

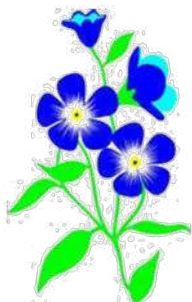
E-Tidings Newsletter



SCASA Events and News

Volume 13, Issue 6

June, 2025



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Bridging Statistics and AI/Data Science

by Chong Ho “Alex” Yu, SCASA President

Dear SCASA Members,



As President of the South California Chapter of the American Statistical Association, I want to address a critical evolution within our field – one that demands our attention and proactive engagement. For decades, statisticians have debated the limitations of *p-values*. Despite extensive critiques—ranging from their susceptibility to misuse to their inability to measure practical significance—we've largely stuck to tradition. Even with powerful alternatives like Bayesian methods, simulation-based inference, resampling techniques, exploratory data analysis, and data science/machine learning methods readily available, the statistical mainstream continues to lean heavily on legacy tools. But we're no longer in a space where this is just an academic discussion. **AI and machine learning are not just buzzwords—they're reshaping our field and job market.**

Recent data underscores this shift: while AI is projected to displace around 85 million jobs worldwide by 2025, it is simultaneously expected to create 97 million new ones (World Economic Forum). More specifically, in the US, 80% of the workforce could see at least 10% of their tasks impacted by AI, and industries most exposed to AI are experiencing slower hiring growth. While certain roles face reductions, there's a growing demand for specialists who can operate and harness AI's potential.

Moreover, AI tools are accomplishing feats that human researchers could scarcely dream of. **AlphaFold**, for instance, has revolutionized protein folding prediction, a challenge that vexed biologists for decades, saving what DeepMind claims to be "hundreds of millions of years in research time." Beyond biology, AI is being used to analyze extremely large datasets in astronomy and genomics, develop novel proofs in mathematics, predict weather patterns with unprecedented accuracy, and accelerate drug discovery. These are not merely enhancements; they represent entirely new paradigms of scientific exploration.

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Bridging Statistics and AI/Data Science

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It's clear that AI will not entirely replace humans. However, humans who master AI will replace those who don't. In recognition of this seismic shift, universities across the globe are rapidly launching new programs focused on AI and data science, or at the very least, robustly incorporating these critical contents into existing statistics curricula. The writing is on the wall: **We must evolve.**

As your President, I am committed to helping our chapter **bridge the gap between classical statistics and modern Data Science/Machine Learning (DSML)**. I believe that our strong foundational understanding of statistical principles positions us uniquely to excel in this evolving landscape. To that end, I've been actively sharing insights and resources through the following channels:

SCASA LinkedIn Page – Trends in DSML:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/socalamstat/?viewAsMember=true>

SCASA Newsroom

<https://community.amstat.org/scasa/newsroom>

YouTube Channel – Data Frontiers – Short videos highlighting key developments:

<https://www.youtube.com/@datafrontiers>

I encourage you to explore these resources and engage with this crucial topic. Our collective future as statisticians depends on our adaptability and willingness to embrace these powerful new tools. If you have thoughts, suggestions, or want to collaborate on content or events—**please don't hesitate to reach out.** Together, let's push the frontier.

Warm regards,

Chong Ho Alex Yu, Ph.D., D. Phil.
SCASA President

Elections of Vice President for Communications

Dear SCASA Community,

Please take a minute to participate in the Elections of an inaugural Vice President for Communications. As stated in the May issue of our eNewsletter (see Page 2), the SCASA Executive Board is pleased to announce a Brand New Officer Position: Vice-President for Communications. After careful deliberation, the Current President, Past-President, and President-Elect unanimously agreed on the need for this role to better connect with our growing community of statisticians, data scientists, and enthusiasts. If the position proves successful, an amendment to the Chapter Constitution will follow to formalize it. The key responsibilities are:

- Manage official chapter accounts on platforms including Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), YouTube, LinkedIn, and others
- Create, schedule, and post engaging content such as: promotional graphics and videos for events, highlights of chapter news and member achievements, recaps of events and interviews with members
- Collaborate with event organizers to promote activities before and after they happen
- Monitor engagement analytics and refine content strategies

Please meet the candidate:

Ronald Parent is the founder of Precision Data Strategies, a Marina del Rey consultancy that turns complex data into clear, actionable insights for small and mid-sized businesses through intuitive dashboards, predictive models, and plain-language advice.

A STEM student at Los Angeles City College, he has already delivered live solutions in inventory forecasting, maintenance-risk alerts, hiring analytics, and bus-route optimization. Ronald holds more than 50 credentials in data science and machine learning through IBM and related coursework, and champions transparent, ethical analysis.



He donates his time to local hospitals and institutions, mentors returning students, and demystifies statistics for non-technical audiences. For recreation, Ronald enjoys pickleball, travel, hiking, and rockhounding--usually with his best friend Charlie, a lively three-year-old terrier.



To vote, go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5ZQWF2P>

DataFest: A Total Success Report

By Robert Gould, DataFest Founder, and Linda Zanonian, DataFest Director

DATAFEST celebrated its 15th year in 2025, bringing together 80 undergraduate teams (with nearly 400 students total), professional data scientists, alumni, faculty and graduate students for a weekend of data fun in the Ackerman Grand Ballroom.

Students began working on April 25 to meet the challenge provided by Savills, an international commercial real estate firm: identify trends in the market place that can help Savills find the best offices for its potential clients. The data set consisted of records on every known commercial lease signed since 2018, and Savills was particularly interested in changes to the market since the pandemic.

A diligent team of judges from universities, industry (and SCASA and OCLBASA) worked hard to select the best of an extremely creative and insightful set of presentations. In the end, they awarded prizes within three categories in addition to two Judges Choice awards.

The Don Ylvisaker Prize for Best Insight went to team **Revenge Arc**, consisting of Celine Nugroho, Muhammad Rohan Bodla, Ethan Xiao, Jordan Kikuta and Christine Yuan. An Honorable Mention was awarded to team **DeepThinkers**, with Ruchira Bhat, Jack Connor, Sara Beniwal.

Team **Big Hiro 6** took home the award for Best Visualization, using an amazing radar plot at the center of a display that integrated a large amount of information. **Big Data Hiro 6** was Ryan Chen, Kevin Nguyen, Taylor Prince, Theresa Unsulangi and Maya Hirsch. Honorable Mention went to **NAN sense**, with Sean Gee, Angelo Guo, Alyssa Mei, Daniel Pae and Jared Fong.



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DataFest: A Total Success Report

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This was a DataFest that lent itself well to using external data, and many of the teams rose to this challenge. So the Best Use of External Data was a very competitive prize this year, and the award went to team **Dart Monkey**, with Loretta Hu, Aryan Sunkersett, Anthony Chen and Aditya Murthy.

Honorable Mention was awarded to team **Chi-Squared Cranes**: Mindy Zhu, Selena Lam, Sanskriti Shindadkar, Clyde Vilacrusis, and Vivian Yee.

The judges may, at their discretion, award up to two Judges Choice awards, and this year they gave two awards. One Judges Choice was awarded to the **Data Engibears** for the impressive way they seamlessly folded external data into their narrative and their strong story telling. The

Data Engibears are Anna Dupree, Allison Lynn, Melissa Chang, Cassidy Sadowski, and Emma Morrison. The other award was presented to **YooHoo**, who enacted an Oscar-worthy presentation with solid statistical skills. The YooHoos are Mingyang Li, Yuhan Xie, Daniel Wang, Oscar Su, and John Tan.

DataFest 2025 was organized by an amazing team of undergraduate students, assisted by Dr. Linda Zanontian, who helped smooth the many bureaucratic rough edges. The student planning committee was one of the most enthusiastic yet, no doubt inspired by the leadership of Irene Zhang and Kowen Jeong. Their team consisted of Arushi Gupta, Tselmen Anuuarad, Morgan Fu, Aida Duong, Kevin Baer, Abigail Shih, Maddy Yip, Leah Shin, Shaina Dulles, and Caleb Williams.

The secret to DataFest's success, beyond the students, is the group of selfless and talented mentors who volunteer time to answer the teams' questions, coach them along, inspire them, and give them feedback. This year we had over 100 mentors and volunteers, including many of our own graduate students from all three programs and our faculty. We also had a large number of alumni return back to campus and many mentors from outside UCLA volunteer their time. We are very grateful for all their support.

DataFest: A Total Success Report

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The judges had a challenging task to select finalists and prize-winners in very short time, but, as always, they came through. We'd like to thank Mark Handcock for chairing the group of judges, as he has 14 of our 15 years. Thanks to Go Ito (Disney), Jack Miller (UCSB), Shantam (Google), Wayne Smith (CSUN), Guani Wu (UCLA), James Wilson '19 (HBO Max), Jamie Had-dock (Harvey Mudd College), Weixin Yao (UCR), Elizabeth Frank O'Neill, (EDI and UCLA gradu-ate student), Jeremy Guinta (Ankura), Joseph Zoller (UCLA), LE Wang (Loyola Marymount Uni-versity), Mark Hubert (Claremont McKenna College), Annie Flippo (Urgently), Jeremy Weidner (Legacy.com), Mine Dogucu (UCI), Juana Sanchez (UCLA), Olga Korosteleva (CSULB), Nate Langholz (IBM), Brian Jerskey (CSULB), and Omar Moore (Tixr). Very special thanks or due to Devon Munos, Senior Vice President from Savills, who both served as a judge and also helped bring the data to the students, along with her colleague Associate Director John Rissmiller.

DataFest is an expensive endeavor, and our undergraduate fundraising team came through with record numbers this year. They tirelessly sold flower bouquets, handmade chocolates, and t-shirts to help get funds to host the event. They were also able to secure our sponsors who contribute so much to the overall success of our event. A huge thank you to our dedicated sponsors Vornoy Partners and Ankura, for sponsoring at the Cauchy Level (\$5000), Analysis Group and resolution economics, for sponsoring at the Pareto Level (\$2500), Chyma Bioven-tures, for sponsoring at the Lognormal Level (\$1000), and SCASA (Southern California Ameri-can Statistical Association) for sponsoring at the Weibull Level (\$500). Thank you to Chipz Hap-pen, SingerLewak, FTI Consulting, Github, and Tixr for sending us swag and goodies. And thank you to our alumni and friends of DataFest for supporting our event each year with funds and contributions. Without you all, this event would not be possible!

UCLA is facing severe budget cuts next year, and the success of DataFest 2026 will depend on our fundraising. Please consider contributing by visiting <http://datafest.stat.ucla.edu/support-datafest/giving/>. Alumni, we will happily send you a department t-shirt in return for your contribution. Please email linda@stat.ucla.edu if you're interested!

If you think your business or research might have data that would make for a good DataFest, please email rgould@stat.ucla.edu.

Live R-Guru Class

with Sunil Gupta



By Sunil Gupta

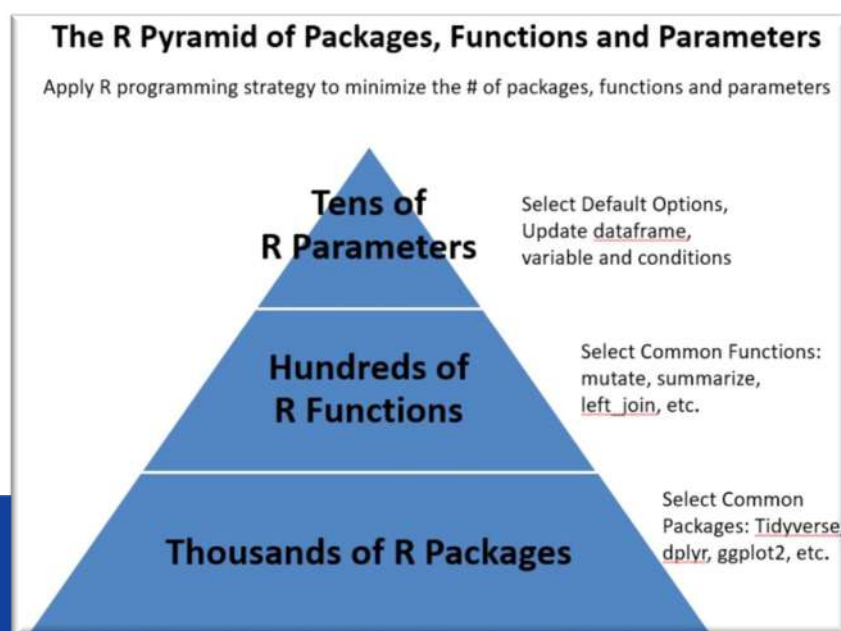
SAS, R and CDISC SME, Author, Mentor and International Trainer

<https://R-Guru.com>, <https://SASSavvy.com>

R-Guru continues to grow, with thousands of viewers each month! R-Guru is designed to help you deepen your understanding, improve your management, and sharpen your programming strategies with R packages, functions, and parameters.

Back by popular demand, I'm excited to announce the next session of my live online R-Guru class — an eight-week series starting at the end of May! Through mentoring and guided instruction, you'll complete weekly hands-on R exercises, build SDTMs and ADaMs, and get your R questions answered — all to help you master R.

Seats are limited for these small-group live sessions, held from 6:30 AM to 8:00 AM PT on the following dates: June 18, 25, July 2, 9, 16, and 23. Enroll today to secure your spot! To enroll, visit r-guru.com/join-us and select Option B.



West LA Data Science / R User Group

Join Us for an R User Group Meetup – Hosted by Neal Fultz!

The R User Group Community is hosting an informal gathering on **Thursday, June 19, from 6:15 PM to 8:15 PM** at **Monkey King Brewing**, located on the second floor of the 99 Ranch rotunda (1360 Westwood Blvd, Los Angeles, CA).



Come celebrate the end of the end of AY24 with fellow R users in a relaxed, casual setting. This is a great opportunity to connect, share experiences, and chat about all things R — and maybe Python, Julia, and data science in general!

Food & Drink:

Monkey King Brewing offers drinks and bar food, with a food court and full market available downstairs. Drinks are self-pay unless a sponsor comes through.

Parking:

Parking is available beneath the 99 Ranch complex.

Sponsor:

This meetup is sponsored by njnm, a boutique data consultancy based in LA. If you or your company is interested in sponsoring a future event, please contact the organizers.

Whether you're a regular or brand new to the group, we'd love to see you there!

To register, please go here: <https://lu.ma/x71j6xqn>

Getting Started with R Shiny Three-Hour Workshop: Your App to the Future Sunil Gupta, Founder of R-Guru.com, R Trainer & Mentor



Date: July 24, 7 – 10 am PT

Registration: <https://r-guru.com/join-us> (Option E)

Fee: \$199

Ready to unravel R shiny objects to create your first R shiny app with a step-by-step hands-on demo approach? Explore the variety of R shiny apps for the pharma industry to better understand the technical structure and rules behind R shiny interactive dashboards.

Join me in this three-hour workshop to create basic R shiny apps to view and filter data frames, tables and plots. Prior R Shiny knowledge is not required but R knowledge is required. Workshop includes access to R-Guru resources for three-months with free R shiny mentoring.

Workshop Agenda

- A. R-Guru.com Resources
- B. R Shiny Workshop Objectives & Outline
- C. Over Twelve R Shiny Live Apps & Galleries Setup App.R
- D. Leveraging tidyCDISC and Teal R Shiny by Genentech
- E. Quick Results with R Shiny Dashboard Apps
- F. Apply the ABC and 123 Method to Create R Shiny Apps
- G. R Shiny Debugging Methods
- H. R Shiny Validation and Submission References



R-Guru now has Steps for R Shiny Development

tidyCDISC Data Table Generator Population Explorer Individual Explorer

Data Upload/Preview

Study ID: CDISCPILOT01

Data upload

ADSL file is mandatory & ADSL-000001 file is optional. Upload both files.

CDISC Pilot Data has been pre-loaded for Demo

Images Uploaded Data

☒ ADSL

☐ ADIS

☐ ADME

☐ ADLRE

☐ ADTTE

Data Preview for ADSL

Show 12 entries

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3	CDISCPILOT01	01-701-1028	1028	701	701	Nonrandomized High Dose	Nonrandomized High Dose	01
4	CDISCPILOT01	01-701-1033	1033	701	701	Nonrandomized Low Dose	Nonrandomized Low Dose	04
5	CDISCPILOT01	01-701-1034	1034	701	701	Nonrandomized High Dose	Nonrandomized High Dose	01

*Develop
Interactive
Dashboards
instead of Static
Tables, Listings &
Graphs!*

*R-Guru has easy to follow
steps to unravel the
complexity of R Shiny syntax!*



Mark Your Calendars! ASA Traveling Course!

Two half-days: Friday, September 19, online & Saturday, September 20, in person

SCASA is super thrilled to announce that this year we have been awarded an ASA traveling course instructed by no one else but our own immediate past president Dr. Anna Yu Lee, a founder and owner of **Concierge Mental Health & Associates**.

DATES: Friday, 9/19/2025, online & Saturday, 9/20, 2025, in person, in the **FOUNDERSPACE BUILDING** at **87 N. Raymond Ave., Pasadena, CA 91103**. Parking is available in a nearby garage at an hourly rate.

COST: \$25 Students/Retirees, \$50 general (either one or two days). We owe ASA \$25 per person regardless.

REGISTRATION: will be launched in July.

TITLE: *Statistical Therapy & Consulting: Combining Traditional and Quantitative Approaches to Provide Emotional Support in Educational & Mental Health Settings*

ABSTRACT: This seminar explores Statistical Therapy Consulting (STC), and Statistical Therapy (ST) as novel approaches to supporting existent forms of evidence-informed mental health care. The workshop begins with an overview of distinctions and similarities between psychotherapy, ST, and STC. Included is research that underscores the development of ST and STC, interactive exercises, and opportunities for group discussion. Highlighted are various applications of STC for the treatment and prevention of common mental, emotional, and relational concerns including stress, cognitive distortion, anxiety, depression, fear, and burnout. Some of the statistical tools applications include probabilistic thinking, distribution analysis, Bayesian inference, algorithmic decision-making, and data categorization analysis. Controversial and exploratory techniques such as, 'Statistics Masochistics,' are also discussed, with the focus being on integrity, transparency, ethics, and cultural diversity/respect as fundamental and integral within the delivery of all mental health services.

Bio: Dr. Anna Yu Lee holds multiple roles as Immediate Past President of the SoCal Ch. of the American Statistical Association, Adj. Professor in the School of Community & Global Health at Claremont Graduate University, and founder and senior consultant at Concierge Mental Health & Associates (CMHA). Her education and clinical training spans the fields of multicultural psychology, public health, and biostatistics, and her professional backgrounds are in counseling, residential care management, health promotion science, journalism, undergraduate/graduate instruction, and marketing. In her private practice, Dr. Yu Lee operates as a consultant, not a psychotherapist. Dr. Yu Lee's publications have appeared in journals of public health, social and behavioral health, and statistical education. She has presented to academic, clinical, and industry audiences in multiple countries in North America, Western Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East, and has taught in the Marriage & Family Therapy program in the USC Rossier School of Education, in Azusa Pacific University's MS in Biostatistics program, and UG Dept. of Mathematics, Physics, and Statistics, UG Dept. of Psychology, in addition to the UG Dept. of Psychology at Cal Poly Pomona.



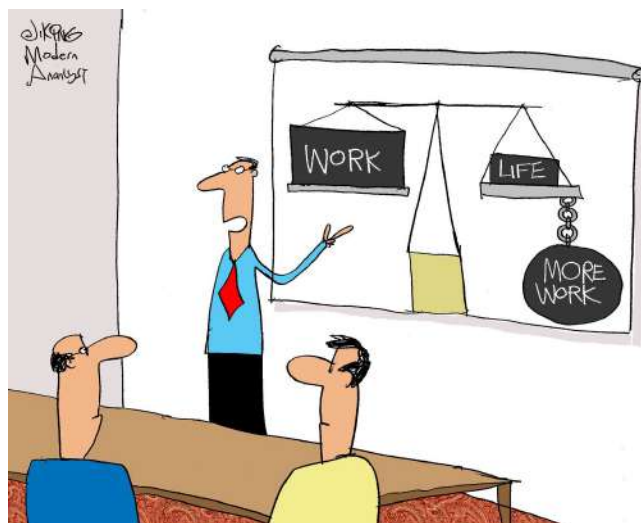
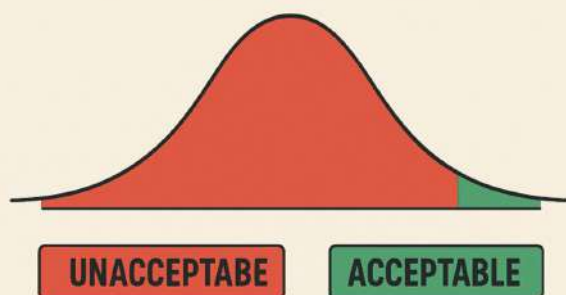
Dr. Normalcurvesaurus, Ph.D. presents

FUN FACT:

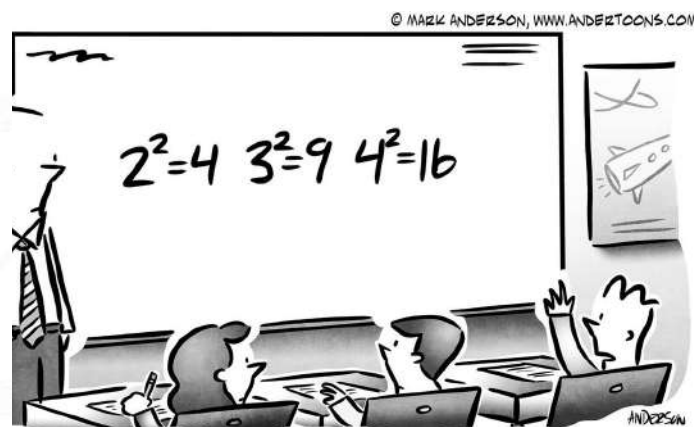
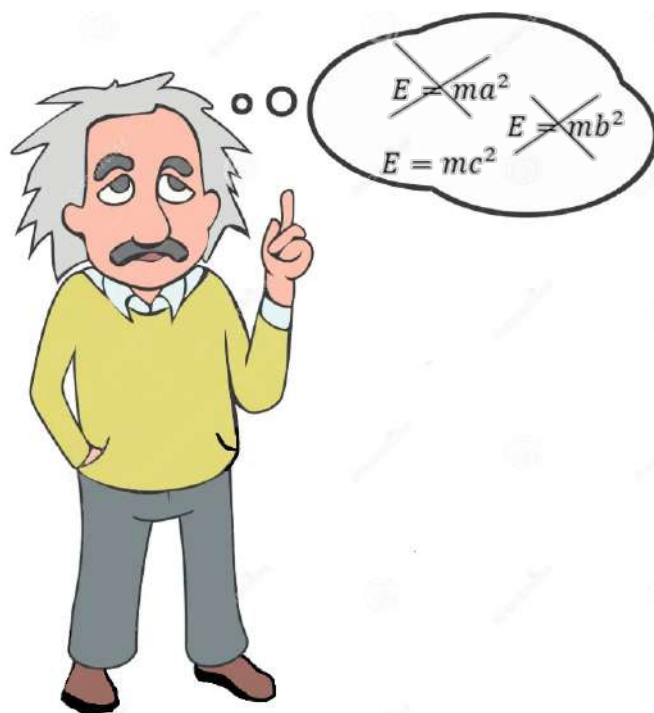
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PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS



"The good news is that we were able to solve the work-life balance problem for our analysts... with more work."



ait, we're squaring numbers now? We just figured out how to round them!"