A Message From The Incoming Chair

Department chairs switch over in July because normally there is not much to do at this time of year. Then came 2020. The good news is that I take over a department in great shape, perhaps its best ever, thanks to the exemplary leadership of Prof. Xuming He and his predecessors. The bad news... Well, I don't need to tell you those.

We have been extremely busy planning for the fall semester. The University of Michigan is offering its students a full range of options, from socially distanced in-person to fully online classes, while honoring all of our faculty's and GSI's preferences on how they want to teach. We make these plans knowing that they can change at any moment, and we are adapting to all sorts of new situations, from graduate students enrolling remotely from outside the US to many of our faculty and staff working from home while caring for their children. The number of contingencies we have to plan for is dizzying, but I am encouraged and inspired by the dedication, creativity, and resilience of our faculty, staff, and students; this is hard, but so far we are managing well.

My chair goals may have been different pre-pandemic, but for now we will have to focus on the work essential to our teaching and research missions. Like many other universities, in the coming year we will not be hiring new faculty or spending on anything other than essential needs; yet there is one new initiative that cannot wait. The department's new diversity, equity, and inclusion committee, assisted by our very engaged students, will ramp up efforts to create an inclusive and professional climate truly welcoming to all department members. It will also continue our long-standing effort to recruit excellent students from every group, and as always, we count on our alumni to send their great students our way.

We will miss seeing our alumni and friends at the JSM this year. Current department members will miss many of

Liza Levina, Incoming Department Chair, Vijay Nair Collegiate Professor of Statistics

our traditions, from the ice cream social group photo to the Statsgiving potluck. The department seminars will be virtual - and while we will miss the coffee, we can now invite our alumni to join! And in many other areas, I hope that we will find ways to make lemonade out of these lemons and continue to grow. One great example was a virtual celebration our PhD student council organized for this year's PhD graduates, which turned out even better than the live version.

As challenging as the coming year may be, I am honored and excited to lead one of the best statistics departments in the country, and will do everything I can for the department where I have spent my entire career and have always been well looked after. I am confident that our tight-knit community will pull through these times together and emerge stronger than ever on the other side.

Faculty News

2019 FACULTY AWARDS

Gongjun Xu

Congratulations to Professor Gongjun Xu who was chosen as a recipient of the Outstanding Young Researcher Award 2019, awarded by the International Chinese Statistical Association (ICSA). This award is given to select junior researchers in recognition of their exceptional research in statistical theory, methodology and/or applications.

Gongjun was also the recipient of an NSF Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) award, a 5-year funding grant that is awarded to outstanding tenure-track professors. Gongjun's CAREER award grant is titled "Identifiability and Inferences for Structured Latent Attribute Models," and aims to address fundamental statistical issues in Structured Latent Attribute Models.

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS
1969 - PRESENT
Bill Ericson (1969–1977)
Michael Woodroofe (1977–1983)
Ed Rothman (1983–1989)
Robb Muirhead (1989–1995)
Jeff Wu (1995–1998)
Vijay Nair (1998–2003)
Julian Faraway (2003–2004)
Vijay Nair (2004–2010)
Tailen Hsing (2010–2015)
Xuming He (2015-2020)
Liza Levina (2020-Present)

Liza Levina

Congratulations are due to Professor Liza Levina who was honored as a recipient of Rackham Graduate School's 2019 Distinguished Faculty Achievement Awards. The Distinguished Faculty Achievement Awards honor senior faculty who consistently excel in the areas of scholarly research or creative endeavors, teaching and mentoring, service and other activities.
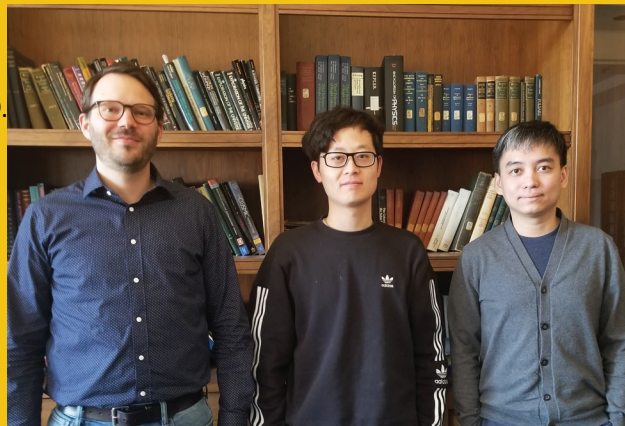
THE DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS FACULTY IS GROWING

The Department of Statistics faculty has grown significantly in recent years. Since 2015, our department has hired nine new faculty members who bring with them unique and important experience. Professors Ya'acov Ritov and Johann Gagnon-Bartsch joined the faculty in 2015, Yuekai Sun in 2016, Yang Chen and Jonathan Terhorst in 2017, and Snigdha Panigrahi in 2018. Most recently in 2019, we have welcomed three new faculty members: Ziwei Zhu, Kean Ming Tan, and Jeffrey Regier who have all joined the department as assistant professors. Additionally, a 10th junior faculty member is expected to join the department in 2021.

Prior to coming to the University of Michigan, Ziwei Zhu worked as a research associate at Statslab at the University of Cambridge. Ziwei received his Ph.D. in 2018 in Operations Research and Financial Engineering at Princeton University. His main research interests include distributed statistical inference, robust statistics, low-rank matrix estimation and missing data.

Kean Ming Tan served previously as an assistant professor of Statistics at the University of Minnesota. Having received his Ph.D. in Biostatistics from the University of Washington in 2015, Kean Ming's interests are broadly focused on developing statistical machine learning methods of analyzing massive data sets.

Jeffrey Regier received his Ph.D. in Statistics from UC Berkeley in 2016. He then served as a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences at that same university. Jeff's research interests include graphical models, Bayesian inference, deep learning, high-performance computing, astronomy and genomics.

Left to Right: Assistant Professors Jeffrey Regier, Ziwei Zhu, and Kean Ming Tan

PROFESSOR LONG NGUYEN

Dr. Long Nguyen earned his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley in 2007. He joined the Department of Statistics at the University of Michigan as an assistant professor in 2009 and is now a professor of Statistics and, by courtesy, professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. It took Long a long time to learn about the field of Statistics and he feels very lucky to have found his path. For his undergraduate education he chose to study mathematics and computer science, which led him to have an early interest in artificial intelligence (AI). He later moved to the U.S. for his graduate studies. At Berkeley, Long shared his interest in AI and machine learning with his PhD advisor, Professor Michael Jordan, who suggested that he study statistics. Shortly after, he met Professor Martin Wainwright, who'd also had a non-conventional path to statistics, and who became Long's second advisor at Berkeley.

For a popular audience, Long says that his interests lie in the area of machine learning. Machine learning used to be a subfield of artificial intelligence, but the core questions are statistical in nature: they ask how to make computers more intelligent with experience, by receiving and analyzing increasing amounts of data. In addition, they tread on the interplay between statistical inference and computation on a more equal footing than classical statistics. For a technical audience, Long says he is interested rather deeply in an area known as non-parametric Bayesian statistics. This area aims to account for the uncertainty of what one can infer from data, using mathematical models and computations that increase in complexity in a graceful way as more data becomes available.

Long says that a great joy of being a statistician is the opportunities to work with engineers, scientists, and other data scientists. From those collaborations, he is informed of what kind of problems and statistical techniques he needs to develop. At the moment he is collaborating with mechanical engineers who develop software systems that help cars drive more safely and

Long Nguyen, Professor of Statistics

intelligently. Modern vehicles collect lots of raw data through increasingly sophisticated sensor systems and often use black-box algorithms for handling these signals. "The work of statisticians is important because not only do we construct models and algorithms for data, we are also genuinely interested in the meaning of data patterns and assessing the reliability of our methods so as to make the built systems more sound and robust," said Long.

For those considering a career in statistics, Long would advise students to be open minded and try to find what they are good at, but also to try to expand the boundary of what they can do. "One of the great aspects of statistics as a field is that there is something for everyone – you can work on interesting data and problems with scientists and engineers, you can also do theory, math, algorithms, and coding," said Long. "Because of the nature of our field, statistics can be relevant and forward-looking as one explores any type of data arising in a vast array of fields. At this time, there is a constant and healthy tension between balancing the exploration with being measured and thoughtful about our inference and decision making."

Long grew up in a small coastal town in Vietnam and went to college in Korea. He lived in many states before settling in Michigan. Of all the places he's been, by now he's lived in Ann Arbor the longest. University of Michigan incidentally showed up on his radar very early on. When he was studying in Korea, the very first US-trained professor he studied with had a PhD degree from U of M, as did the last professor he worked with. When Long first interviewed with the Department of Statistics at the University of Michigan - on an extremely cold day - he was attracted by the warm and welcoming atmosphere with the students, faculty and staff he met. "Michigan is a special place for me and my family," said Long. "It's really good to work and live here."
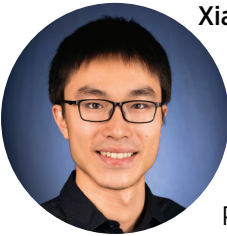
2019 Student Awards

Yuqi Gu

In early 2019, Yuqi Gu was selected as a recipient of the 2019-2020 Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship. This program supports outstanding doctoral students who have achieved candidacy and are actively researching and working on their dissertation. Additionally, this past fall, Yuqi was selected as one of three winners of the IMS Lawrence D. Brown Ph.D. Student Award by the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS).

Aritra Guha

In June of 2019, Aritra Guha won the Best Poster Presentation Award at the 12th International Conference on Bayesian Nonparametrics (BMP12) which was held in Oxford. Aritra received this award for his presentation of his poster titled "On posterior contraction of parameters and interpretability in Bayesian mixture modeling."

Xianghao Chen

In October of 2019, Xianghao Chen, a first-year Master's of Data Science student, and his team achieved 1st place in task one, Sepsis Onset Prediction, of the 2019 'Discover, Innovation, Impact' National Data Science Challenge. This challenge was hosted by the University of Texas Health School of Biomedical Informatics. As part of the challenge, teams were asked to devise methods of predicting sepsis onset and sepsis mortality. Xianghao's team experimented with different machine learning and feature engineering techniques to produce the best method for this challenge.

Zheng Gao

In the summer of 2019, Zheng Gao was awarded the Best Student Paper Award at the 11th international conference on Extreme Value Analysis (EVA 2019). Zheng presented his paper, "Concentration of maxima and the fundamental limits of exact support recovery in high dimensions," at EVA 2019 which took place in July in Zagreb, Croatia. This award was given in recognition of his excellent presentation and original solution of the exact support recovery problem using the concentration of maxima phenomenon.

Xinzhou Guo

In spring of 2019, Xinzhou Guo received the Jiann-Ping Hsu Pharmaceutical and Regulatory Sciences Student Paper Award. Xinzhou received this award in recognition of his paper "A Quantitative Assessment of Risk for Subgroup Pursuit in Clinical Trials." Xinzhou presented this work at the 2019 Statistics Symposium of the International Chinese Statistical Association in June 2019.

In addition, Xinzhou was selected earlier this year as the winner of the 2020 Biopharmaceutical Best Student Paper Award by the Biopharmaceutical Section of the American Statistical Association for his paper "Inference on Selected Subgroups in Clinical Trials."

Xinzhou defended his dissertation in 2019 and is currently a fellow at the Harvard-MIT Center for Regulatory Science. Both of the above-mentioned papers were co-authored with his advisor, Professor Xuming He.

Caleb Ki & Drew Yarger

In April of 2019 the Department of Statistics was very excited to congratulate Caleb Ki and Drew Yarger who were both awarded with 2019 NSF Graduate Research Fellowships. The NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program is an outstanding program that supports exceptional graduate students in NSF-supported STEM disciplines and has a reputation for opening up opportunities for international research and professional development.

THE NEW M.S. OF APPLIED STATISTICS BRIDGE PROGRAM

In 2020, the Department of Statistics is excited to be welcoming its first-ever cohort to the new M.S. of Applied Statistics Bridge Program. The Bridge Program is an enhanced, fully-funded option that offers research training and additional coursework to prepare students for further Ph.D. training. While having demonstrated academic excellence, Bridge Program candidates must also meet additional criteria related to the departments commitment to diversity and equal opportunity.

Students who are successful at completing the Bridge program's requirements satisfactorily have the opportunity to be admitted into the Statistics PhD program.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

Eric Margolin: Statistics & Data Science

"My name is Eric Margolin and I'm from New Orleans, LA. I'm currently a rising senior double majoring in statistics and data science through LS&A. This summer I am interning with the NFL and working on a research project through UM on the Hot Hand phenomenon in basketball. After graduation, I hope to continue working in the field of sports statistics, either through academic research or working for a professional sports franchise."

Lydia Rogers: Statistics & Data Science

My name is Lydia Rogers, and I am a rising senior double majoring in Data Science and Statistics. I am also pursuing a Master's degree in Applied Statistics through the Accelerated Master's Degree Program (AMDP). I'm originally from Whitmore Lake, Michigan, a small town just north of Ann Arbor. On campus, I keep busy as an active member of Alpha Phi Omega and K-Grams, and as a Database Analyst Intern with the Ford School. I'm intrigued by the applications of data science methods in the social sciences, particularly political science and econometrics. In the future, I hope to explore the use of machine learning and predictive analytics to solve difficult problems faced by our society, such as closing the gender gap within technical fields and improving access to higher education for low-income students.

INTRODUCING THE PHD STUDENT COUNCIL

The Department of Statistics PhD Student Council was formed in 2018. This student-run group aims to improve the PhD student experience by providing opportunities for PhD students to take ownership over their experience in the department, along with promoting an inclusive community that integrates and welcomes students from diverse backgrounds. The Council additionally acts as an interface between PhD students and department leadership and provides a student perspective on department matters.

Since its creation, the Council and council committees have influenced the department and PhD student life significantly. For example, the computing committee created a Stats Wiki that serves as a source of information for current and new PhD students on computing resources, conferences, living in Ann Arbor, and more! The curriculum committee played a vital role in collecting and sharing student input for the recent overhaul of the PhD curriculum. The recruitment committee brought new events (with prizes!) to visit day and took on a significant role when visit day went virtual. The social committee brought us together for Pi Day, laser tag, and Diwali candle painting. And while things looked quite different this year for graduation, the Council hosted a successful virtual graduation celebration that was shared with many family and friends.

Students and faculty members paint candle votives to celebrate Diwali

Administrative Update

This academic year started out with a lovely celebration of the 50th anniversary of the U-M Department of Statistics. It was a wonderful opportunity to see so many alumni and remember what a great community we have built together. As we headed into the second half of the winter term, things took an unexpected turn.

The way our University operates, indeed many things about the world we live in, has changed dramatically. While the University transitioned to online classes and each of us had to learn what it was like to physically distance from our colleagues, it has been encouraging to see how our community has come together during this time of uncertainty.

The COVID-19 crisis has continued to present challenges to how we operate as a department. I have been deeply impressed with the commitment of our students, staff and faculty in overcoming those challenges creatively. In just a few days after transitioning to fully remote work, Gina had figured out how to conduct academic advising remotely. This was vital to the wellbeing of our students as they struggled with the changes in their personal lives.

Unfortunately, a global pandemic isn't the only challenge we face as a community. Recent events such as the killing of George Floyd have once again brought the issues of institutionalized racism to the fore. As a department we stand united against racism and other forms of inequality. I am proud of the ongoing conversations surrounding diversity on campus and in our department. I am optimistic that our Department will continue to work together to make our

Bebe Zuniga-Valentino, Department Administrator

community a more inclusive space for everyone.

I would like to thank Xuming He, outgoing Chair, for his leadership over the past five years. He shepherded us through a period of unprecedented growth and left us with a very successful and collegial department. I'm looking forward to working with Liza Levina. I feel confident in her leadership, and will work with her to guide us through the changes we are likely to see over the next several years. Most of all I would like to thank our staff who have worked hard to make sure our students and faculty continue to enjoy the level of support that they are used to. Considering what we have already faced and overcome, I am certain that we will be able to meet existing and any new challenges head on, together.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: GINA CORNACCHIA

Gina Cornacchia is the Undergraduate Coordinator for the Department of Statistics. In her role, she provides support to the Department Chair in coordinating the course schedule, as well as supports the Director of Undergraduate Programs by organizing the undergraduate advising and curriculum committee. Gina's favorite part of her job is working with the students, as she provides general advising for all of the department's undergraduate programs.

Outside of work, Gina enjoys spending time with her family, reading, and exploring her neighborhood on long walks with her dog.

"I am grateful to be part of the Statistics Department at UM. I truly enjoy working with undergraduate students and we have the best faculty."

- Gina Cornacchia

WOODROOFE LECTURE SERIES

The Department of Statistics is excited to be hosting the 9th annual Woodroofe Lecture on November 13, 2020. This year's speaker is Dr. Emery Brown, Edward Hood Taplin Professor of Medical Engineering and of Computational Neuroscience, and Professor of Health Sciences and Technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Dr. Brown is also Warren M. Zapol Professor of Anaesthesia at Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital; the Director of the Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology Program at MIT; the Associate Director of the Institute for Medical Engineering and Science at MIT; and an Investigator at the Picor Center for Learning and Memory, part of the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences at MIT.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI SPEAKER SERIES

On February 14, 2020, the Statistics Department had the pleasure of hosting Dr. Earl Lawrence, a scientist at Los Alamos National Observatory, as our first-ever Distinguished Alumni Speaker. Dr. Lawrence spoke about his work using statistical methods to analyze data collected from the ChemCam, an instrument on the Mars rover. With this new alumni speaker series, our department hopes to better recognize our incredible alumni for their achievements, as well as strengthen the bonds between current and former students.

THANK YOU!

#GIVINGBLUEDAY

In 2019, the Statistics Department participated in #GivingBlueday, raising a total of $3,514! A huge thank you to everyone who donated to support statistics, your contributions are very much appreciated!

AN UPDATE ON COVID-19

In March of 2020, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and in an effort to protect our campus community, the University of Michigan moved all of its classes for the remainder of the winter semester, spring semester, and summer semester online. As a result, the Department of Statistics has had to adapt or postpone many of the events that we look forward to every year.

As we approach the Fall 2020 semester, our department looks forward to welcoming students back on campus in a public health-informed manner. As we plan for classes in both virtual and in-person formats, it is unclear as to which extent we will be able to host in-person events. However, our website will continue to be updated to advertise all department events - both virtual and otherwise.

CAREER FAIR

In September 2019 the department hosted the annual career fair for all undergraduate and graduate students of statistics, applied statistics, informatics, and data science. Representatives from 13 companies were in attendance, and 234 students attended to network with potential employers. The department is looking forward to hosting the career fair again this coming fall, although it may be in a virtual format. We would like to encourage any companies or recruiters who would like to participate to please reach out!

MSSISS

Each year, graduate students in Biostatistics, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science, Industrial & Operations Engineering, Statistics, and Survey Methodology organize and host the Michigan Student Symposium for Interdisciplinary Statistical Sciences (MSSISS). This event is designed to help encourage interdisciplinary research and discussion across the different fields of statistical science. Additionally, it presents an opportunity for graduate students to present their work, share insights, and explore diverse applications of statistical sciences. MSSISS 2020 took place on February 27 and 28, and the Department of Statistics' very own Yang Chen, assistant professor of statistics, was invited to speak as the junior keynote speaker.

Alumni Update

Jing Ma, Ph.D. Statistics (2015)
Jing Ma received her Ph.D. in Statistics from the University of Michigan in 2015, under the supervision of Dr. George Michailidis. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Biostatistics in the Public Health Sciences Division at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. She specializes in statistical machine learning for big biomedical data with applications to cancer biology and aging. Outside of work, she enjoys hiking in the Pacific Northwest.

Tim NeCamp, PhD, Statistics (2019)
Tim received his PhD in Statistics from University of Michigan in 2019. Tim is passionate about using his statistical knowledge to impact his community and make the world a better place. He recently started a data science consulting organization called Data Bloom (https://thedatabloom.com). Data Bloom partners with nonprofits and social good organizations to turn data into insight, action, & impact. Data Bloom provides a range of services, from data planning, data collection & organization, data analytics, and data reporting & visualization, all towards the goal of helping mission-driven organizations achieve their impact.

Mackenzie Fankell, M.A. Applied Statistics (2014)
Mackenzie Fankell received her M.A. in Applied Statistics in 2014. Since then, she has worked for both Ford Motor Company and Ford Motor Credit Company as an analytics scientist on the Global Data Insights and Analytics team. Most recently, she developed a statistical model that values used vehicles for an online trade-in tool. She also had the honor of being selected for Bill Ford's Thirty Under 30 program in 2017 where she worked with community partners to improve issues of food insecurity in the Detroit area.

Stewart Zellars, M.S. Applied Statistics (2017)
Stewart received his M.S. in Applied Statistics from the University of Michigan in 2017. He is currently a Manager in Plante Moran's Business Analytics consulting practice in Detroit, MI. His work with his clients usually spans the entire data life-cycle - from data preparation and discovery to visualization and predictive analytics. Stewart meets each of his clients wherever they may be on their analytics journey and helps them make better decisions with data.

Tianwen Ma, B.S. Statistics (2016)
Tianwen Ma received his B.S. in Honors Statistics from the University of Michigan in 2015, completing his senior thesis under Dr. Edward Rothman. He received his M.S. in Biostatistics from the University of Michigan in 2018. Currently, he is pursuing Ph.D. in Biostatistics at the University of Michigan under the supervision of Professor Jian Kang. His research interests include Bayesian methodology development with the application to EEG-BCI system.

Jiahui Ji, B.S. Statistics (2018), M.S. Biostatistics and Data Science (2020)
Jiahui Ji received her B.S. in Statistics (honors) from the University of Michigan in 2018, completing her honors thesis under Dr. Long Nguyen. She continued to be a Wolverine by completing her M.S. in Biostatistics in 2020, while pursuing a dual Master's degree in Data Science, expected to graduate in December 2020. During Summer 2019, she worked as a Research Analyst Intern at STATinMED Research. In Summer 2020, she is working for Liberty Mutual Insurance as a Data Science Intern. Her career goal is to be a Data Scientist.

Alumni from the University of Michigan have become the Leaders and Best all around the world.
In the Department of Statistics, we love to hear from our alumni and receive updates on how they're doing.
Shoot us an email at stat-um@umich.edu and let us know where you're at!

Memories of the 50th Anniversary

Statistics In The Data Science Era: A Symposium To Celebrate 50 Years Of Statistics At The University Of Michigan

On September 20-21, 2019, the Department of Statistics was very happy to celebrate its 50th Anniversary as a department on campus at the University of Michigan. To mark the historic occasion, the department hosted an anniversary symposium at Rackham Graduate School with over 150 former and current department members, as well as friends of statistics. The symposium featured talks led by former professors and alumni, as well as panel discussions.

Keynote Speakers
Michael I. Jordan, University of California, Berkeley
Susan Murphy, Harvard University
Jeff Wu, Georgia Institute of Technology

PH.D. STATISTICS
Julie Deeke
Yanzhen Deng
Alexander Giessing
Jun Guo
Xinzhou Guo
Adam Hall
Gregory Hunt
Yura Kim
Peng Liao
Boang Liu
Zhiyuan Lu
Timothy NeCamp
Jinqi Shen
Chun-Chen Tu
Jingshen Wang
Wenyi Wu
Ruofei Zhao

M.S. DATA SCIENCE
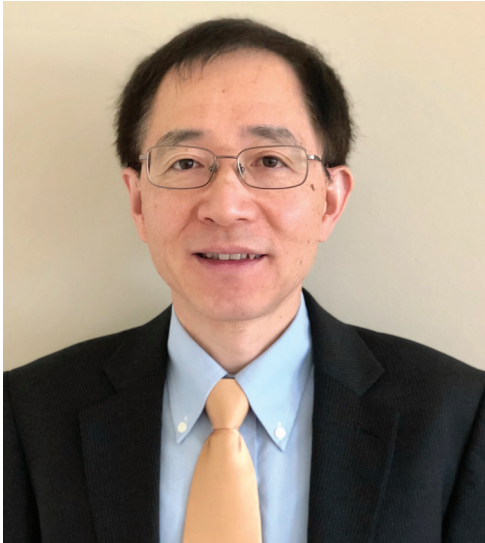Chunyu Hou
Ben Sadis

M.S. APPLIED STATISTICS
Yang Cai
Andres Cambronero Sanchez
Cara Cannella
Pin-Yu Chen
Vincent Chen
Wenyu Chen
Jerome Jaehoon Choi
Jing Chu
Reed Wolfe Coots
Anuj Dahiya
Samantha Edds
Yu Gao
Naomi Giertych
Shengchen Hao
Bingqing Hu
Xin Hu
Zhihao Huang
Shen Jin
Yu-Chun Kao

Eric Kim
Alexander Kellner
Andrei Kopelevich
Mark Kurzeja
Sunghun Lee
David Jing Li
Yuhan Li
Zetan Li
Joseph Robert Lipa
Yuanhao Liu
Gongcheng Lu
Yuxing Lu
Zhongyuan Lyu
Rui Ma
Yumeng Ma
Jawad Mohamad Mroueh
Sandra C Nwogu
Teerth Patel
Yunbin Peng
Zhen Qing
Bo Qu
Eli K. Schultz
Mengjie Shi
Yongxin Shuai
Huan Tan
Aman Taxali
Wan-Lun Tsai
Jieni Wan
Shunji Wei

Katherine Steel Wilkinson
You Wu
Yifan Xiang
Ruikun Xiao
Yuming Yang
Zhichao Yang
Yuzhe Ye
Hsuan-Yu Yeh
Mengyi Yuan
In Son Zeng
Xiaotian Zhan
Lei Zhang
Yingdan Zhang
Tian Zhou
Xiaodan Zhou
Zirun Zhu

A Message From The Outgoing Chair

Xuming He, Outgoing Department Chair, Harry C. Carver Collegiate Professor of Statistics

I am truly honored and humbled to have had the opportunity to serve as the Department Chair over the past five years. This is indeed the best job I have ever had so far, thanks to the tremendous support I received from the faculty, staff, alumni and friends of Michigan Statistics. My immediate predecessors, Vijay Nair and Tailen Hsing, led the department to national prominence, which made it easier for us to aim higher and grow further.

In the last five years, we witnessed an unprecedented growth in our programs. Our undergraduate majors more than doubled in size and our graduate program grew even more. This growth would not have been possible without the support of our dedicated staff, led by Bebe Zuniga-Valentino. On the faculty side, we successfully recruited ten new assistant professors, and our teaching faculty size grew by 25%. The younger generation of faculty brought with them passion and expertise in emerging areas of statistics and data science. Three of our junior faculty received prestigious NSF CAREER awards. Our graduates have been placed at top financial and IT companies such as Google and Goldman Sachs, as well as leading research universities such as Berkeley, Cornell, and Columbia.

We are making efforts to build a more inclusive community. The department was awarded a National Science Foundation training grant in 2017 to support the training of domestic students and postdoctoral fellows. Starting this year, we are offering a new Bridge Master's Program to help promising students who come from backgrounds that are traditionally underrepresented in Statistics to better prepare for Ph.D. studies. We revamped our Ph.D. program requirement this year to aim for more intellectual diversity with a forward-looking curriculum. These efforts will make us a national leader in higher education in statistics and data science for the years to come.

In September 2019, we celebrated our department's 50th anniversary. Generations of our alums came back to Ann Arbor to cheer us on. As I step down as department chair in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, I would like to share how proud I am of our department and all that's been accomplished. Now under the leadership of our new Chair, Liza Levina, I have great confidence in our future, whatever the challenges ahead. Go Blue!

A FAREWELL TO BRENDA GUNDERSON

This summer, the Department of Statistics says goodbye to Dr. Brenda Gunderson on her retirement. Brenda received her PhD in Statistics from the University of Michigan in 1989 and stayed on with the department as a senior lecturer. Brenda is best known for her tireless work as the coordinator for Stats 250. She will be greatly missed by her colleagues, staff, and students in the department! To honor Brenda's legacy at the University, our department has created a special GSI award that will be given each year to an outstanding GSI in a large lower-level course who has shown outstanding commitment to their students.

"I have been truly blessed over my 34 years at UM to have worked with... amazing colleagues, an outstanding administrative support team, the best graduate student instructors in the world, and so very many exceptional undergraduate students."

- Dr. Brenda Gunderson

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The Department of Statistics is on social media!
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up to date on happenings in the department!

IN THIS ISSUE...