E-Tidings Newsletter

SCASA Events and News

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2026 Biostatistics Symposium of Southern California
Post-event Summary

The 2026 Biostatistics Symposium of Southern California (BSSC) was held on January 22–23 at the Renaissance Newport Beach Hotel, welcoming more than 220 professionals from academia, industry, and regulatory agencies. The event was a tremendous success, providing a vibrant forum for networking and in-depth discussions on emerging developments in biostatistics and data science. This year's theme, *"Navigating New Frontiers: Biostatistics, AI and Regulatory Evolution in Biomedical Research,"* framed timely and thought-provoking conversations throughout the symposium.

Keynote speakers delivered insightful perspectives across a wide range of topics:

- **Harpreet Singh, MD**, Chief Medical Officer, Precision for Medicine, shared perspectives from his experience as a former FDA Oncology Director on innovating clinical trial analysis for next-generation therapeutics.

- **Artem Adrianov**, CEO of Cyntegrity, discussed strategic approaches that integrate unsupervised and supervised centralized statistical monitoring.

- **Daniel Bradbury**, Chairman and Co-Founder of Equillium, Inc., examined biotech market dynamics and key macroeconomic drivers.

- **Chito Hernandez, PhD**, Founder of StillWave and Professor of Practice at UC San Diego, explored how biostatisticians are evolving from technical contributors to strategic leaders in the age of AI.

- **Daniel L. Gillen, PhD**, Chancellor's Professor and Chair of Statistics at UC Irvine, posed critical questions around the value and application of futility bounds.

- **Ying Lu, PhD**, Professor at Stanford University and Co-Founder of Dashu, highlighted the transformative potential of real-world data in optimizing clinical trial design and analysis.

The program featured parallel tracks in clinical statistics, data science, and academic research, with 20 speakers in each track. In addition, a student poster competition and dedicated poster sessions showcased 14 posters, with seven presented each day.

We extend our sincere thanks to all SCASA members who contributed to organizing and participating in this outstanding event, and look forward to continuing this momentum and delivering an outstanding symposium again next year.

http://biostatsymposium.org/

CALL FOR SPONSORS AND MENTORS

ASA DataFest

May 1-3, 2026, at UCLA

ASA DataFest at UCLA 2026 will take place **May 1–3, 2026** in the **UCLA Ackerman Grand Ballroom,** which has hosted the event for the past four years.

DataFest is an exciting, fast-paced 48-hour data wrangling competition where undergraduate teams dive into a rich, real-world dataset and work collaboratively to uncover insights. The event is held at numerous sites across several countries, but it all began at UCLA thanks to the leadership and vision of **Dr. Robert (Rob) Gould**.

UCLA is actively **seeking sponsors**, and if you know an organization that may be interested in supporting this educational and community-centered event, please share the sponsorship page:

http://datafest.stat.ucla.edu/support-datafest/giving.

UCLA is also actively **looking for mentors** to assist student teams, and you can sign up for time slots at **https://tinyurl.com/datafest-mentor-25-26**.

If you'd like to **serve as a judge** or have any questions about the event, please contact **Dr. Linda Zanontian** at ***linda@stat.ucla.edu***.

Gareth James Appointed Dean of UCLA Anderson School of Management, effective July 1, 2026

UCLA has announced the appointment of Gareth James as the next dean of the UCLA Anderson School of Management, effective July 1, 2026. James currently serves as the John H. Harland Dean of Emory University's Goizueta Business School, where he has led a period of significant growth and innovation. In his first three years, Goizueta launched three new degree programs, established two centers, created three endowed faculty chairs, recruited 22 new full-time faculty, and increased student enrollment by 35 percent. The school's momentum is reflected in improved rankings, including a rise in the U.S. News & World Report full-time MBA ranking from #26 in 2022 to #17, and a Poets & Quants BBA ranking of #8.

Before joining Emory in 2022, James spent more than two decades at the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business as a member of the data sciences and operations faculty. There, he held the E. Morgan Stanley Chair in Business Administration and served in several senior leadership roles, including interim dean, deputy dean, and vice dean for faculty and academic affairs. He is widely regarded for his visionary leadership, data-informed decision making, strategic insight, optimism, and commitment to advancing business education and preparing future innovators.

A statistician by training, James is a highly influential scholar whose research has been cited more than 40,000 times. He is the co-author of the widely used textbook *An Introduction to Statistical Learning* and has published extensively on statistical and machine learning methodologies. His career includes leadership of multiple National Science Foundation grants, service as an associate editor for leading research journals, and recognition as a fellow of both the American Statistical Association and the Institute of Mathematical Statistics. He has also received multiple awards for research excellence.
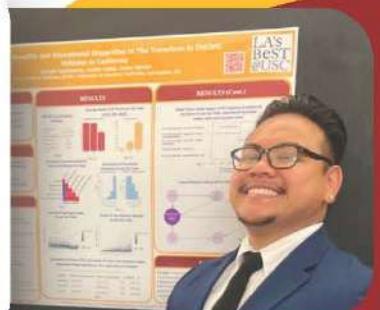
James is equally celebrated for his teaching, mentoring, and service to academic communities. He has received numerous honors for instructional innovation and excellence, including multiple Golden Apple Awards, as well as top university awards for mentoring junior faculty and graduate students. UCLA leadership expressed gratitude to the search committee and to Margaret Shih for her service as interim dean, and voiced strong confidence that James' distinguished leadership and Los Angeles roots will enable UCLA Anderson to thrive and reach new heights under his deanship.

Congratulations, Gareth !!!

https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2026/01/new-anderson-dean.html

Keck School of Medicine of USC
Department of Population and Public Health Sciences

NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

LA's BeST @USC

LA's **B**iostatistics & Data Scienc**e S**ummer **T**raining Program at the University of Southern California

Attention all mathematics, statistics, and science students seeking a summer opportunity!

What is LA's BeST @USC?

A six-week experience for math and science students to conduct research, meet public health professionals, and grow their presentation and career skills.

Tentative dates: JUNE 15 - JULY 24, 2026
APPLICATION PERIOD:
Dec. 1, 2025 - Mar 13, 2026
Offers will be made on a rolling basis.

Eligibility:
U.S. citizen or permanent resident
Completed at least 2 years of undergraduate study

What sets us apart:

- ✓ Earn College Credits
- ✓ No tuition or fees, $2.5K Stipend
- ✓ Housing & Transportation covered
- ✓ Networking & Mentorship Opportunities
- ✓ Summer in Los Angeles!

Learn health data analysis, epidemiology, clinical trials, statistical genetics and spatial statistics for geographical modeling
Train using R, a widely used software in research
Immerse in data from groundbreaking public health research studies such as the Southern California Children's Health Study

We seek students interested in applying biostatistics & data science to tackle complex health challenges encountered in different communities

*For more information and to apply, visit:
LASBEST.USC.EDU

SCASA Leadership Legacy Corner

From the list of Past Presidents of SCASA:

2023-2024 Anna Yu Lee, Claremont Graduate University

Dr. Anna Yu Lee contributed over a decade of leadership, service, and creative educational programming to the Southern California Chapter of the American Statistical Association (SCASA) from 2014 to 2025. During this time, she served as President and in numerous leadership roles, supporting students, colleagues, and mentors while promoting connections between psychology, public health, history, and philosophy.

Her long-term service includes judging, mentoring, and hosting numerous student research competitions and DataFests, including the International Science and Engineering Fair, local research events such as SCASA's annual poster competition, and most recently, *Statistical "Therapy": The Game Show*. This groundbreaking program celebrated SCASA's 100th anniversary as the first locally founded ASA chapter in the United States.

The program platformed a broad community of volunteers, students, mentors, and sponsors, highlighting data science, psychology, and public access programming. It emphasized ethical and transparent uses of statistics in mental health, inviting students and professionals to reimagine how statistical thinking can support emotional insight, decision-making, and well-being. The title itself raised thoughtful questions about what can be considered "evidence-based" in both statistics and psychology.

Dr. Yu Lee's early work in teaching statistics was motivated less by affection for the subject and more by concern over the discipline's inherently insecure foundations. Her initial focus centered on reducing statistics anxiety in university classrooms and counseling settings. In later years, she experimentally explored the reverse direction of effect, examining how statistical tools and philosophies might be applied within broader mental health contexts. Her recent work emphasizes transparency and the ethics of human and AI collaboration in data analysis and mental health practice.

During her leadership with SCASA, Dr. Yu Lee contributed to and helped coordinate many of the chapter's primary events, including Annual Kickoffs, Career Days, and student-centered programming. Across all settings, she consistently promotes curiosity and courage over boredom and fear. Among the highlights of her most recent work with the ASA, she taught ASA Traveling Courses in Mississippi-Alabama and Southern California within the past year. These courses examined both the uses and risks of statistics and artificial intelligence in mental health, supported student teams at the Los Angeles City College Datathon, and advanced public dialogue on transparency across scientific disciplines. Her teaching spans K-12, undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral, industry, and community-based settings. In 2025, she was nominated for the ASA Outstanding Teaching Award in the Health Sciences.

Additional Information

During her graduate studies and work with SCASA, Dr. Yu Lee developed a feline-based emotional assessment poster designed to support survey engagement and respondent feedback. This tool has been used at ASA conference booths, research and outreach initiatives, and mental health events locally and internationally. It is available in 13 languages and by a request at *www.AnnaYuLee.com*.

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DR. NORMALCURVESAURUS,

PH.D., PRESENTS