviewed for one of our tenure-track positions, has accepted an offer from Oncology Biostatistics. He will have a joint appointment in our department.

Dan Scharfstein encouraged everyone to respond to the grades survey.

Standing Reports:

BIT:

Fernando Pineda reported that the Dean has renewed the School's computing subsidy for the coming year. On behalf of the entire Department, Karen thanked Fernando for his efforts in securing another year of funding.

The new storage system has been delivered. May 1 is the target date for it to go online (some preliminary testing is currently underway).

Hardware purchases by faculty are outpacing our ability to absorb them in the server room. We are working with Ross McKenzie in IS on a plan to upgrade the capacity of the server room so we can handle more equipment over the next few years."

Graduate Program:

Brian Caffo reported that the numbers for our incoming class are now finalized: 10 new PhD students and 7 new ScM students. On behalf of the entire Department, Karen thanked Brian and the Admissions Committee for another successful recruitment cycle.

As a reminder, this year's comps will be held on Monday, June 3. Brian has been in touch with the first-year instructors and the exams are being compiled.

So as to avoid gaps in funding of student research assistantships, academic and thesis advisors are asked to notify Debra as soon as possible if they become aware of a grant their advisee works on that is ending/being discontinued, etc.

Our PhD training program with NCI is on an informal hiatus (i.e., no new students will be assigned to the program at this time). We will be looking into whether the program could be modified to be more attractive to students. In the past, we have invited an incoming PhD student to join the NCI program. It was noted, however, that many incoming students don't feel comfortable committing themselves in this way before they have even begun their PhD studies. Another aspect of the program that may be particularly unappealing to students is the requirement to work almost exclusively at NCI during Year 3 and thereafter; some students may be reluctant to "disconnect" in this way, after having spent the previous two years establishing themselves in the department and in Baltimore. In the meantime, faculty who are considering developing any kind of training partnership with NIH should consult with Karen before proceeding further.

"Statistics in Action" is an initiative we proposed for the 2012-13 incoming PhD class that is supposed to provide students with exposure to how statistics are used in decision-making at the highest levels. Short trips to NIH, FDA, and the like to meet with practicing statisticians there were planned. To date, however, we've not implemented the program. Anyone with contacts at NIH/FDA, or with ideas about what kinds of events we might hold either this year or in 2013-14, should contact Brian. Brian will be sending out an email to faculty with a description of what is needed.

Faculty Senate

Mei-Cheng Wang reported on the new on-campus networking site, Bubbler. It will be akin to Facebook but will have as its primary purposes promoting collaborations between Hopkins researchers.

Mei-Cheng distributed a [map](#) of recent and planned new construction on the JHMI campus and in the surrounding neighborhoods. In the works are, among other things, a Walgreen's pharmacy and an elementary school run by Hopkins (School of Education).

Students

Amanda Mejia reported that Biostatistics defeated Epidemiology at the recent kickball game. The students are planning on holding this event again next year.

In preparation for the comps, first-year PhD students are interested in having a probability review session hosted by either the Homewood or Biostatistics probability TA. They would also like to see the Biostatistics probability TA's office hours reconfigured (ie, weekly sessions?).

Some students (mainly first-year) are worried that if they come to the retreat, they'll be perceived by faculty as not working hard enough. Karen will follow up via email to the students reiterating that all members of the department (faculty, students, and staff) are welcome and encouraged to attend. Instructors of first-year courses are also requested to announce in class that they're looking forward to seeing the students at the retreat. It was also suggested that in future years, we might think about reverting back to a fall retreat (first-year students might be less apprehensive about attending, as it would not be as close to comps).

Center

Rick Thompson reported that he, along with Carol Thompson and Gayane Yenokyan, recently attended the national meeting of CTSA centers and learned about some potential collaborations. Anyone interested in finding out more should contact Rick.

Retreat

By way of background, Karen reminded everyone that in contrast to last year's retreat, this year's will be focused exclusively on our departmental self-study (due at the end of this year). As a result, we will be having breakout groups but no "flash talks." Saturday's schedule will also differ in that instead of breaking for lunch, we will have a working lunch and go through until about 2 PM.

Ingo Ruczinski reported that we'll be organized into 4 groups/themes:

Group 1: Education (facilitators: Marie Diener-West, John McGready)

Group 2: Research: programs, scientific contributions, hiring (facilitators: Hongkai Ji, Martin Lindquist)

Group 3: Collaboration, consulting (facilitators: Roger Peng, Rick Thompson)

Group 4: Governance, administration, culture, resources (space, equipment, funding sources, programs) (facilitators: Michael Rosenblum, Ingo Ruczinski)

For each group, a Google website has been set up. Posted there are relevant documents from past self-studies/external reviews, etc. We'll be sending out an email shortly asking retreat participants to you to pick a group that they are interested in, access the Google page, add their name to the list of participants, read through the document, and post any comments/edits/questions.

This year's retreat will be "green" in that we will not be printing out retreat packets.

On behalf of the entire Department, Karen thanked Ingo and the other members of the retreat planning committee (faculty: Jeff Leek, Michael Rosenblum, Vadim Zipunnikov; students: Hilary Parker, Yenny Webb Vargas) for all their hard work.

Funding/Opportunity Dissemination

The School has begun to feel the effects of sequestration. As a result, Karen emphasized the importance of sharing information about funding opportunities. She requested that faculty members who turn

down a funded collaboration request pass along that request to Karen, so that she can then share it/circulate it among those of us who may be looking for funding opportunities.

E-Reserve Policy

So as to avoid possible copyright infringement, the School is asking faculty who wish to post PDFs of articles on their course websites to do so only through Welch Library's E-Reserve program. Faculty who currently have PDFs posted should take them down immediately. It is permissible for faculty to provide references, so that students can look up the articles for themselves. There was consensus among our faculty that posting open access materials is in line with the School's policy and would not constitute copyright infringement. There was also enthusiasm for scheduling a more detailed discussion of this issue with Lori Rosman, our Welch liaison, at an upcoming faculty meeting.

Seminar Time

There has been some enthusiasm in the department for modifying/changing the time of our weekly seminars. Karen noted that since we will need to find a new location for our seminars for 2013-14 while W2030 undergoes renovations, this would be a good time to revisit the issue of changing the Wednesday seminar start time. The proposals voted on were:

- 1) Have the seminar first thing in the morning
- 2) Have the seminar at lunchtime
- 3) Have the seminar at just a slightly earlier time than the current one (3:30).

The winner was Proposal #2. Karen will follow up via email.

Space

As a result of another "bumper crop" of incoming students for 2013-14, we find ourselves short of student office space. Although we plan to increase the number of slots in the E3000 student offices from 4 to 5, we still will need approximately 5 more spaces. At the same time, Karen and others have been considering ways in which the Library space could be put to more effective use. Karen shared Facilities Management's first [draft](#) of a reconfigured Library. In this plan, the current "meeting room" section of the Library would remain unchanged, but the outer part of the room would be refitted to accommodate up to 20 students in a style reminiscent of the School's 4th floor reading room. Folding doors would be installed between the meeting room and outer areas. Faculty consensus, both at the meeting and given to Karen ahead of time, is that the outer area would be far too impersonal and crowded, making this design less than optimal.

After some discussion, the most popular suggestions that emerged were:

- 1) Keep the outer area as multi-student office space, but significantly reduce the number of students being housed there (possibly adding some furniture to create a more friendly atmosphere);

2) Flip the meeting room and outer area sections so that the current meeting room space would now house 6-8 students and the current outer area would become the meeting room area (the meeting room table would be moved).

It was also suggested that under either of those two scenarios, at a minimum, some kind of soundproofing between the two areas would need to be provided. There was more enthusiasm, however, for walling off the two areas from each other entirely and installing a second, separate doorway.

Karen will be sending out a follow-up email to the faculty. She will also pass along to Facilities our suggestions.