



WSS NEWS SUPPLEMENT

WASHINGTON STATISTICAL SOCIETY

Greetings from the WSS President

I had a recent conversation with a colleague who reflected on the positives from 2020 and this got me thinking. I've tried a few new spicy recipes, found a great YouTube channel for step aerobics, enjoyed having an officemate again (hint: see my President's message on the WSS website), and connected with friends and family in new meaningful ways, just to name a few. I'm also thankful for the career path I've chosen – statistics.

We use statistics and data science to uncover signal(s) in data with methods designed to limit extraneous patterns (i.e., noise). The signals can drive policy and messages for the public good and that is powerful. The power, however, is limited if the research can but doesn't see the light of day.

Many of us are generalist, swimming in a variety of subject areas, while others have a particular focus. WSS has several virtual seminars and other events beginning this month where you can learn about and contribute to a wide range of topics. What is your area, your passion, the reason you chose this field and stayed? Please consider presenting at a WSS event and send us your ideas today!

Wishing you and yours all the best in 2021!

Jill A. Dever
WSS President

Save the Date!!

2021 Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) Research and Policy Conference

When: November 2nd – November 4th, 2021

Where: Walter E. Washington Convention Center
801 Mt. Vernon Place, NW
Washington DC, 20001

The 2021 FCSM Research and Policy Conference will include sessions on cutting-edge research topics and emerging policy issues. This conference is an excellent forum to bring together federal and non-federal researchers and policy members to exchange current methodological knowledge and policy insights about topics of current and critical importance to the Federal Statistical System.

Each day of the conference will offer papers on a wide range of topics relevant to the production, quality and use of federal statistics. Attendees from a range of backgrounds will find sessions of interest, including statistical methods, administrative data, questionnaire design, program evaluation, policy making, and more.

The call for papers announcement will be issued in February 2021.

Please contact Darius Singpurwalla (dsingpur@nsf.gov), Jessica Graber (qcs1@cdc.gov), or David Kashihara (david.kashihara@ahrq.hhs.gov) for any questions you may have about the program.

For questions about registration or mailing list requests, please contact fesm@copafs.org.

The conference is jointly sponsored by the FCSM (<https://nces.ed.gov/fesm/>) and the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (<http://www.copafs.org/>).

Note: If crowd size is limited due to COVID-19, the conference may be switched from in-person to virtual.

Washington Statistical Society

Member Spotlight

Introducing your fellow members and showcasing the diversity of the WSS membership

Meet WSS Member Samantha Tyner...

Where do you work and what do you do?

I am a Data Scientist at Tritura Information Governance, a wholly owned subsidiary of the law firm Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath, LLP.

What attracted you to your current position?

The Lead Data Scientist found me on Twitter! I had tweeted that I was looking for a new job in data science, and some of the things I was looking for in a new role. We had a couple of preliminary calls and it sounded like a great opportunity. I had done some legal-adjacent work as a part of my postdoc, so I was already interested in statistics and data science applied in the legal arena.

Finish the sentence: "I joined WSS to"

...build up community connections as I am new to the DMV. I was a member of the local ASA chapter in grad school and my postdoc and would like to continue to stay engaged.

Why did you join the data science and statistics profession?

I've always loved math and numbers, then in college I read *The Lady Tasting Tea* which guided me towards statistics. I'm of the opinion that statistics and data science are synonyms, so I identify as both a statistician and a data scientist.

What advice would you give to someone entering the data science and statistics profession?

Don't forget about the theory. If you're just starting out, make sure you have a solid grasp on calculus and linear algebra before getting into statistics and data science. That foundation will help you a lot down the road. Also, always



question your assumptions in statistical modelling and in life.

Have you had any great mentors? If so, what made them great?

I have been so blessed to have so many great mentors, almost all of whom happen to be women: I stand on the shoulders of giantesses. In undergrad, through grad school, my postdoc, my fellowship, to now, they encouraged me and they showed me how to grow as a person and as a statistician. I have to shout out WSS

members Wendy Martinez, Polly Phipps and Ed Mulrow. Wendy and Polly were really incredible mentors during my fellowship last year at the Bureau of Labor Statistics and continue to be great mentors and friends. Ed was my supervisor during my summer internship at NORC nearly 6 years ago and he is a great mentor, friend and cheerleader.

"...I have been so blessed to have so many great mentors, almost all of [them] women...they showed me how to grow as a person and as a statistician."

How has COVID-19 changed your work environment, methodology, etc? What changes do you think will persist post-pandemic?

Working from home was a huge adjustment for me. I've always been the type of person who likes to keep work and home environments strictly separate and now my

office is also my bedroom. I anticipate being a fully remote employee for quite a while, if not permanently, so I'm always looking for ways to improve my WFH space. One thing I've really appreciated about my new role is that we tend to do voice calls rather than video calls: I find video calls draining in a really weird way.

Post-pandemic, I think conferences will always have a virtual component. There's so much great online content now, and it's so easy to meet people in your field all over the world. Now that we've experienced that for a year, people are always going to expect it.

How do you like to spend your free time away from work?

I recently became a co-organizer of *R-Ladies DC*, the local chapter of the global *R-Ladies* organization. Our goal is to support and promote women and gender minorities in the R community here in the DMV. You can find us on Meetup and Twitter. You can also find me on Twitter [@sctyner](#), where I post a lot of memes (like the one on the right!), usually about R and life as a data scientist. Finally, I am an avid crocheter. I have really gotten into it over the last year and I occasionally tweet photos of things I've crocheted as well.



“The glass is half full.”

“The glass is half empty.”

“The 8-ounce glass contains 4 ounces of liquid.”

Washington Statistical Society

Member Spotlight

Introducing your fellow members and showcasing the diversity of the WSS membership



Meet WSS Member Andreea Erciulescu...

Where do you work and what do you do?

I am a Senior Statistician at Westat, an employee-owned research corporation. My work-related activities are at the interface between survey statistics and other areas of statistics, and are mostly driven by needs to answer analytic questions using data from multiple sources.

What attracted you to your current position?

The energy and professionalism of the group of statisticians, and the corporate-wide interest in high-quality products to help the society. Hence, our motto 'improving lives through research.'

Finish the sentence: "I joined WSS to..."

... stay connected with the statistical group in the DC-area.

Why did you join the statistics profession?

Right after finishing high-school in my hometown, Dragasani (Romania), I came to the U.S. to complete a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics. At that time, I did not know Statistics was a profession on its own, but rather a 'branch' of Mathematics. After my first year at Colorado State University (CSU), I learnt that Statistics courses were required to complete my Mathematics major, with concentration in Math of Information and Technology. Then the first Stats course turned into a few Stats courses, a second degree concentration in Statistics, a few hourly jobs in the Stats department, and a research project in biostatistics, completing my CSU experience. I started to see the practical aspects of Statistics and its power to address real-life problems, without having to set aside my passion for Mathematics. In addition, I was greatly challenged in one of the Stats courses I took (graduate-level data analysis and regression). So, I decided to go for a PhD in Statistics, at Iowa State University. Greater challenges and lots more fun were just starting...

"At that time, I did not know Statistics was a profession on its own"

"I was greatly challenged in one of the Stats courses I took...
...so, I decided to go for a PhD in Statistics"

What advice would you give to someone entering the statistics profession?

Have fun *collecting* (question, observe, experiment), *analyzing* (use methods that you fully understand), *interpreting* (exactly what the data say), *presenting* (only what you know and using tools comfortable to you), *communicating* (focus on your audience), and *making informed decisions* (if you went through the previous steps to reach this point, then you are all set); yes, pretty much follow the definition of statistics.

How do you like to spend your free time away from work?

There's a saying that if your work is what you enjoy doing, then it doesn't even feel like work. But I do 'sign off' of my work machine, just because I also like cooking, cleaning the house, the yard, practice fitness yoga, going for long walks/hikes, and playing board games.

What is your favorite daily ritual?

Starting and ending the day with my husband.

What is your favorite meal or local restaurant?

Not a specific meal or local restaurant, but I could eat feta cheese with every single meal if I could.

What is your favorite vacation spot?

The most magical vacation experience I've had so far was hiking Mauna Kea, above the clouds to see the nearby ocean and volcanic craters, and be amazed by one of the clearest night skies on the planet, in the Big Island of Hawaii.

Finish this sentence: "On an ideal Saturday, I would..."

...wake up late, have a yummy brunch, catch up with family and friends in Romania, and go on a new outdoor adventure!

Welcome to new ASA/WSS members

The following new ASA/WSS members were identified in the updates of the WSS email list in April and December 2020:

Nauri Ahmed
Edmund Essah Ameyaw
Tony B. An
Elisabeth Wreford Andersen
Timothy Shawn Anderson
Sabina Azim
Shaun Bender
Herbert Archie Blassengale
Joshua Born
Rose Braue
Stephen Campbell
Miriam Chappelka
Stephen Chen
Yuanqi Du
Renee Ellis
Jonathan Fintzi
Lisa Frehill
David C. Gerard
Alokananda Ghosh
Evan Gibson
Elliott Han
Ada Harris
Matthew Hawks
Faiz Ikramulla
Yunyun Jiang
Brian Joseph
Sai Joseph
Lindsey Jung

Jongchan Kim
Shaon Lahiri
Jason A. Lee
Philip Lee
Anthony J. Lonardo
Cameron McPhee
Rui Miao
Nathan Nalam Nastili
Ujjwal Oli
Krista Park
Jennifer Erin Park
Jessica Randall
Sarah E. Reese
Adriana V. Resendez
Ralph Romanelli
Samuel Rosin
Benjamin Julius Schneider
Elizabeth Schneider
Harold Simeon
Elizabeth Anne Stanwyck
Gary Sullivan
Mary Carolyn Thies
Zheyue Wang
Whiting Wicker
Ruth Wunderlich
Ricardo Zambrano
Yi Zelibor

Welcome to WSS!

Jill Dever, WSS President

Eileen O'Brien, WSS Past President

Mark Otto, WSS President Elect