ANNUAL NEWSLETTER
BRINGING WORMS NEWS TO YOU
DECEMBER, 2017

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WORMS at INFORMS 2017

Panel: Female Professional Development  
*Monday, Oct. 23, 11:00-12:30, 360D*

Panel: Managing the Work/Life Balance  
*Monday, Oct. 23, 1:30-3, 360D*

Panel: Diversification  
Co-Sponsored Event with MIF and JFIG  
*Tuesday, Oct. 24, 1:30-12, 351F*

WORMS Business Meeting  
*Sunday, Oct. 22, 6:15pm-7:15pm, 360D*

Networking Reception  
*Monday, Oct. 23, 8:00pm-11:00pm*  
Grotto Downtown

WORMS Luncheon  
*Tuesday, Oct. 24, 12:30-1:30pm, Hilton - Ballroom of Americas*

WINNERS!!!  
**Annual Meeting:**  
Doctoral Colloquium Support  
Kathryn Smith, North Carolina State University

Family Care Travel Fund  
Zhijie Dong, Texas State University  
Yaarit Even, Columbia Business School  
Irem Orgut, Lenovo  
Umit D. Tursun, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign  
Yueran Zhuo, Umass Amherst

Monsanto Travel Award  
Shadi Hassani Goodarzi, North Carolina State University  
Ying Zhang, The University of North Carolina

**Analytics Meeting:**  
Professional Colloquium Support  
Yulia Vorotyntseva, The University of Texas at Dallas

Family Care Travel Fund  
Jennie Hu, SAS Institute  
Durai Sundaramoorthi, Washington University in St. Louis  
Qinqin Zhang

WORMS had organized several exciting events this year at the INFORMS Annual Meeting in Houston. Dean Eric Johnson (Vanderbilt University) chaired the WORMS panel on female professional development. The panelists were Rachel Rong Chen (University of California-Davis), Anahita Khojandi (University of Tennessee-Knoxville), Vidya Mani (Pennsylvania State University), Tava Olsen (University of Auckland), Aleda Roth (Clemson University) and Rohit Verma (Cornell University). The panel mostly focused on issues faced by women. A group of dynamic women shared, with the attendees, stories and lessons learnt from their own experiences. There was active audience participation. The session ended with a lunch buffet. The second WORMS panel on managing the work/life balance, was chaired by Xiajun Amy Pan (University of Florida). The panelists were Kyle D. Cattani (Indiana University), Irina Dolinskaya (National Science Foundation), Karen L. Donohue (University of Minnesota), Gokce Esenduran (Purdue University), Burcu B. Keskin (University of Alabama) and Haoying Sun (University of Kentucky). The panel focused on issues such as dual career management, care of kids, time management etc. Anyone who brought a male colleague along to either session got a free WORMS mug! WORMS luncheon was a great success with the award ceremony. We were honored to present the 2017 WORMS Award for the Advancement of Women in Operations Research and Management Science to Prof. Ruth Williams.
WORMS Networking Reception
This year the WORMS networking reception took place on the evening of Monday 22 October at the Grotto Downtown restaurant, which was just outside of the Convention Center where the INFORMS annual meeting was taking place in Downtown Houston. About 200 people joined in for the party, making it one of the best-attended off-site INFORMS-sponsored events to take place this year. The guests enjoyed delicious drinks, such as Grotto’s signature Peach Bellini cocktails. They also helped themselves to a buffet of savory foods including flat breads, mini paninis, meat skewers and arancini’s rice balls, which was followed by an array of tasty desserts including brownies, cheesecake and cookies. WORMS members and non-members, female and male, professors and Ph.D. students, academics and industry representatives, were seen mingling around, having a relaxed time, with many of them preferring the outside patio to the inside reception room on this pleasantly warm Fall evening. The party went on until shortly after 11pm and, as guests were leaving the premises, some whispered that this had been the best INFORMS party they ever took part in! We at WORMS look forward to hosting another successful networking event next year and look forward to seeing you all there!

WORMS establishes its presence at the Analytics Conference
WORMS recognizes the growing number of women practitioners in the analytics space. As a way to continue supporting the community of OR/MS women, WORMS offered multiple opportunities to attendees of the 2017 INFORMS Analytics conference to engage and learn about the benefits of our membership. Extending our membership to those outside of academia will enable us to offer a diverse and broader range of mentoring expertise to those of you actively seeking it.

This year, WORMS invited folks for coffee and conversation during the Women in OR/MS networking breakfast. The programming during the event involved watching TED Talk videos on topics pertaining to the dearth of women leaders and the importance of gender equality. Participants found the videos both entertaining and relevant and it stimulated interesting discussions.

Feedback from one of the participants stated, “It was a great discussion with other women with similar experiences. I enjoyed hearing about strategies they’ve developed to move forward in their careers, as well as having an opportunity to share with those who are new in their careers.”

The success of this session, led us to recommend that WORMS make it a signature event at future Analytics conferences, similar to the WORMS luncheon at the Annual Meeting.

WORMS also prides itself in providing deserving candidates the opportunity to attend INFORMS conferences to meet, share and collaborate with peers and experts in their field. This year, with the generous contributions of our sponsors, we were able to support, Ms. Yulia Vorotyntseva, a doctoral student from The University of Texas at Dallas, to attend the INFORMS Professional Colloquium. We also awarded childcare travel support to the following individuals: Mr. Durai Sundaramoorthi, Washington University in St. Louis. Ms. Jennie Hu, SAS Institute Inc. and Ms. Qin Qin Zhang, Microsoft.

We look forward to enhancing our offerings at future conferences and would love to hear your thoughts and suggestions.
An Informal Chat with our 2017 WORMS Awardee

Prof. Ruth Williams

University of California, San Diego
Mathematics Department

1. What do you think was your biggest achievement in the area of OR/MS?

One of my main efforts has been to develop a theory for reflected Brownian motion in the orthant and associated limit theorems showing that such stochastic processes arise as heavy traffic approximations to multiclass queuing networks. Building on this, I have had great fun solving some performance and control problems for stochastic networks arising in OR/MS.

2. What is one advice that you will give to the students in this field?

A strong grounding in mathematics provides a great foundation for studying problems in OR/MS. If you are good at math, OR/MS is a great career choice with many different avenues to pursue.

3. If we were sitting here a year from now celebrating what a great year it’s been for you, what would we be celebrating?

I would hope we would be celebrating some great new theorems I had proved in conjunction with my collaborators, several of whom are women.

4. What do you think are the most significant barriers for women/minorities in STEM careers? How could they be remedied?

There is still significant attrition at all stage of the career pipeline for women. Collectively, we can make a difference. In my own experience, the efforts that have the most impact are the individual interactions we have with women in the formative stages of their careers. It could be as simple as taking the time to talk with high school students who have received limited advice on STEM career possibilities, or offering advice on a junior colleague’s first grant proposal, or suggesting one of your women colleagues for an invited talk, or for an award. It all adds up, in fact, like a branching process, it multiplies.

5. What is your perspective on how 20 years of WORMS have impacted the women in OR/MS and what would you like to see for future of Women in OR/MS?

There are certainly more women in OR/MS than there were 20 years ago and as a consequence, one feels less isolated. WORMS has, and continues to play, a very important role in encouraging talented women to pursue and excel in their careers. WORMS provides a key forum and support network for women to come together, to share experiences, to exchange ideas and information, and to provide encouragement to one another. In the future, I would like to see the day when women are so plentiful in OR/MS that having a woman professor or boss or CEO or President will seem entirely natural.

6. What interests do you have outside of work?

I like the outdoors and enjoy walking on the beach and hiking.
Thank You, 2017 Sponsors!!!

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WORMS Mission

• Encourage all forms of support for women’s careers in OR/MS, and to publicize women’s successes
• Facilitate communication among women in the field of OR/MS about career opportunities and challenges
• Encourage discussion and interaction among individuals having interest in the issues facing women in relation to the profession of OR/MS
• Encourage interest among women in the field of OR/MS, and
• Advise the INFORMS Board on issues facing women in the profession of OR/MS and to keep the Board apprised

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

✓ Mentorship network – meet other WORMS members and learn from their experiences
✓ Family care travel fund – help cover family care costs when attending the Annual Meeting
✓ Student travel award – offset costs for graduate students traveling to conferences
✓ Job opportunities – discover new job postings or advertise for open positions
✓ Resources and support – access articles and tools for women in OR/MS, STEM fields
✓ WORMS Award – celebrate significant contributions towards the advancement of women

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