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**UI College of
Public Health**

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

**Department of Biostatistics
Newsletter**

LETTER FROM THE HEAD

This newsletter is a little later than usual. This has been a year of change for the College of Public Health, the Department of Biostatistics, as well as a year of change for me and my family. After over 20 years at the University of Minnesota, in the School of Statistics and the Department of Biostatistics, I moved to the University of Iowa in the Fall of 2002. It has been an interesting year.



Faculty News

Skip Woolson left for the Medical College of South Carolina early in the summer, but retains his position as Professor Emeritus. He has kept in touch and continues to work with students and colleagues at Iowa. Jon Lemke also took early retirement and is now Chief of Biostatistics at Genesis Health System in Davenport, Iowa.

Brian Smith joined the faculty as a tenure track Assistant Professor, after spending a year as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Brian continues to work with the Biostatistical Core of the Cancer Center and on MCMC methods and spatial modeling. Jeff Allen spent a year as a visiting faculty in the Department, working with Jane Pendergast in the Center for Public Health Statistics, and taught the web based introductory biostatistics course. Jeff left in July to take a position across town at ACT, and will continue teaching the web based class. Andrew George and Mark Logue joined the Department's Division of Statistical Genetics; Andrew coming from a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Washington, Seattle, and Mark from the University of Iowa.

Deborah Dawson, Professor of Dentistry and Director of Biostatistics of the College of Dentistry, joined the Department through a secondary appointment. Deborah brings considerable expertise to the University of Iowa and the Department in genetic epidemiology, oral health and a wealth of other areas.

Bridget Zimmerman, Senior Research Scientist, and Justine Ritchie, Associate Research Scientist, were both appointed as Adjunct Faculty in January 2003 and we look forward to them being more involved in the graduate program.

Daniel Sargent, Director of Cancer Center Statistics at the Mayo Clinic, joined our staff as an Adjunct Associate Professor. Dan plays a key role collaborating with the Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center (HCCC) on the Lymphoma SPORE grant. He works closely with Bill Clarke, Justine Ritchie and Brian Smith.

In the Fall of 2003, we welcome two new faculty. Joe Cavanaugh joins us as an Associate Professor. Joe is moving from the University of Missouri-Columbia and brings considerable expertise in time series and in model selection criteria. Gideon Zamba joins us as a Visiting Assistant Professor (and plans to defend his PhD thesis before then or soon after). Gideon comes from my old department in Minnesota and wrote his thesis on quality control and multivariate change point analysis.

One of the biggest changes to the Department is that the College has established a Program in Public Health Genetics, under the leadership of Veronica Vie-

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land. The faculty for this new Program will come from the Division of Statistical Genetics. So Veronica Vieland, Trudy Burns, Jian Huang, Kai Wang, Andrew George and Mark Logue will move their primary appointments from the Department of Biostatistics to the Program in Public Health Genetics. We will miss them, but we look forward to working with them as colleagues in the College, and anticipate a close relationship with the new Program. The Department's PhD subtrack in Statistical Genetics will be phased out and replaced by a PhD in Statistical Genetics to be administered by the Program in Public Health Genetics. This is a major initiative for the College of Public Health, expanding the College's offering in Public Health Genetics.

Staff News

Kice Brown retired in the fall from the Biostatistics Consulting Center (BCC). The BCC continues to operate under Bridget Zimmerman's direction. Nancy Parizek continues to coordinate the graduate program in both Biostatistics and Epidemiology, and in the fall will take on additional coordination of the Biostatistics and Epidemiology MPH students. Nancy will be coordinating almost half of the graduate students in the college! Terry Kirk continues to keep things running smoothly as Department Secretary. The staff of the Clinical Trials Statistical Data Management Center (CTSDMC) continue to increase as the Center continues to flourish under the direction of Bill Clarke.

Student News

We had a record number of students entering the Graduate Program last Fall, and two more joined in Spring. The students formed an active Biostatistics Student Association with five elected officers and many activities: meetings, social events and representation to the faculty on academic issues.

On July 1st, Jeff Dawson agreed to act as the Department of Biostatistics' Director of Graduate Studies. Jeff will be providing leadership on our graduate program and providing sound and consistent advice to students.

Other

We have included in this newsletter some items submitted from alumni. Please submit your news to me, kathryn-chaloner@uiowa.edu, or Terry, terry-kirk@uiowa.edu, and we will include them in the next Departmental Newsletter.

Personal Note

I would like to extend my thanks to the Department faculty, staff and students for their help and support in this transition, and especially to Bill Clarke, for acting as Deputy Head, and putting me straight on several occasions.

Thanks!

Kathryn

Faculty Awards

Michael P. Jones received the 2003 College of Public Health Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Brian J. Smith received the 2003 College of Public Health-College of Medicine New Investigator Research Award for his project "Bayesian Models for Meta-Analysis: The Impact of Dietary Fat Intake on Prostate Cancer".

Outstanding Alumni Awards

At this May's Awards Ceremony, two of our alumni received the 2003 College of Public Health Outstanding Alumni Award:



James D. Leeper, former chair of the Department of Community and Rural Medicine, University of Alabama School of Medicine, Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Jim earned an MS degree in biostatistics in 1974 and a PhD degree in biostatistics in 1977. He was awarded the American Public Health Association's Statistics Section Award in 1994 and the University of Alabama recognized him with an Outstanding Commitment to Teaching Award in 1995. Leeper was a charter member of the College of Public Health's Board of Advisors. He completed his term on the board in December 2002.



Susan L. Slager, Research Associate, Division of Biostatistics, Department of Health Sciences Research, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota. Susan earned an MS degree in biostatistics in 1994 and a PhD in biostatistics in 1999. During 1997-99, she was a predoctoral fellow with the National Institute of Mental Health. She held a postdoctoral research fellowship at Columbia University from 1999-2000, followed by a second postdoctoral fellowship in 2000-01 at the Mayo Clinic. In 2002, Susan was awarded a National Institutes of Health Career Development Award for her work on statistical genetics methods for cancer gene studies.

2003 Student Graduations

- Jeff M. Allen, PhD Thesis: "Frequent Performance of Bayesian Models for Bivariate Longitudinal Data with Two Informative Drop-out Times"; Co-advisors: Michael P. Jones and M. Kathryn Cowles.
- Jianfang Hu, MS Jianfang is a Biostatistician in the Department of Biostatistics at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.
- Christopher P. Irwin, MS Chris worked this summer with Jane Pendergast in the Center for Public Health Statistics. He has accepted a position in the Coordinating Center for Biometric Research at the University of Minnesota.
- Laura E. Jones, MS Laura entered the PhD Program in Epidemiology at the University of Iowa.
- Bess E. Sorensen, MS Bess is a Statistical Research Associate at the Fred Hutchison Cancer Research Center in Seattle.
- Wenquan Wang, PhD Thesis: "Estimating and Testing Treatment Effects on Two Binary Endpoints and Association between Endpoints in Clinical Trials"; Co-advisors: William Clarke and Robert Woolson. Wenquan is currently a Research Assistant Professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.
- Lirong Zhao, MS Lirong is a Statistical Analyst in the Biostatistics Department at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

Alumni News

Alumni—please submit your news to terry-kirk@uiowa.edu or kathryn-chaloner@uiowa.edu. Here is news from recent two recent alumni (not a random sample!)

Ye Tan (MS 2002) has a position with the Blood and Marrow Transplant Program at the University of Minnesota Medical School. Ye's e-mail address is: tanxx048@umn.edu. She writes:

I appreciate working in this group. The science behind the research is very interesting and exciting; some topics are the lead in the nation which makes me feel thrilled. I have the chance to apply the knowledge and skills that I have learnt from the graduate school. I have always loved working in the academia environment. My colleagues are all nice and easy to get along with....

Jacque Neuhaus (MS 2001), also at the University of Minnesota (jacque@cibr.umn.edu) writes:

After completing my Masters in Biostatistics in May of 2001, I accepted a position with the Community Programs for Clinical Research on AIDS (CPCRA) within the Division of Biostatistics at the University of Minnesota. I am involved 7-9 year international AIDS clinical trial (The SMART Study) that began enrolling towards a goal of 6000 patients in January 2002. Before the trial opened, I assisted in the development of materials for the implementation of the SMART study such as case report forms, the Manual of Operations, the Laboratory Manual, and the Protocol itself. I have been involved in protocol training of the research clinicians and the preparation of enrollment, baseline, and follow-up data tables and analyses for web reporting and for the Data Safety and Monitoring Board (DSMB) reviews.

Milford E. Barnes Award

Jeff M. Allen, PhD, is the recipient of the 2003 Milford Barnes Award for Biostatistics.

An Iowa native who grew up in Grinnell, Jeff earned a BA in math from Wartburg College in 1996. He then earned his MS degree in biostatistics at the University of Iowa in 1998 and PhD degree in 2002. His dissertation "Frequent Performance of Bayesian Models for Bivariate Longitudinal Data with Two Informative Drop-out Times" was completed under the supervision of Professor Michael P. Jones (Biostatistics) and Professor Mary Kathryn Cowles (Statistics). "It has been a great pleasure to have such an enthusiastic and self-motivated student as Jeff," said Professor Jones. Dr. Allen received the 2002 Milford E. Barnes Award for Biostatistics given annually to the outstanding student in Biostatistics. After completing a year working in the University of Iowa Center for Public Health Statistics and teaching the department's distance-learning web-based introductory course in Biostatistics, Jeff has taken a job at ACT. We'll certainly miss him at shortstop on the College of Public Health softball team, but are happy that he and his family are staying in the Iowa City area.



Mike Jones

Merck Fellowship Report for the Year 2002 --- Xinqun Yang

First I would like to thank Merck & Co., Inc. and the Department of Biostatistics at the University of Iowa for giving me such a great award. I attended GAW13 (Genetic Analysis Workshop 13) and International Genetic Epidemiology Society 11th Annual Meeting (IGES2002) November 11-17, 2002 in the city of New Orleans, LA. GAW13 was held November 11-14, 2002 and IGES2002 was held November 15-16, 2002.

The Genetic Analysis Workshops (GAWs) are held in even-numbered years at which genetic epidemiologists gather to evaluate and compare statistical genetic methods. GAW13 was open to individuals who had analyzed GAW13 data and submitted a summary of their analyses for presentation at the workshop. The GAW13 data comes from the Framingham Heart Study. As the first author, I submitted my contribution "Genome-wide linkage analysis of blood pressure under locus heterogeneity" which was assigned to "Development and Extension of Linkage Methods" presentation group. Annual scientific meetings of the International Genetic Epidemiology Society (IGES) include invited talks from prominent researchers, as well as platform and poster presentations of contributed abstracts. Since the meeting was middle-sized and there was only one presentation at one time, I was able to listen to almost all topics. That was a great experience for people like myself who are new in this field. Topics like haplotypes and linkage disequilibrium, microarray and pooling, gene-gene interaction and gene-environment interaction really helped me have a broad picture of the statistical genetics field.

Biostatistics Faculty Publications During 2003

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