Spring in Statistics

UC Riverside Department of Statistics Department Newsletter

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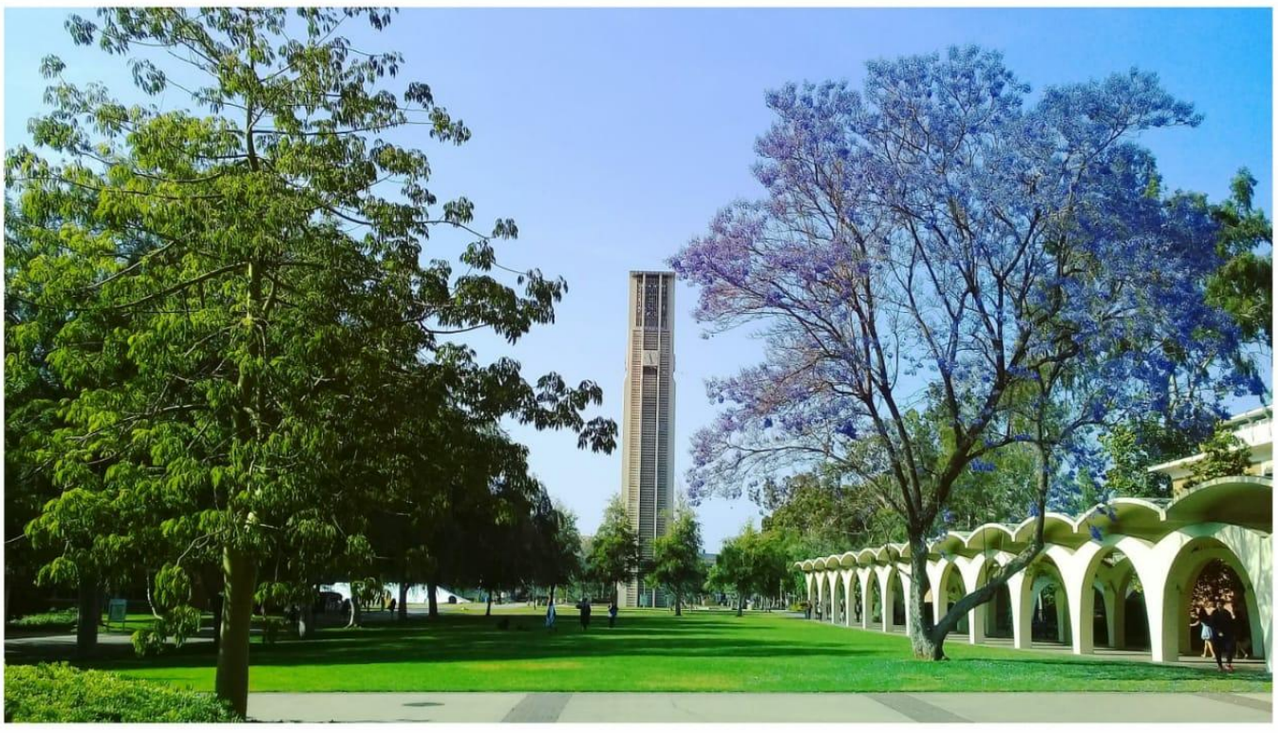
As a statistician I think a super important thing is knowing the difference between statistical significance and practical significance. It's very important to understand the field in order to make well informed decisions. Also thanks to all of my UCR professors, they were a main reason I decided to further my stats education.

- Mirella Rodriguez, MS BS



Photographer: Debaleena Sain

Faculty Spotlight

Esra Kürüm

Where did you receive your graduate degree?
I received my Ph.D. in Statistics from Penn State University.

Did you work anywhere before UCR? If so, where and what did you do there?
I was a Postdoctoral Associate in the Department of Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases at Yale University. I worked on building novel statistical methods to measure the efficacy of pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (PCV 7 and PCV 13) in the U.S. and developing countries.

What kind of research have you done? How can your research be applied to other data sets?
The main focus of my research is on building novel models for repeated measures/longitudinal data and jointly modeling mixed outcomes such as survival and longitudinal responses. Specifically, I work on modeling temporal trends in the data and exploring relationships between variables that change over time. I have collaborated with researchers in various fields including social sciences, stem-cell biology, and medical fields such as aging, infectious disease, obstetrics and gynecology, ophthalmology, and rheumatology. In my experience, the motivation to introduce new methodologies stems from exposure to real-life problems through interdisciplinary collaborations. Such interactions have been the driving force of my past and current research.

How did your interest in statistics begin?
It began during my undergraduate education. I entered the statistics program mainly for the computing component and when I realized the wide range of areas statistics can be applied to and how powerful statistics is, I wanted to learn more and therefore, I applied to graduate programs in Statistics.

What advice would you give to other graduate students?
Definitely have a support network composed of people going through the same challenges as you are. It is always good to have people that you can tackle challenges together, help each other out, and also celebrate each other's successes. This network does not need to be just during your graduate studies, try to keep the network alive even after you graduate.
If you can, have a mentor, someone senior that you can go to when you need advice/help, they don't need to be in statistics, and you don't need to have only one mentor. None of us needs to reinvent the wheel, be always open to seeking advice/help whenever you need it.
Similarly, have mentee(s), share what you learned through your journey.
Start thinking about what you want to do after your graduate program as early as possible. Look for internship opportunities, teach during summer, etc.

What hobbies have you recently picked up?
I recently started doing woodworking, so far, I made two live edge end tables, next project is a coffee table, we'll see how that will go.

Graduating Students

Tyler Brannan
Degree: PhD
Advisor: Dr. Yehua Li
Favorite Memory: Playing racquetball and tennis at the recreation center.
Advice: Keep searching for the answer and looking at only what needs to be done that day.
Future Plans: Working at UnitedHealthcare as a Senior Statistician and Actuarial Consultant.
Favorite Food Place: Rice & Spice Thai Cuisine

Kim Phan
Degree: MS
Favorite Memory: Making friends from a wide range of backgrounds and ages! I get to meet people who already had experience in finance, or even worked in a government office. No matter how different everyone is, I feel the support from my peers and I know that I can rely on them!
Advice: Ask questions to your peers. Your peers are going on a similar degree path and may even help you more than you thought!
Future Plans: Starting a new job as a Statistical Programming Analyst at Edwards Lifesciences in Irvine, CA. While working, I plan to keep my physical activity up by running 5 miles 4 times a week. Nothing makes me more fulfilled to know that I reached my goal of completing 20 miles at the end of every week!
Favorite Food Place: Heroes Restaurant and Brewery. No other place has the largest portions for the price, especially with their generous side of French Fries!

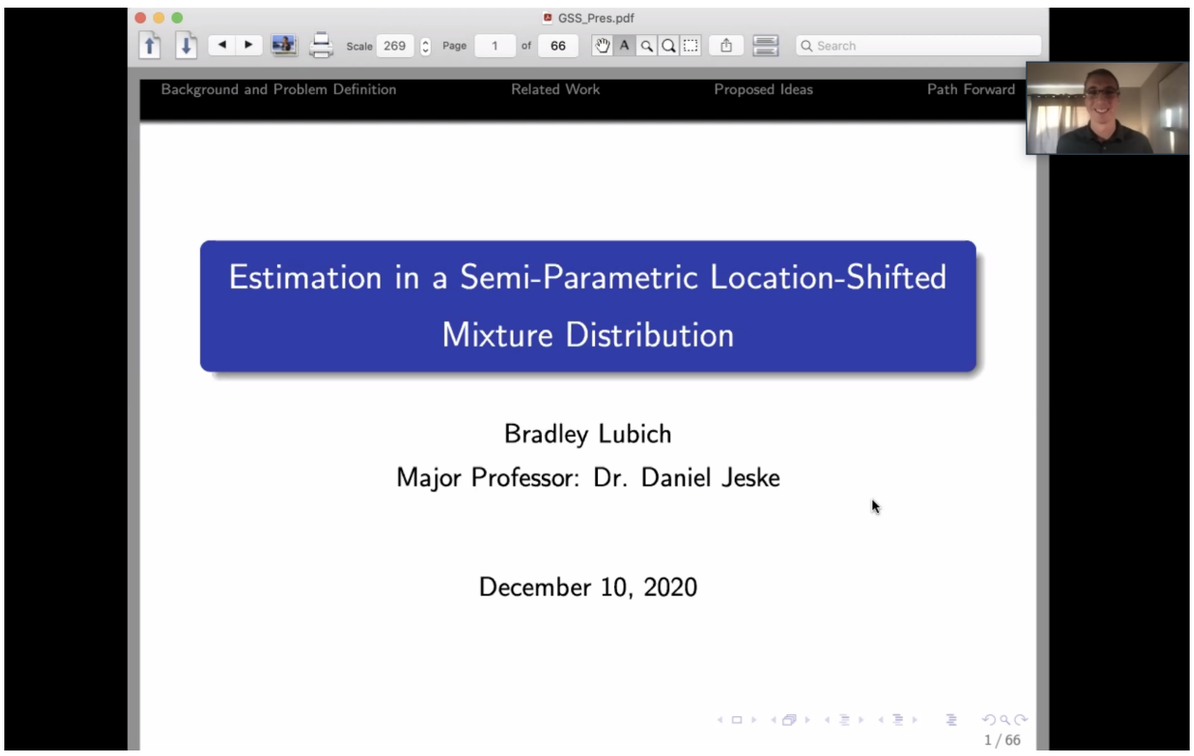
Graduating Students

Jinhui Yang
Degree: PhD
Advisor: Dr. James Flegal
Favorite Memory: My first TA lab
Advice: Don't worry, be happy.
Future Plans: I am going to be a data scientist at Amazon.
Favorite Food Place: Zizi BBQ House (near University Village)

Graduate Student Seminar

A Seminar for Graduate Students

The GSS series is an opportunity for graduate students in our department to showcase some of the cool things they are doing, gain presentation practice, and get to know each other. The presentations can be on a variety of topics, including research, projects, internships, a topic you wanted to investigate, a paper that you found interesting, and more. Anything that is appropriate for the graduate-student level audience that could be of interest to the graduate students of this department is welcomed.



The GSS welcomes, and ENCOURAGES, anyone who is interested to attend. This includes undergraduates, faculty, and staff. This is open to ALL graduate students. We are hoping to get a variety of topics and perspectives. Please email **ucr.grad.stat@gmail.com** with your name as soon as possible if you would be willing to put together a presentation, we would be delighted to have you.

NISS

National Institute of Statistical Sciences (NISS) Affiliation

Our department is an affiliate of the National Institute of Statistical Sciences (NISS, niss.org). Through this affiliation, we have access to several events (https://www.niss.org/meet-recordings) including conferences (https://www.niss.org/first-canssi-niss-health-data-science-workshop-full-program), career fairs (https://www.niss.org/meet-recordings#career-fairs), and tutorials (https://www.niss.org/news/victor-lo-sets-stage-new-series-tutorials-essentials-data-science-business). Some of these events are marked as affiliate fund eligible indicating that participants from NISS affiliates can get reimbursed after attending the event; for more information on this, please send an email to our department's affiliate liaison, Dr. Esra Kurum (esra.kurum@ucr.edu). Graduate students can also join the NISS Graduate Student Network (https://sites.google.com/view/nissgradstudentnetwork/), which is established in 2020 to help graduate students tackle challenges of their programs and share their experiences. Through this network, in addition to connecting with their peers in other academic institutions, students can organize events, discuss career paths, and share internship/research/teaching experiences. Upcoming NISS events include the first graduate student conference (https://www.niss.org/events/niss-graduate-student-research-conference) and COPSS-NISS COVID-19 Data Science Webinar Series (https://www.niss.org/events/copss-niss-covid-19-data-science-webinar-series-10). Follow https://www.niss.org/events for more on upcoming NISS events.

HiSS Year in Review

A conversation with co-Presidents Phoebe Ly and Christian Dueñas:

What is your best memory of HiSS this past year?
Our favorite memories were putting together the Coffee Hours and Undergraduate Research talk. It was really awesome to see students engaged. The Smash Bros. tournament was really fun as well.

How was your experience with DataFest?
Datafest was stressful, yet fun. There were moments where we had no idea what we were doing, but other moments where we felt like true data scientists.

What skills did you gain from the activities you've participated in?
Being involved in HiSS taught us a lot about leadership. We really had to focus on communication and organization. These are the skills that really helped us succeed in other aspects of undergrad, such as research and internships.

What advice would you give younger HiSS members?
HiSS is one of those things where the more you put in, the more you get out. We really recommend you participate as much as possible so that you can get to know your peers, professors, and help foster a community.

Women in Data Science

Statement from Kim Phan
A brief description of the event is that WiDS Riverside is an independent event that is organized by UC Riverside as part of the annual WiDS worldwide conference organized by Stanford University, which features outstanding women doing outstanding work in the field of data science.

The highlight of the event is the variety of panels ranging from professors and graduate students panel to tutorials in data analysis with R and Python. Being able to combine efforts from the Statistics and Computer Science Departments, WiDS is able to not only share the capabilities of each speaker but also inspire participants to challenge themselves in managing as well as analyzing data. The strengths from both Computer Science and Statistics are integrated together to share the applicability and impact in real-life problems. This event shows that there is much more than just collecting, transforming, and analyzing data.

I was able to have the opportunity to host a R tutorial with the topic of Advanced Data Analysis using R. Within the time, I covered the various applications of regression, from simple linear to logistic regression. Through these topics, I used examples such as predicting the price of a diamond to predicting the survival outcome of passengers from the Titanic. Being able to share my knowledge helps me strengthen my communication skills in sharing ideas and conveying theory. Looking back at this event, this has been a wonderful opportunity for me to share my passion in analyzing data and I hope to see more similar events in the future!

Accomplishments

Christian Dueñas	I got admitted to the PhD program at UCR
Phoebe Ly	Made it out alive
Kim Phan	Running 5 miles 4 times a week!
Osvaldo Ramirez	I got accepted into LA's Biostatistics Education Summer Training program at the University of Southern California

HiSS Senior Showcase

Dung Dinh

Future Plans: Searching for a job in analytics, marketing, or consulting. Travelling and tasting coffee from all over the world!

Christian Dueñas

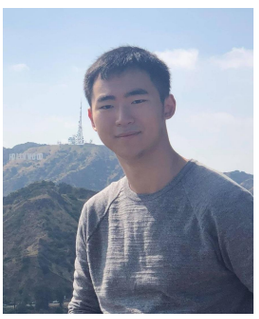
Future Plans: Coming back to UCR for a PhD in Applied Statistics this Fall. Continue making games during my spare time.

Phoebe Ly

Future Plans: Participating in Stanford's (wow) SURGE program this Summer to perform research in environmental sciences. Planning on applying to grad school next Fall. Looking to get a fun part-time job at a coffee shop inbetween!

Emily Ouyang

Future Plans: Returning to UCR for a PhD in Applied Statistics this Fall. Eventually perform research in the field of Education!



Bailey Zhang

Future Plans: Heading off to Pepperdine University to get a Masters in Business Administration. Working towards starting a business!

Fall 2021 Reopening Q&A

Q: If undergraduate (or graduate) students are uncooperative with wearing masks, what are the steps to take as TAs?

A: It is likely that by June 15 and most likely by July 15, CDPH/Cal OSHA (aka CA) will relax masking and physical distancing. It is not clear yet if UCOP will hold us to local requirements (i.e., Riverside County) or have UC-wide mandates. Please stay tuned.

Q: Will there be a limit on the number of students in a classroom (based on classroom size)?

A: For classes with enrollments above 80 students, the maximum allowable density will be 50% of room capacity. For classes with enrollments between 35 and 80 students, the maximum allowable density will be 67% of room capacity. For classes with enrollments below 35 students, normal density (full room capacity) will be allowed. These limits will be adjusted as needed to be consistent with revised state and county public health guidance.

Q: How will courses be determined to allow in-class instruction?

A: Department Chairs and directors will work with their faculty to determine a mix of 75-80% in-person courses and 20-25% remote courses for each department or program. For Fall, STAT155, STAT48, STAT100A, STAT100B will be online and all other classes will be in person.

Q: If students are uncomfortable attending class in-person, will there be an option for recorded lectures/virtual learning?

A: Remote options are not required for in-person instruction in fall, but they are strongly encouraged to extend access to more students when circumstances warrant. The decision to offer a remote option will be made by each instructor, in consultation with their chair or program director.

Q: Should a student be concerned they have COVID-19, what accommodations can students expect if they miss class/are unable to attend lectures?

A: The student needs to discuss with the instructor for appropriate accommodation.

Q: Are students still required to wear facial coverings/maintain social distance in the classroom?

A: See answer for question 1.

Q: Will the Statistics department enforce other measures, in addition to the UC mandated procedures for Fall Quarter in-class instruction?

A: Statistics department will closely follow the UC and campus guideline.

Q: Will students who opt not to come back to campus due to concerns over COVID be allowed to attend lecture remotely in the next academic (2021-2022) year?

A: If a student opts not to come back to campus, then he/she can only sign up the classes with remote option. Students enrolled in in-person classes will be expected to attend in-person unless the course offers a remote option.

The links below provide more return to campus information.

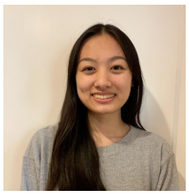
Answers to instructional FAQs are here:
https://campusreturn.ucr.edu/instructional-continuity

Webinars with the latest updates:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuH79jyxFwA&t=56s

Important Dates

First Day of Fall Quarter	Sept 20, 2021
First Day of Fall Class	Sept 23, 2021
Academic and Administrative Holidays	Nov 11, Nov 25-26, 2021
Add/Drop Date Deadline	Oct 8, 2021
Last Day to Change Grading Basis	Oct 15, 2021
Last Day of Instruction	Dec 3, 2021
Final's Week	Dec 4-10, 2021
First Day of Winter Quarter	Jan 3, 2022
First Day of Winter Class	Jan 3, 2022

HiSS Incoming Officers



Carmen Kha, Co-President

Statistical Interest: Finance, tech, and real estate

Hobbies: Watching cooking videos, listening to true crime podcasts, and painting

Arun Premanand, Co-President

Statistical Interests: I'm interested in the application of statistics in machine learning. I enjoy creating predictive models and am currently trying to create a stock recommender engine based on historical data.

Eric Yun, Vice President of External Affairs

Statistical Interests: Business, stocks, finance, data science

Hobbies: Reading, cooking, games, fitness

Lauren Flemmer, Vice President of Internal Affairs

Statistical Interests: Data science + machine learning

Tobias Rasmussen, Events Coordinator

Statistical Interests: Applying stats to research and public policy

Sanjana Rajagopal, Outreach Coordinator

Hobbies: Playing games, watching and reviewing movies.

GSA Incoming Officers

Bradley Lubich, President
Statistical Interests: Distribution-robust estimation (nonparametric, semi-parametric, model averaging, etc.), mixture distributions, unimodal constraints, multi-dimensional test statistics
General Interests: Christianity, the global food system, standing desks, health, analyzing social norms
Hobbies: Basketball, hiking, spike ball

Rebecca Kurtz-Garcia, Vice President
Statistical Interests: Computational Statistics, Nonparametric Statistics, Categorical Analysis, Data Science
Hobbies: I compete in triathlons and running races. I also sew.

Jericho Lawson, Treasurer
Statistical Interests: Sports statistics, machine learning, data science
Hobbies: Hiking, playing and watching sports, eating at new restaurants, playing video games, and photography.

Brian Tran, Secretary
Statistical/General Interests: Biostatistics, Stochastic Processes, Longitudinal Data, Time Series Analysis
Hobbies: I enjoy reading, listening to music, watching Supernatural and dancing.