

# BCASA NEWSLETTER

## Boston Chapter of the American Statistical Association

*Serving*

Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont

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Homepage: <http://www.amstat.org/chapters/boston>

E-Mail: [BostonChapterASA@gmail.com](mailto:BostonChapterASA@gmail.com)

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SCHEDULED EVENTS		
Saturday, January 26, 2013	Annual Winter Potluck Dinner and Party	Natick, MA
Saturday, February 2, 2013	BCASA Retreat	Boston, MA
Monday, February 11, 2013	Mosteller Statistician of the Year Banquet	Boston, MA
Tuesday, March 12, 2013	International Year of Statistics Presentation	Northampton, MA

Event schedule at the chapter website: <http://www.amstat.org/chapters/boston>

Detailed announcements appear later in this newsletter. All events are announced in advance to members on our email list. We are currently planning events for the coming year. If you have suggestions please contact Program Chair John McKenzie, [mckenzie@babson.edu](mailto:mckenzie@babson.edu).

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## ***Mosteller Statistician of the Year Banquet***

Building the Biostatistics Pipeline: Educating the Next Generation of Biostatisticians

Lisa M. Sullivan  
Associate Dean for Education  
Professor and Chair, Department of Biostatistics  
Boston University School of Public Health

**Date:** Monday, February 11, 2013

**Time:** Social 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:30 pm, Presentation 7:00 pm

**Location:** 670 Albany Street Building 107/108, Boston University Medical Campus, 670 Albany Street, Boston, MA 02118

**Directions and Parking:** <http://www.bumc.bu.edu/about/map-directions/>

**Registration:** <http://bcasa2013feb.eventbrite.com/> by February 4

**Cost:** Dinner: \$20 for chapter members; \$25 for non-members; students free. Presentation: free.

**Abstract:** Almost every day, another finding related to human health is reported in the news. A new drug shows promise for treating Alzheimer's disease. A study in a leading medical journal suggests an association between a father's age and risk of autism, while another finds evidence that certain genetic variants are associated with heart disease. An expert panel recommends that common tests for screening for ovarian cancer should be stopped, as they may do more harm than good. Behind all of these discoveries is *Biostatistics* – the science of development of statistical theory and methods for application to data-driven challenges in the health sciences. Biostatisticians work on interesting projects like these, combining statistical, mathematical, and scientific principles to solve important medical and public health problems. Biostatistics is an exciting field for people with strong quantitative skills who want to make a difference in the lives of others. Opportunities for biostatisticians with advanced training are plentiful and growing. However, despite the widespread demand for biostatisticians across the nation's health research enterprise, U.S. students are not pursuing training in biostatistics in the numbers required. Why is this? How serious a problem is it? What is being done? We need to commit as a field to promote more vigorously the rich and rewarding opportunities available now and in the future for people with training in biostatistics or statistics and we must continue to develop innovative ways to introduce biostatistics to young people across the educational continuum.

**Award history:** Every year the Boston Chapter presents the Statistician of the Year award to a distinguished statistician who has made exceptional contributions to the field of statistics and has shown outstanding service to the statistical community. In 1997, this award was renamed the Mosteller Statistician of the Year award in honor of the 80th birthday of its first recipient, Fred Mosteller.

Individuals from academia, industry, and government who have contributed to the Boston Chapter are considered for the award. For a list of past award winners, see <http://amstat.org/chapters/boston/awards.html>.



## ***International Year of Statistics Presentation***

Mark Hansen  
Director, David and Helen Gurley Brown Institute for Media Innovation  
Professor of Journalism, Columbia University

**Location:** Ford Hall 240 (Clark Science Center), Smith College, Northampton, MA

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, March 12, 2013 at 7:00pm

**Title:** Information Performance

Far from virtual, inert quantities, data exert real forces in the physical world. They are incendiaries wielding the power of once-secret diplomatic cables; mores initiated with the invention of a privacy setting; and physical laws shaping the built environment with the quiet, persistent action of zoning regulations. Data rarely act in isolation, gaining power through combination, "join"ing forces and moving into new terrain. Their presence is thought to guarantee transparency, their absence is seen as suspicious, and restrictions on their movement appear to be temporary, at best.

In this talk, Mark Hansen will take a broad view of data (and companion ideas like "algorithm," "model" and "visualization") and explore their use in creative practices. He will present a selection of work from his artistic collaborations over the last decade -- From a permanent display in the lobby of the New York Times building and a new work for the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York City; to a performance designed as part of the New York Public Library's centennial celebration last June. He will tie these artworks to a larger movement in which data and data processing are seeping into almost every academic discipline on campus. His talk will end with a proposal to aggregate the data practices from science, the humanities, and even art and design under a single umbrella -- Data science.

Mark Hansen joined Columbia Journalism School in July of 2012, after a decade of shuttling between the west and east coasts. In Los Angeles, he held appointments in the Department of Statistics, the Department of Design Media Arts and the Department of Electrical Engineering at UCLA -- literally forming a triangulation of data, art and technology -- and was a Co-PI for the Center for Embedded Networked Sensing, an NSF Science and Technology Center devoted to the study of sensor networks. While in New York, Hansen was a long-standing visiting researcher at the New York Times R&D Lab and a consultant with HBO Sports. Hansen works with data in an essentially journalistic practice, crafting stories through algorithm, computation and visualization. In addition to his technical work, Hansen also has an active art practice involving the presentation of data for the public. His work with Ben Rubin at EAR Studio has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Whitney Museum, the Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, the London Science Museum, the Cartier Foundation in Paris, and the lobby of the New York Times building (permanent display) in Manhattan. Hansen holds a PhD and MA in Statistics from the University of California, Berkeley and a BS in Applied Math from the University of California, Davis.

The talk and Mark's visit to the Five Colleges is organized by the Five College Statistics Program, and co-sponsored by Athena Health, the Boston Chapter of the American Statistical Association (proudly serving members in Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island) as well as the Smith College Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

We hope that you, your colleagues and students will be able to attend. For more information, please contact Nicholas Horton, [nhorton@smith.edu](mailto:nhorton@smith.edu).

## ***Annual Winter Potluck Dinner and Party***

Date: Saturday, January 26, 2013

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: MathWorks, 3 Apple Hill Dr., Natick, MA 01760

<http://www.mathworks.com/company/aboutus/directions.html>

Summary: Information and sign-up by Thursday January 24 at

<http://www.luckypotluck.com/potluck/BCASAJanuary2013WinterParty>

This is a wonderful opportunity to renew contact with some members of the BCASA statistical community and meet other members for the first time. Please provide your name, how many people will be in your party, and what you would like to bring (appetizer, entrée, side dish, salad, or dessert). Also, leave either phone or email contact information so that you can be reached in case of weather problems. However, the site has garage parking so a cancellation is unlikely. The sign-up web page also includes an area where you can leave messages, including offers of a ride or requests for a ride.

## ***BCASA Retreat***

Date: Saturday, February 2, 2013

Time: 9:30 am to 4:00 pm

Location: Lefavour Hall (Glass Library Tower) Room 428, Simmons College, 300 The Fenway, Boston MA 02115

Directions

by car: [www.simmons.edu/overview/directions/#car](http://www.simmons.edu/overview/directions/#car)

by public transportation: [www.simmons.edu/overview/directions/#public](http://www.simmons.edu/overview/directions/#public)

Cost: Retreat, Food, and Drink are free.

Possible limited support for the cost of transportation and parking, especially for individuals carpooling.

Registration: <http://bcasa2013retreat.eventbrite.com/> by February 1

Description: Do you want to help improve BCASA? Then attend this event which will discuss strategy, build stronger teams, and formulate goals for the Chapter. Among the items to be discussed are BCASA events related to the International Year of Statistics in 2013 and the 175th Anniversary of the American Statistical Association in 2014 and ones that will appeal to statisticians in all five member states (Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont), organizational structures that will effectively implement these events (officers, committees, etc.), communication strategies (e-mail, newsletter, website, etc.), and recruitment and retention of BCASA members. For further information, please contact John McKenzie at [mckenzie@babson.edu](mailto:mckenzie@babson.edu) or 781-239-4479.

## ***Statistics Career Day***

We are pleased to announce that the BCASA will hold its Statistics Career Day again this year. In the past two years we have organized for the high school students with Advanced Placement Statistics courses and we plan to organize for high school students again in 2014. This year we are targeting college students for the event on Saturday, April 27, 2013, at Simmons College. The aim of the event would be to highlight the endless opportunities with a career in Statistics. The undergraduates will be able to learn what a career in statistics might be like and how to proceed with such a career. We will have speakers from different areas of application of statistics as well as a panel of graduate students.

We need help from statisticians and students from all areas and with varied interests. Your participation will make a huge difference. We are also looking for suggestions for a vibrant keynote speaker who will be engaging the undergraduate students. If you are interested in participating or have any suggestions, we would like to hear from you. Please contact:

Lisa Mukherjee: [lisamuk@hotmail.com](mailto:lisamuk@hotmail.com)

Bob Goldman: [rgoldman@simmons.edu](mailto:rgoldman@simmons.edu)

Miriam Chernoff: [miriam.chernoff@juno.com](mailto:miriam.chernoff@juno.com)

## ***Event Funding: Request For Proposals (RFPS)***

The Boston Chapter of ASA is accepting proposals for supplementary support funding to plan and conduct events with a statistical theme. Qualified events include short courses and other educational events but are not limited to these. The RFP is open until further notice.

Proposal requirements and additional information:

- Proposals should be no more than 3 pages in length with 2 pages being a description of the program, date and time, program sponsors, location and information on parking or public transportation, targeted audience/expected attendees, rationale for why the program is important and will be attractive to potential attendees, and people responsible for program planning and conduct. The last page is a budget plan.
- Funding for up to \$750 can be requested.
- The event must be open to all chapter members.
- The event must be advertised in the chapter newsletter.
- It is expected that the BCASA is not the only resource supporting the event (e.g., a department or other sponsor should be involved in organization or nominal fees to attendees should be charged).
- Any fees charged to attendees should be reasonable, with special discounts for students. The expectation is that the event will be affordable to statisticians.
- A report of the event must be submitted to BCASA upon completion of the event with possible publication of the event in the BCASA newsletter. The report should include an estimate on the number of attendees, attendee comments, an evaluation of the program, and a financial summary.
- Unused funds should be returned to the BCASA.
- Proposals will be reviewed by members of the Planning Committee of the BCASA. Applicants will be contacted shortly after the Planning Committee meeting that follows application submission.
- Questions should be directed to Scott Evans, Ph.D. ([evans@sdac.harvard.edu](mailto:evans@sdac.harvard.edu)).
- Proposals should be electronically submitted at least 6 weeks prior to the program to Scott Evans, Ph.D. ([evans@sdac.harvard.edu](mailto:evans@sdac.harvard.edu)).

## ***Boston Meetings***

The following three annual meetings will take place in Boston during 2013:

- The American Association for the Advancement of Science, February 14-18. For more information, please visit <http://www.aaas.org/meetings/2013/>.
- 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Clinical Trials, May 19-22. For more information, please visit <http://www.sctweb.org/public/meetings/2013/home.cfm>.
- 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Drug Information Association, June 23-27. For more information, please visit <http://www.diahome.org/en/Meetings-and-Training/Find-Meetings-and-Training/Meeting-Details.aspx?ProductID=30075&EventType=Annual%20Meeting>

## **NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Member News**

Vanessa Xanthakis, Vice President of the BCASA, was awarded the National Center's Clinical Research Program by the American Heart Association to evaluate novel biomarkers as screening tools for precursors of heart failure. The award is for two years. Congratulations Vanessa!

### **Article in Amstat News by Nicholas Horton**

Please check out the news piece written by Nicholas Horton, a very interesting article describing his time working for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, titled "How I Spent My Year at the Bureau of Labor Statistics".

### **BCASA Planning Committee**

The BCASA Planning Committee meets about once every six weeks. Please join us and have an impact on chapter events and activities. Dinner is provided. For more information contact Chapter President Tom Lane, [tlane@alum.mit.edu](mailto:tlane@alum.mit.edu). Our next meeting will be an all-day retreat. See the event description elsewhere in this newsletter.

### **Nominations for Chapter Officers**

Several BCASA officer terms are up for election this year for terms starting on January 1, 2014. These are Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary (two-year terms).

We typically hold elections at the final event of the academic year. If you are interested in nominating yourself or anyone else for these positions, please contact current President Tom Lane ([tlane@alum.mit.edu](mailto:tlane@alum.mit.edu)) or Past President Dominique Haughton ([dhaughton@bentley.edu](mailto:dhaughton@bentley.edu)). New volunteers are always welcome and greatly needed.

### **Mu Sigma Rho**

The BCASA encourages all faculty teaching statistics in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine to consider nominating undergraduate and graduate statistics students for membership in Mu Sigma Rho, the national honorary society for statistics. The deadline isn't until March 1, 2013, but nominations are accepted at any time. Inductees will receive a free membership in the ASA and BCASA and a subscription to Chance magazine. This is a great way to encourage your top students to pursue a career in statistics and to introduce them to many useful resources and job opportunities. The process is straightforward for both the nominator and nominee. Nominators should fill out the online nomination form at [http://www.colby.edu/academics\\_cs/mu\\_sigma\\_rho/msrnom.cfm](http://www.colby.edu/academics_cs/mu_sigma_rho/msrnom.cfm). A transcript (unofficial is fine) and \$5 induction fee for each nominee then need to be mailed to:

Liam O'Brien  
Department of Mathematics and Statistics  
Colby College  
5838 Mayflower Hill  
Waterville, ME 04901-8858

The nominee only needs to confirm his or her interest and to approve his or her transcripts being forwarded.

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*The BCASA Newsletter is published four times during the academic year and is emailed to current BCASA members. Send comments or suggestions to any of the individuals listed below.*

<b>BCASA OFFICERS</b>	
President, 2013-14	Tom Lane, The MathWorks
Program Chair, 2013-14	John McKenzie, Babson College
Vice-President, 2013-14	Vanessa Xanthakis, Boston University
Secretary, 2013-14	Sachiko Miyahara, Harvard School of Public Health
Treasurer, 2013-14	Huichao Chen, Harvard School of Public Health
Council of Chapters Representative, 2013-15	James MacDougall, Ironwood Pharmaceuticals
Past President	Dominique Haughton, Bentley University
Webmaster, 2013-14	Ching-Ti Liu, Boston University
Newsletter Editor, 2013-14	Ming Yang, Harvard School of Public Health

<b>BCASA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON</b>	
<i>Mu Sigma Rho</i>	Liam O'Brien, Colby College