

# THE BIOSTAT NEWS

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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ New alumni updates: Find out what's going on with your fellow alumni on page 2.
- ◆ Construction continues at SPH! Look inside to find out more.
- ◆ Bob Wolfe and Dr. K. have retired! Read more on page 3.

## Greetings from the Chair

Welcome back to another edifying issue of *The Biostat News*! We have an exciting year ahead of us with a bigger than ever incoming class of residential students as well as 3 new faculty hires and 2 visiting professors! We also have a new OJ/OC cohort beginning in September with at least 40 new students. Regrettably, these gains don't come without some loss. This summer we will be bidding farewell to three esteemed faculty members. Anant Kshirsagar and Bob Wolfe are retiring, while Xihong Lin will be pursuing other opportunities at Harvard University. We will certainly miss each of them and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

This Fall we will be welcoming a whopping 42 residential students. 32 of these students will be enrolling in our MS program, 7 in our PhD program, and 3 in our MPH program. In addition to an estimated 40 new OJ/OC students, and our returning residential students, we are expecting an enrollment of 150 students this year!

This Fall we will also be welcoming several new faculty members. Michael Elliott received his PhD from our Department in 1999 and will be joining us from the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology at the University of Pennsylvania. He has a joint appointment as Assistant Professor in Biostatistics and Research Assistant Professor in the Institute for Social Research. Sebastian Zöllner received his PhD from the University of Munich/Max-Planck Institute in 2001 and will be joining us from the Department of Human Genetics at the University of Chicago. He has a joint appointment as an Assistant Professor in Biostatistics and in Psychiatry. Tom Braun is our third new faculty hire this Fall. He received his PhD from the University of Wash-

ington in 1999. He has already been working in our Department but is changing his appointment from the research to the instruction track. Our Department is also welcoming 2 visiting professors this Fall. Paul Peng is an Associate Professor from Memorial University in Canada and Sumitra Purkayastha is an Assistant Professor from Indian Statistical Institute. We also have the pleasure of announcing several promotions within the Department. Goncalo Abecasis and Debashis Ghosh have been promoted to Associate Professor and Mousumi Banerjee has been promoted to Research Associate Professor. In addition, Kerby Shedden, whose primary appointment is in Statistics, has a joint appointment in Biostatistics and has been promoted to Associate Professor. Finally, Jim Lepkowski has been promoted to Professor. It is a pleasure to congratulate Debashis, Goncalo, Mousumi, Kerby and Jim.

This summer has also brought many significant changes to the School of Public Health. We were formally approved for 7 more years of accreditation, we've got a new Dean (Kenneth Warner), and we're entering a new phase of the construction process. You can read more about Ken Warner's new appointment and the SPH construction project on page 2.

I hope you enjoy this issue of our newsletter. Please continue to keep us informed of any updates in your lives and let us know of any suggestions you might have for our alumni or other programs.

With best wishes,

*Jude Kalbfleisch*



Biostatistics Graduation Reception

## Alumni Updates

We've started receiving more requests from alumni to be featured in our newsletter, but we still want to hear from more of you! Please contact our Student Administration office at 734-615-9817 or [cumminga@umich.edu](mailto:cumminga@umich.edu) to share information about job changes, research projects, marriages, births, moves, awards, promotions, etc. This issue, we're featuring Anita Rao (MS '00), Steven Knutzen (MS '01), and Rod Dunn (MS '96).

Anita Rao is currently a Statistician in California. Her interests include statistical computing and she has recently applied for a membership in IASC.

After Steve and his wife Dana (M.S. Genetic Counseling, Fall 2002) graduated from the University of Michigan, they returned home to the Pacific Northwest. Both are currently employed by Children's Hospital in Seattle. Steve works for the Cystic Fibrosis Therapeutics Development Network coordinating center where he provides statistical support for a variety of studies. One current project is a study to compare the ability of new infant pulmonary function measures using raised volume expiratory flows with the ability of partial expiratory flows obtained during tidal breathing and measurements of passive respiratory mechanics to detect lung function abnormalities in infants with CF.

Rod Dunn has been working at the UM Cancer Center since 1998 and for the UM Urology Department since 2000. He works on a variety of projects involving urology and urological oncology (mainly prostate and bladder cancer), including quality of life studies, clinical trials, and analyses of administrative and clinical databases. Rod is married to Julie, and has two sons, Trevor (age 5) and Kiernan (age 3).



Anita Rao, MS, 2000

## Graduation 2005



Biostatistics Graduation Reception

Graduation season has come and gone in Ann Arbor and the Department is very proud of the graduating class of 2005. Convocation took place April 29, 2005 at the Michigan Theater and was an exciting event for the Department. Twenty-five of our residential students graduated with their Master's degrees and of those, nine will continue on to our doctoral program, the largest number to date. The eleventh cohort of the OJ/OC CRDSA program also graduated this year and three doctoral students

participated in the ceremony in recognition of their years of hard work. The Department's own Dr. Robert Wolfe was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award as well. Please join the Department in congratulating all of those recognized at convocation this year!



## Construction Update

Construction continues at the School of Public Health and the new building is at last starting to take shape. Steel erection of the seven-story research tower was completed in January 2005 and steel framing, glass installation, and brick laying continue. It is expected that a bulk of the work will move to the inside of the tower by the Fall term. As expected, there has had to be some shifting of offices in the Department due to the loss of space as construction has progressed. Students, staff and faculty alike are working through the noise, dust, and loss of space quite well and look forward to the completion of the Crossroads of Public Health in Fall 2006. Visit the SPH Renovation website at [www.sph.umich.edu/about/renovation](http://www.sph.umich.edu/about/renovation) to get project updates as well as get a taste of the action by viewing webcams also available on the site.

## Dean Search Success

After a long and eventful search, Dr. Kenneth Warner's appointment as Dean of the School of Public Health was approved by the Regents of the University of Michigan at their May 19 meeting. Warner is a professor in the Department of Health Management and Policy as well as an economist and authority on tobacco policy. He is the sixth dean of the school replacing Noreen Clark effective July 1, 2005. The Department's own Dr. Michael Boehnke played an important role in the search. For more information on this important development at the School of Public Health, please refer to the press release found on the SPH website at this web address [http://www.sph.umich.edu/news\\_events/127press.html](http://www.sph.umich.edu/news_events/127press.html).

## OJ/OC Report

The eleventh cohort of our On Job/On Campus program in Clinical Research Design and Statistical Analysis graduated in April 2005 with a class of 40. Our biggest OJ/OC graduating class yet! Congratulations to everybody. The twelfth cohort is scheduled to begin classes in late September, 2005. Although we are still accepting new applications, it looks like we already have a full cohort of at least 40 incoming students. Our thirteenth cohort is scheduled to begin in October 2007. If you know of anybody who may be interested in our program, please have them contact Amanda Ring at 734-615-9817 or [cumminga@umich.edu](mailto:cumminga@umich.edu). You may find more information regarding our OJ/OC program on our website at <http://www.sph.umich.edu/biostat/programs/clinical-stat/>.



## Bob Wolfe's Retirement

On June 10, a farewell dinner was hosted at the Foxman-Boehnke home in honor of Bob Wolfe's retirement. Approximately 70 colleagues attended to celebrate Bob's many contributions to our Department and to wish him happiness and success in the future. Although Bob is retiring from the Department of Biostatistics, he will continue to collaborate with the University Renal Research and Education Association (URREA). Bob has taught in the Department for 27 years and will be missed by faculty, students and staff alike. Photos from the party can be found online at

<http://www.sph.umich.edu/biostat/bwret.html>.



## Upcoming Events

\* The UM Biostatistics and Statistics Departments will be holding a joint alumni reception again at this year's Joint Statistical Meetings. The reception will be held on Tuesday, August 9, 5:30-7:30pm at the Hilton Minneapolis in the Carver room. All UM Biostatistics and Statistics Department alumni, faculty, students, family and friends are welcome to attend. You may find more information regarding the event on our website at <http://www.sph.umich.edu/biostat/events.html>.

\* This year's annual Fall Picnic will be held on Saturday, September 10, 11:00am-3:00pm at Burns Park in Ann Arbor. This is a potluck event with the Department providing hamburgers, veggie burgers, hotdogs, and beverages. You may find more information about this event by going to <http://www.sph.umich.edu/biostat/nes.html> and clicking on Fall Picnic, under Events. All Biostatistics students, faculty, alumni, staff, family, and friends are invited to attend.

\* This year the SPH Prospective Student Information Day will be held on Saturday, October 22 in SPH II. This event is intended to advertise the School and the various Departments by offering prospective students the opportunity to hear from and interact with faculty, staff, students and alumni. If you know of anybody who is interested in pursuing a degree in Biostatistics please let them know of the event or have them con-

tact the Department at 734-615-9812 or [hillockh@umich.edu](mailto:hillockh@umich.edu).

Also, if any alumni would be willing to give a 5-10 minute presentation on what they're doing with their degree, please let us know! Additional information regarding this event can be found online at [http://www.sph.umich.edu/students/information\\_day.html](http://www.sph.umich.edu/students/information_day.html).



ENAR Reception, 3/21/05, Hilton Austin

## Jobs

The search for excellent faculty and staff is on in the Department. Detailed descriptions of open positions as well as application procedures can be found on the Department's website at <http://www.sph.umich.edu/biostat/jobs/>. Openings at the University as a whole can also be found here on the new JOBS at the U website <http://www.umich.edu/~jobs/>. If you are aware of any positions open in the

## A Farewell From Dr. K.

After spending about 28 years in Ann Arbor in this Department of Biostatistics, I am finally retiring on May 31, 2005. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my Ph.D. students and other students whom I taught, for the appreciation and affection they showed to me. They gave me the inspiration and support for all that I could do in statistics. It was here that I wrote two books – *Linear Models* and *Growth Curves*, which were very well received by the statistical community. Because of a large Asian-Indian community in Detroit, my family and I had a rich social life and enjoyed our stay in Ann Arbor. It was an honor to be a faculty member of this great University of Michigan and I will cherish the memories of my days in the Department. Wish all the students and faculty members best of luck, before I bid farewell.

Anant M. Kshirsagar

May 31, 2005

Biostatistics field, we encourage you to pass them along to the Department via email at [hillockh@umich.edu](mailto:hillockh@umich.edu). We routinely pass along information such as this to our alumni list as well as to the SPH Career Services office where it is then posted to the SPH Job Bulletin. We hope that efforts such as these help us to connect better with each of you and strengthen the Department of Biostatistics' Alumni Network.

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## Department Honors 2005

- Professor Robert Wolfe was awarded the SPH Excellence in Teaching Award, recognizing his many outstanding contributions in teaching and mentorship. This award is adjudicated by the School of Public Health Alumni Society Board of Governors. The award was presented at Convocation on April 29, 2005.

- Dr. Little has the honor of presenting the American Statistical Association's President's Invited Address at the 2005 Joint Statistical Meetings in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His presentation will be on "A Bayes/Frequentist Roadmap".

- Professor Goncalo Abecasis has been honored with the prestigious Pew Fellowship awarded by the PEW Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences. The Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences is designed to support young investigators of outstanding promise in the basic and clinical sciences relevant to the advancement of human health.

- Sherry Teboe was awarded the 2005 Excellence in Staff Service Award. This annual award is made to staff members that excel in their job within the School of Public Health. Sherry has spent the last 15 years of her 29 year tenure at the University of Michigan working for the Michigan Alzheimer's Disease Research Center and was recognized for her positive attitude, optimism, competence, and loyalty.

- At the 2005 Eastern North American Region (ENAR) Conference of the International Biometrics Society, several of our students received the Distinguished Student Paper Award. The ENAR Conference holds this competition for student papers annually. All winners receive a certificate, reimbursement for travel expenses, tuition for the short course of their choice, complimentary issues of the Journal of Agricultural, Biological, and Environmental Statistics (JABES) published during the past year, and an invita-

tion to the President's Reception. What's even more impressive is that this year, out of the total 20 winners, 6 were from our Department! In addition, one of the winners, Adin Andrei was also the recipient of the Van Ryzin Award for the best paper submitted. Among these students are Adin-Cristian Andrei (Van Ryzin Award), Wei Chen, Mingyao Li, Dawei Liu, Qi Long, and Ronglai Chen. Congratulations!

More information on these and other awards can be found on our website.

