WSS

The Washington Statistical Society

SINCE 1926

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2026 WSS AWARDS CEREMONY (RECAP)

President's Invited Talk, and Reception

Wednesday, June 17, 2026, 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM (ET)

Location: Westat, 7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1000E, Bethesda, MD (*Conveniently right across from the Bethesda metro station on the red Line*)

This year's program featured the President's Invited Talk (Keynote and fireside chat), followed by the WSS Annual Awards Ceremony and a catered reception. The event attracted more than 65 attendees.

Featured Keynote

Dr. Travis Hoppe

The Statistical Imagination in the Age of AI: New Data, New Tools, and the Future of Evidence

Dr. Hoppe (Chief AI Officer at GroundVue; former Chief AI Officer at CDC and White House Office of Science and Technology Policy) explored how AI is fundamentally reshaping data, inference, and the very meaning of evidence in the modern era.

Program Highlights

- **Opening Remarks** — Dr. Benmei Liu (Outgoing WSS President)
- **Introduction** — Lisa Mirel
- **Keynote Address** — Dr. Travis Hoppe
- **Fireside Chat** — Dr. Travis Hoppe with **Dr. Liz Mannshardt** (Vice President and Director, Statistics and Data Science Center, Westat)



- **WSS Annual Awards Ceremony** — Celebrating excellence in our community
    - K-12 Data Visualization Poster Competition
    - Regional Science Fair Poster Competition
    - Curtis Jacob Award
    - Student Travel Award
    - Outstanding Graduate Student Awards
    - Forecast the Bloom: Petals, Probabilities, and Prizes
    - Julius Shiskin Award
    - Gertrude M. Cox Award
    - Roger Herriot Award
    - President's Award
    - Featuring three cohort honorees in celebration of the WSS 100th Anniversary
    - Other Awards

    - **Closing Remarks** — Lisa Mirel (Incoming WSS President)

Meet the Speakers

Travis Hoppe, PhD



Travis Hoppe is Chief AI Officer (CAIO) at GroundVue, a startup that uses AI and social science to analyze local government meetings. He was the former CAIO for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and completed a tour at the White House OSTP as the Associate Director of AI R&D. He holds a Ph.D. in Physics from Drexel University, and served his post-docs at the National Institutes of Health.

He has authored an eclectic range of publications including fields of biophysics, chemical physics, number theory, AI, R&D policy, and bibliometrics. He helped shape national AI policy through his detail to the White House OSTP where he supported the National AI Research Resource (NAIRR) adoption.

At CDC, he deployed the first generative AI model to all staff, published two guidance documents on maturity models for generative and agentic AI for local public health agencies, and led the release of an AI model from the National Center for Health Statistics, developed standards for trustworthy AI aligned with NIST, and stood up new communities of practice to accelerate innovation across the agency. He published widely cited work on disparities in NIH funding, open citation data, and a driver of open-source science including AI models like *The Pile*.

Liz Mannshardt, PhD



Liz Mannshardt is Vice President and Director of the Statistics and Data Science Center at Westat. Prior to joining Westat, Mannshardt served as the director of the Statistics, Methods, and Innovation Program at the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics of the National Science Foundation.

Prior to NSF, Mannshardt was the acting director of the Information Access and Analysis Services Division in the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Information Management. Her research and applied work include data product development, data quality assessments, governance, survey statistics, extreme value analysis, spatial statistics, and scientific communication.

Mannshardt is an adjunct professor in North Carolina State University's Department of Statistics and serves on the External Advisory Board for NCSU's Master of Science in Foundations of Data Science program. She is an elected Fellow of the American Statistical Association. Liz currently serves on ASA's Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) Policy Committee as well as ASA's inaugural Katherine K. Wallman Award Committee. Her prior service includes Vice Chair of ASA's Membership Council, Chair of ASA's Government Statistics Section, President of ASA's North Carolina Chapter, and as a member of the Health Effects Institute (HEI) Energy Review Committee.

WSS extends its gratitude to Westat for generously providing the venue for this exciting event.

2026 WSS BOARD ELECTION RESULTS

Congratulations to the candidates elected to serve on the 2026–2027 WSS Board!

We also extend our sincere appreciation to all the candidates who participated in this year's election. Thank you for your willingness to serve the Washington Statistical Society and for supporting our community.

President-Elect: Carolina Franco

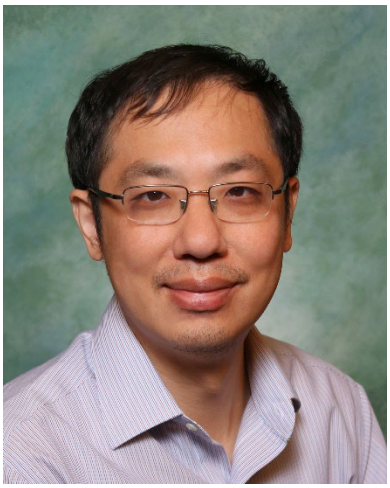


Carolina Franco has been an active member of the Washington Statistical Society and the American Statistical Association for many years. Within WSS, she served as Chair of the Morris Hansen Lecture Committee in 2024 and as a member of the committee from 2023 to 2026, leading the program for the 32nd Annual Morris Hansen Lecture. Within the broader ASA, she served as Chair of the Committee on International Relations in Statistics (2021-2023), where she helped launch a widely attended international webinar series with Statistics Without Borders, helped establish the first ASA student chapter in Africa, and expanded the committee's international reach through new partnerships and programming. She has also served as Lead Guest Editor for two JSSAM special issues on survey research from Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Oceania, as Associate Editor of JRSS-A, as Chair of the ASA Gertrude M. Cox Scholarship Committee, and as a member of the ASA Edward C. Bryant Scholarship Committee. She is a Fellow of the American Statistical Association and an Elected Member of the International Statistical Institute.

Carolina is a Principal Statistician at NORC at the University of Chicago, specializing in small area estimation, Bayesian hierarchical modeling, and statistical data integration applied to public health, social policy, and official statistics. Prior to joining NORC in 2021, she spent nearly a decade at the U.S. Census Bureau's Center for Statistical Research and Methodology, most recently as Principal Researcher and Group Leader of the Small Area Estimation Group. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, College Park.

WSS plays a unique role in bringing together statisticians from across the Washington area and has a strong tradition of service to its members and the profession. After being elected, she plans to build on that foundation by supporting strong programming, meaningful opportunities for in-person engagement, and stronger connections among statisticians across sectors and areas of practice. She will work to foster opportunities for statisticians to engage with researchers in other disciplines, since that is often where our work has the greatest impact. She also likes to strengthen mentoring and professional development for students and early-career members, so that WSS continues to be a vibrant and welcoming community for statisticians at all career stages.

Methodology Section Chair: Yulei He



Yulei He obtained Ph.D. in biostatistics from University of Michigan with a graduate student internship experience at Pfizer. Upon graduation, he had worked as a post-doc and biostatistics faculty member in Harvard Medical School. More recently he had served as the chief of the mathematical statistics and data science branch at the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), U.S. CDC. He is currently Director of Statistics, Medical Affairs and Health Technology Assessment Statistics Division, AbbVie. Yulei is also teaching statistics courses in both University of Maryland at College Park and George Washington University as adjunct faculty members. Yulei's own statistical research and application interests include missing data analysis, survey statistics, Bayesian statistics, causal inference, machine learning, and their applications to public health, medical research, and pharmaceutical industry. He is an elected fellow of the American Statistical Association.

As a long-time American Statistical Association (ASA) member, Yulei has always been passionate about building and supporting the statistical community. He has served as the program chair for ASA Health Policy Statistics Section as well as statistical editors for multiple journals. He also really enjoys teaching and mentoring the younger generation, ranging from middle school students to graduate students, about the beauty of statistics and data as well as the wonderful career of being a statistician.

Yulei is very enthusiastic on serving the Washington Statistical Society (WSS), the oldest in ASA with many strong traditions and inspiring activities. He has volunteered for the WSS Methodology Section and WSS student mentoring program. In the past several years Yulei has served as a Representative-at Large for WSS to support and provide input for various WSS activities and programs. He is eager to continue his support to WSS by serving as the Chair-Elect of the Methodology Section of WSS. Drawn from his rich experience in statistical research, application, and teaching, Yulei will work with other colleagues to organize a series of seminars and mini conferences covering both cutting-edge and classical techniques in statistics and data science methodologies. The goal is to use these talks to actively engage and serve WSS members as well as related parties across government, academia, and industry in the era of data science and AI. Yulei is looking forward to working with all of you to achieve it!

Communications Officer: Chrystine Tadler



Chrystine Tadler is a Senior Statistician at NORC at the University of Chicago with more than a decade of experience in survey methodology and federal statistical programs. She specializes in sample design, weighting, imputation, and the integration of survey and administrative data. At NORC, she has contributed to major projects including the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey for CMS and several data-linkage initiatives for NCSES.

Before becoming a statistician, Chrystine was a high school math teacher and later an adjunct lecturer at Georgetown University which shaped her strong communication style and ability to explain quantitative concepts clearly. These experiences informed her current daily approach to stakeholder communication, technical documentation, and cross-team coordination.

She has led project management and communication activities across multiple federal statistical efforts, ensuring alignment between technical work, client needs, and program objectives. Her work includes developing sampling and weighting documentation, overseeing deliverables, and managing technical teams. She enjoys presenting at professional conferences like JSM and AAPOR as part of staying connected to the broader statistics community.
As the newly elected WSS Communication Officer, Chrystine hopes to make WSS communications more approachable, timely, and community-focused, helping members feel informed, connected, and excited about Society activities.

Treasurer: Lloyd Hicks



Lloyd Hicks is a senior statistician with over 25 years of experience in the design and application of survey sampling. He is actively involved with the WSS communications committee modernizing the WSS website. He served on the mentorship committee and has been a mentor for several years. He has held a position as Treasurer for other organizations and has managed budgets on several projects as an employee at Westat.
Lloyd has worked in a wide variety of survey research areas, including sample design, frame development, sample selection, survey sample and composite weighting, missing data imputation, and variance estimation. He currently serves as a statistical team director for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) program.

Lloyd started his career as a mathematical statistician at the US Census Bureau working on the CPS and NHIS. He jumped to Price-Waterhouse-Coopers to do audit sampling work and has been with Westat since 1999. Lloyd has a bachelor's in mathematics from Randolph-Macon College and a master's in statistical computing from American University.

Representatives-At-Large

Julie Gershunskaya



Julie Gershunskaya is a mathematical statistician with the Statistical Methods Staff of the Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Her main areas of interest include statistical data integration, small area estimation, and treatment of influential observations, with application to the U.S. Current Employment Statistics Program.

Daifeng Han



A senior statistician at Westat, Daifeng Han has successfully led a variety of statistical activities for large-scale national studies. She develops new procedures and builds high-functioning teams through deep collaboration and creative problem-solving. In addition to her technical expertise, Daifeng adds value to her workplace by actively mentoring young statisticians and promoting staff development.

Daifeng has been passionate in serving the statistical community throughout her career. She was the WSS Short Course Chair for several years before moving to North Carolina to work remotely and build a family. Currently, Daifeng enjoys being a mentor in the WSS Mentorship Program, an associate editor for the Stat journal, and Westat's representative for the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics.

Daifeng is eager to continue her involvement with the WSS. Being the newly elected Representative-At-Large, Daifeng will work with other WSS officers to initiate platforms that will strengthen the connection between WSS members in the hybrid work environment. She will also focus on producing and disseminating information to engage young statisticians in WSS activities.

Daifeng received her Ph.D. in Methodology from the Joint Program in Survey Methodology at the University of Maryland. She has authored peer-reviewed articles in Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology, Survey Research Methods, and Public Opinion.

CONGRATULATIONS, AWARD WINNERS!

2026 President's Awards
Featuring three cohort honorees in celebration of the WSS 100th Anniversary

Legacy Leadership Cohort
Glenn White and Edward Mulrow
For their longstanding commitment to the Society and for proactively leading the planning of the 100th Celebration of the WSS Founding Program, which was a tremendous success.

Distinguished Service Cohort
Jonathan Auerbach
(Council of Chapters ASA Award for Outstanding Chapter Service Winner)
For outstanding service and leadership to the WSS as President, University Representative Coordinator, and Hansen Lecture Committee Member and Chair.

Gary Cline
For excellent service as Social Arrangements Committee Chair and for enthusiastically stepping forward to serve in that role while concurrently serving as Representative-at-Large.

Lloyd Hicks
For dedicated service as Treasurer of the Society and for consistently and reliably coordinating the WSS election ballot system.

Future Stars Cohort
Ujjayini Das and Patrick Roney

For serving as energetic student representatives, contributing as members of the Social Arrangements Committee, and leading the first student-representative-led event, Forecast the Bloom: Petals, Probabilities, and Prizes, a hackathon promoting applied statistical problem-solving and student engagement.

Congratulations to all of this year's award recipients. We also extend our sincere thanks to the many WSS members whose time, dedication, and service have contributed to the Society's success throughout the year.

The 2026 Gertrude M. Cox Award Goes to Yajuan Si



The 2026 Gertrude M. Cox Award goes to Dr. Yajuan Si, in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the field, dedication to mentoring, and statistical leadership, which exemplify the legacy of Dr. Cox. Dr. Si is a Research Associate Professor at the Survey Research Center and Associate Director of the Michigan Program in Survey and Data Science at the University of Michigan. She joined Michigan in 2017 after three years on the faculty at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in biostatistics and population health. She earned her Ph.D. in Statistical Science from Duke University and completed postdoctoral training at Columbia University.

Her research develops statistical methods that connect data analysis to study design, with an emphasis on Bayesian approaches to population inference. Her work spans design- and model-based survey inference, data integration, missing data methods, confidentiality protection, and causal inference, with applications in the social and health sciences. A central focus of her research program is improving population inference from complex and integrated data sources by addressing selection and nonresponse bias through principled modeling and design-informed adjustment.

About the Gertrude M. Cox Award: The Gertrude Cox Award was established in 2003 through a joint agreement between the Washington Statistical Society (WSS) and RTI International. in memory of Gertrude M. Cox (1900-1978). The award annually recognizes a statistician in early to mid-career (less than 15 years after terminal degree) who has made significant contributions to one or more of the areas of applied statistics in which Gertrude Cox worked: survey methodology, experimental design, biostatistics, and statistical computing. This award is made possible by funding from RTI. The recipient is chosen by a six-person committee - three each from RTI and WSS. Nominations for each year's Gertrude Cox Award will be accepted early in the year. More details about the award can be found at the WSS website: https://washstat.org/awards/#Cox.

The 2026 Roger Herriot Award Goes to Terrance Savitsky



The 2026 Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics goes to Dr. Terrance Savitsky in recognition of his exceptional contributions to Bayesian statistical modeling. His work has been instrumental in connecting official statistics with the rapidly evolving fields of statistics and data science, leading to significant advancements in small area estimation, privacy, and the integration of multiple data sources. Since 2021, Dr. Savitsky has served as a Senior Research Mathematical Statistician at the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), providing technical leadership in the development and adoption of statistical methodologies for the production of published economic survey statistics. His methodological research has made major contributions to Bayesian inference under complex informative sampling designs, particularly through scalable divide-and-conquer approaches. He has also helped bridge traditional survey statistics with Bayesian and machine learning methods, including seminal work on incorporating informative sampling designs into Bayesian models and combining probability and non-probability samples. Additionally, he has advanced privacy-preserving Bayesian inference through model-based privacy as an efficient alternative to additive noise.

Throughout his career, Dr. Savitsky has built a strong reputation as a researcher and collaborator, applying methodological work to real challenges in federal statistics. He has also contributed to the broader community through publications, presentations, and collaborations that support more modern statistical practices beyond federal settings.

About the Roger Herriot Award: The Roger Herriot Award was established following Dr. Herriot's death in 1994 through a joint effort of the Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections of the American Statistical Association (ASA), along with the Washington Statistical Society (WSS), in his memory. Nominations are sought annually for innovation in federal statistics. The award is intended to reflect the special characteristics that marked Roger Herriot's career, including dedication to issues of measurement, improvements in the efficiency of data collection programs, and the improvement and use of statistical data for policy analysis. More details about the award and past recipients can be found on the WSS website: https://washstat.org/awards/herriot.html.

The 2026 Julius Shiskin Award Goes to Paul Schreyer



The 2026 Julius Shiskin Award goes to Dr. Paul Schreyer, in recognition of his depth of knowledge, significant contributions, and dedication to advancing the measurement and use of economic statistics. Dr Schreyer is the Director of Research and Enterprise at the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence (ESCoE) at King's College London, has made extraordinary contributions to the fields of productivity measurement, national accounts, and economic statistics. His career spans international public service, academic research, and the development of statistical standards used by governments and institutions worldwide. He received his Doctorate in Mathematical Economics with distinction from the University of Innsbruck, Austria in 1986.

At the OECD, where he served for over three decades in progressively senior roles — culminating as Chief Statistician and Director of the Statistics and Data Directorate (2020–2024) — Dr. Schreyer led and shaped the international standards that underpin how countries measure economic output, capital, and productivity. He is the author of two definitive OECD Manuals, *Measuring Productivity* (2001) and *Measuring Capital* (2009), which remain the methodological foundations for national statistical agencies across the globe. His research advanced the price measurement of information and communication technology, the statistical treatment of free digital services, natural capital in productivity accounts, and the measurement of health and education output. As Rapporteur for the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, and through co-authored work with leading economists, Dr. Schreyer consistently bridged rigorous statistical methodology with the broader interpretation of economic and social well-being.

About the Shiskin Award: Nominations are invited for the annual Julius Shiskin Memorial Award for Economic Statistics. The Award is given in recognition of unusually original and important contributions in the development of economic statistics or in the use of statistics in interpreting the economy. Contributions are recognized for statistical research, development of statistical tools, application of information technology techniques, use of economic statistical programs, management of statistical programs, or developing public understanding of measurement issues. The Award was established in 1980 by the WSS and is now co-sponsored by the WSS, the National Association for Business Economics, and the Business and Economics Statistics Section of the American Statistical Association. The recipient is chosen by a six-person committee consisting of three representatives, one from each from the three sponsoring organizations, and three recent award recipients. More details about the award and the past awardees can be found at https://community.amstat.org/businessandeconomicstatisticssection/awards/shiskin.

WSS K-12 Data Visualization Poster Competition Winners

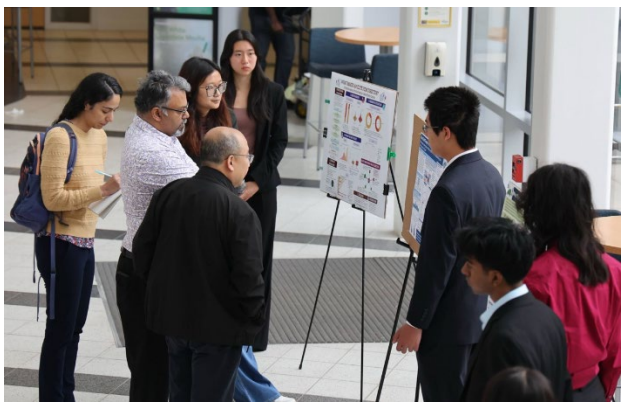
The American Statistical Association has an annual poster competition for students in Grades K-12. The aim is to increase statistical awareness and understanding via a statistical poster containing two or more related graphics that summarize a set of data, look at the data from different points of view, and answer specific questions about the data in a coherent manner. Judging is blinded with no identifying information provided.

The Washington Statistical Society awards prizes for the competition in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Winners of this local competition are then entered into the national competition.

10th-12th Grade
1st place: Callie Deng; What makes an elite film director?
2nd place: Ethan Chen; Blue Crab Trends: Policy vs Ecosystem
3rd place: Irene Kim; First Scorer World Cup Advantage
Honorable Mention: Sarah Li; Differences in Intron Retention Manifest across Disease Severities in Lupus

7th-9th Grade
1st place: Alice Zhao; Analyzing Swimflation through 100LCM swimming world records
2nd place: Yacob Zwedu; How much is too much
3rd place: Jeevesh Sivakumar; The algorithm of atrophy

We would also like to use this opportunity to give a big shout-out to all the judges. Without them, all of this is not possible. Thank you so much for your time, fairness, responsiveness, and diligence in selecting the posters winners this year. Your contributions mean a lot to the candidates and WSS.



Judges: *Abhijit Dasgupta, Binbing Yu, Cindy Yang, Darcy Morris, Denisse Olarte, Elizabeth Petraglia, Kapil Rathi, Mark Otto, Rhoda Muse, Richard Sigman, Sabrina Zhang, Srijeeta Mitra, Susan Mayo, Wei Fu.*

Regional High School Science Fair Poster Winners

The Washington Statistical Society annually participates in judging regional high school science fairs. We congratulate all this year's winners!

Student	Award	Region
Gia Capaldi	First	Montgomery
Sathvik Dasari	Second	Montgomery
Amir Nilfouroushan	Third	Montgomery
Nikhil Rao	Honorable Mention	Montgomery
Rishik Shenolikar	Honorable Mention	Montgomery
Shuven Khurana	Honorable Mention	Montgomery
Lang Xiong	First	Fairfax
David Kharitonashvili, Isaac Leetyn	Second	Fairfax
Adithya Pillai Lang Xiong	Second	Fairfax
Lexin Zhu	Third	Fairfax
Priya Deshpande, Radhika Deshpande	Honorable Mention	Fairfax
Sarah Li	Honorable Mention	Fairfax
Venita Wan	Honorable Mention	Fairfax
Tiger Deng, Shunyao Yan	Honorable Mention	Fairfax
Clara Amundson, Amna Abdelbagi	Third	Northern Virginia
Thomas Park	Honorable Mention	Northern Virginia
Hanan Alamri, Diana Galindo Rodriguez	Honorable Mention	Northern Virginia
Madison Caramanica	Honorable Mention	Northern Virginia
Sid Ghosh	Honorable Mention	Northern Virginia
Xuanqi Ni, Botao Tang, Chenfan Wu	Honorable Mention	Northern Virginia



We would also like to take this opportunity to give a special shout-out to WSS Science Fair Coordinator **Denisse Olarte** (pictured on the left), as well as **Huanjun Zhang** (pictured on the right) and all of the judges who volunteered their time and expertise this year. Their dedication and commitment have been invaluable to the success of this important event, which WSS has proudly supported for many years. Thank you for helping inspire and encourage the next generation of scientists!

2026 Curtis Jacobs Memorial Award for Outstanding Statistics Project

Rishik Shenolikar, 11th Grade, Montgomery Blair High School. Teacher: Dr. Jonathan Fritz

Runner Up:
Gia Capaldi, 9th Grade, Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart. Teacher: Marlen McKinney

2026 WSS Student Travel Award Winner: Aditi Sen



This year, the award goes to **Aditi Sen**, who recently completed her Ph.D. in Applied Statistics at the Department of Mathematics, University of Maryland, College Park (UMD).

Aditi's research interests lie at the intersection of survey statistics, data integration, small area estimation, Bayesian methods, and machine learning methodologies. She has already shown quite some achievements in these fields: three published articles and an insightful discussion that she wrote on the 2023 Morris Hansen Lecture paper. Apart from her research, internship, and teaching obligations, she managed to find time to serve the statistical community as a reviewer for *Survey Methodology,* the *Calcutta Statistical Association Bulletin*, and the *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*. She will join the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) in the fall as a postdoc fellow.

2026 WSS Outstanding Graduate Student Awards

Barrett Hobbs, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Georgetown University, Degree sought: MS in Mathematics and Statistics. Nominator: Ali Arab

Jiayi Zheng, Department of Statistics, George Mason University, Degree sought: PhD. Nominator: Brett D. Hunter and Jiayang Sun.

WHO'S IN SPOTLIGHT THIS TIME?

Sabrina Zhang



Meet WSS Member Sabrina Zhang …

Sabrina Zhang is a Survey Statistician at Westat, where she works primarily on multiple large-scale, nationally representative surveys. She collaborates with federal agencies across various fields, including education and longitudinal health research. Sabrina's work focuses on sample design and the application of survey weighting techniques. Currently, her research centers on health disparities, utilizing advanced survival analysis methods to examine differential outcomes across populations.

1. Where do you work and what do you do?

I work at Westat as a survey statistician. I spend most of my time thinking about sampling and weighting, and convincing different statistical softwares to do exactly what I want them to do.

2. What attracted you to your current position?

I love that the work is always a little bit challenging and never boring. There's always something new to figure out, which keeps me on my toes in a good way.

3. What skills are most important for the next generation of statistics professionals?

I think the people who really stand out are the ones who don't just rush through data, but pause to think—what is this data actually saying, and what question are we trying to answer? That kind of clarity goes a long way.

4. Finish this sentence: "I joined WSS to…"
I joined WSS to meet other people who speak the same "statistics language" and to give back to a community that I've learned so much from.

5. What was your first job?
My first job was at Westat—and I never left! I've been lucky to grow my career here, surrounded by incredibly intelligent, supportive colleagues who make the work both inspiring and genuinely enjoyable.

6. Why did you join the statistics profession?
I've always loved math, not just to solve equations, but to solve real problems. Statistics felt like the perfect bridge between theory and the real world.

7. What's one piece of advice you'd give to students or early-career professionals?
Be curious about everything, even the things that don't seem directly related to your job. You never know which random skill or experience will end up being surprisingly useful later on.

8. How do you like to spend your free time away from work?
I love traveling, especially going somewhere completely new and just exploring. Getting a little lost (in a good way) is part of the fun.

9. What is your favorite meal or local restaurant?
I'm a big fan of all kinds of cuisine, but if I had to pick one, Olazzo in downtown Bethesda is currently one of my favorite go-to spots.

10. What keeps you motivated in your work?
What keeps me motivated is the chance to keep learning—there's always a new method or challenge to explore, which keeps the work engaging and lets me channel my curiosity into something meaningful.

WSS LECTURES & SEMINARS (RECAP)

February to June 2026

The Roger Herriot Award Seminar, presented by the 2025 award recipient, Daniell Toth of the National Institute of Statistical Sciences, was held successfully on February 10, 2026, virtually via Instats, with more than 55 participants. The talk, titled *"Tree-Based Models for Addressing Nonresponse in Bureau of Labor Statistics Surveys,"* was chaired by Avi Feller of University of California, Berkeley and was cosponsored by Washington Statistical Society (WSS), the Government Statistics Section (GSS) and the Social Statistics Section (SSS) of the American Statistical Association (ASA).

The WSS 33rd Annual Morris Hansen Lecture, delivered by Partha Lahiri of the University of Maryland, was held successfully on March 30, 2026, at Summit Consulting LLC, with about 105 attendees. The lecture, titled *"Combining Information from Multiple Data Sources Using Statistical Modeling and Methods,"* featured discussions by Beka Steorts of Duke University and Lisa Mirel of the National Science Foundation. The session was chaired by Carolina Franco. A reception catered by Millar & Co. followed the lecture. WSS extends its gratitude to Summit Consulting LLC for generously providing the venue and covering half of the catering costs.

The WSS April Webinar, presented by Jae-Kwang Kim of Iowa State University, was held successfully on April 2, 2026, via Instats, with more than 100 attendees. The talk, titled *"Bregman Projection for Calibration Estimation in Survey Sampling,"* was chaired by Pushpal Mukhopadhyay, the WSS Methodology Section Chair.

The JPSM Distinguished Lecture, presented by Matthew J. Salganik of Princeton University, was held successfully on April 9, 2026, at University of Maryland. The lecture, titled "*Life Trajectories and Life Chances: New Approaches from Population Registries and AI*," featured discussions by Amy O'Hara of the Georgetown University Research Data Center and Frauke Kreuter of the University of Maryland, and was cosponsored by Joint Program of Survey Methodology (JPSM) and WSS.

The Gertrude M. Cox Award Lecture, presented by Yajuan Si of University of Michigan, the 2026 Award recipient, was held successfully on June 3, 2026, via Zoom, with more than 50 attendees. The lecture, titled *"Design-based thinking in the model-based practice: Shaping survey methodology for modern data science,"* was co-sponsored by WSS and RTI International. The event was hosted by Marcus Berzofsky of RTI International, Chair of the Gertrude Cox Award Committee, and coordinated by Wei Fu, WSS Methodology Program Chair.

RTI International and WSS cohosted **a Small Area Estimation Webinar** on June 26, 2026, via Zoom. Over 165 attended this virtual event. In today's survey landscape, policymakers increasingly need timely, precise, location-based data to guide decisions. Small area estimation (SAE) helps agencies produce reliable subnational and local estimates when budgets are constrained and direct estimates aren't feasible. The webinar featured a panel discussion with Partha Lahiri of University of Maryland, Benmei Liu of National Cancer Institute, Matthew Williams, and Stephanie Zimmer of RTI International, moderated by Marcus Berzofsky of RTI International. Panelists discussed how emerging SAE methods can help address survey challenges and support efficient, actionable decision-making.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Stay Tuned for More Upcoming Events

- **WSS 100th at JSM 2026 at Boston, August 1-6, 2026**
  - *Topic-contributed session*, A Century of Washington Statistics, featuring five past WSS presidents—Dan Kasprzyk, Phil Kott, John Czajka, Linda Young, and Michael Cohen. Past president Jonathan Auerbach will serve as Chair and Organizer.
  - *WSS Joint Mixer* with SRMS, GSS, and SSS of ASA
    - **Monday, August 3, 2026, 7:00–9:00 PM**
    - W-Grand Ballroom, Section E, Westin Boston Waterfront

- **2026 DC-AAPOR/WSS Review Preview Conference**
  September 9, 2026 at Gallup (901 F Street NW, Washington, DC 20004)
  - We know you can't attend every conference, so DC-AAPOR and WSS are teaming up once again to bring you exemplary presentations from the local research community.
  - Register the conference at **https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dc-aapor-wss-2026-review-preview-tickets-1991565013567**
  - Submit abstract at the link: **https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfaksIFY762uBtbtMu-MwbOBwhRoSBcI-_7BnWR8ESQOLasmA/viewform**
  - **Call for Abstracts (see submission link above):**
    At the Review Preview Conference, you will get the opportunity to share your work with local colleagues, hear what others are doing, and connect with colleagues in person.

    We invite anyone to submit an abstract for presentations or poster of research never previously presented, or presented at one of the conferences below in the last year:

    - ✓ American Association for Public Opinion Research Conference
    - ✓ Joint Statistical Meetings
    - ✓ World Association for Public Opinion Research
    - ✓ European Survey Research Association
    - ✓ International Statistical Institute World Statistics Congress
    - ✓ International Field Directors and Technologies Conference

- ✓ Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology
- ✓ Federal Computer Assisted Survey Information Collection (FedCASIC) Workshop
- ✓ Data user group meetings or conferences, like the NCES Data Users Group or the Association of Public Data Users
- ✓ First Workshop on Bridging NLP and Public Opinion Research
- ✓ Small Area Estimation Conference
- ✓ Any other statistics and survey methodology conferences or workshops

We will be hosting a happy hour after the conference to catch up with old friends and make new ones. Details to follow as we get closer to the conference.

Call for Sponsorship

DC-AAPOR and WSS would not be able to host events like this without the help of sponsorship. If interested in helping sponsor this or future events, please reach out to Jason Kosakow at program.chair.dcaapor@gmail.com or Benmei Liu at WashStat.WebMaster@Gmail.Com.

ADDITIONAL TIDBITS

ADDITIONAL BUT NO LESS PERTINANT!

Seeking Old WSS Newsletters

The project to create PDF scans of the WSS newsletter paper archive began in 2023 and was completed in 2024. PDF scans of WSS newsletters from 1945 to 1995 are now available in the WSS newsletter archive https://washstat.org/newsletters . Unfortunately, we discovered that the paper archive is incomplete. We have discovered both missing issues, and issues with missing pages. The issues with missing pages have not been added to the online newsletter archive. As a result, the online archive currently does not include September 1990, June 1979, September 1972, December 1971, June 1971, June 1968, May 1968, February 1968, February 1967, November 1963, and December 1962. Additionally, there were pieces of paper in the paper archive that said "No Newsletter" for December 1973, December 1972, and January 1972. We don't know if that means no newsletter was created for these months, or if these were lost.

For earlier years, there likely are missing newsletters as well. For example, the archive contained only three newsletters from 1946, and only two newsletters from 1947.

We would like to hear from you if you have an archive of paper WSS newsletters from 1990 and earlier years that includes one or more of the missing/incomplete/unknown status issues. Please contact either John Czajka (johnlczajka@gmail.com) or Chris Moriarity (cdm7@cdc.gov).

We thank Elizabeth Margosches for providing copies of the December 1994, November 1993, and October 1992 newsletters for scanning in response to an earlier appeal.

Additionally, the online newsletter archive mainly contains the electronic version of the newsletter between 1996 and 2002. There are many broken links in these electronic newsletters. If we are able to locate sufficient paper newsletters from this period to scan into PDFs to supplement the electronic newsletters, we intend to do this. Please contact us if you have a significant collection of paper newsletters from this period that you are willing to loan for this initiative.

Washington Statistical Society: A Century of History

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Amy Lin, the WSS history book has been updated to document the Society's story through June 2026.

The updated history book can be viewed or downloaded from the WSS History Page: https://washstat.org/history.html.

Introducing svy: A Python Package for Complex Survey Design and Analysis

Mamadou S. Diallo, Ph.D. | Samplics, Hoboken, NJ | msdiallo@samplics.org

In supporting WSS members, the Job Seeker Ally provides technical skills spotlights in the changing analytics world. This month, we feature svy, a new Python package for complex survey design and analysis, and highlight the growing role of modern, open-source tools in applied statistics.

Python is universally recognized as the most popular language for data science and AI, largely due to its open-source versatility, massive ecosystem, and beginner-friendly syntax. Evidence of this dominance appears across industry indexes and developer surveys, Platforms like LinkedIn, Indeed, and Dice Tech Jobs typically show Python as a requirement for the majority of data science and AI roles.

Python has historically lagged behind R and SAS for complex survey analysis, but that gap is now filled by svy, the rigorously validated Python package designed specifically for complex survey design, weighting, and analysis.

****

Software support for design-based inference is well established in Stata, SAS, SPSS, and R, where the `survey` package by Thomas Lumley has long served as the reference implementation in the research community. Python, despite becoming one of the dominant languages for applied data work, has lacked a comparably comprehensive tool. Existing Python libraries address narrow aspects of survey methodology; none provides the integrated end-to-end workflow that survey practitioners need.

`svy` is an open-source Python package (MIT license) that aims to close this gap. It supports the full complex survey workflow — sample size calculation, sample selection, weight adjustment and calibration, point and variance estimation, categorical analysis, and generalized linear models — and has been validated against R's `survey` package to produce numerically identical results to at least six significant digits across supported methods, except for where deliberate choices were made to apply different justifiable adjustments. Often these deviations match established software like Stata.

The package succeeds `samplics`, an earlier Python library by the same author, and represents a ground-up redesign aimed at broader workflow coverage, production-readiness, performance, and a more Pythonic API. It is intended as a modern complement to established environments such as Stata, SAS, and SPSS for NSOs and statistical agencies.

SCOPE

svy provides:

- **Sample size calculation** for estimation and comparison objectives, with adjustments for design effects, stratification, and anticipated nonresponse.
- **Sample selection** including simple random sampling, systematic sampling, probability proportional to size (PPS), and multi-stage cluster designs.
- **Weight adjustment** including nonresponse adjustment, poststratification, generalized regression (GREG) calibration, raking, and weight trimming.
- **Point estimation** for means, totals, proportions, ratios, and quantiles, with Taylor linearization variance that correctly reflects stratification and clustering.
- **Replication-based variance estimation** via BRR, Fay-BRR, jackknife, bootstrap, and SDR — with automatic propagation of all weight adjustments to the replicate weights, so replication-based standard errors reflect the full uncertainty of the weighting process, not only sampling variability.
- **Categorical analysis** including one-way and two-way design-adjusted tabulations, design-based t-tests, and Rao–Scott tests.
- **Generalized linear models** (Gaussian, binomial, Poisson, Gamma) with design-adjusted standard errors.

The package is built on Polars, NumPy, and SciPy, with performance-critical components implemented in Rust (available separately on PyPI as svy-rs). On a standard laptop, a full analytical pipeline including bootstrap variance estimation with 500 replicates completes in under a quarter of a second.

DESIGN

svy exposes two primary objects. Design is an immutable descriptor that declares the sampling structure: strata, primary sampling units, weights, replicate-weight configuration, and similar metadata. Sample binds a Polars DataFrame to a Design, validates the combination at construction, and exposes analytical capabilities through namespaces (Sample.estimation, Sample.weighting, Sample.selection, Sample.categorical, Sample.glm).

Sample is immutable: every transformation, e.g. subsetting, reweighting, recoding, returns a new Sample rather than modifying the original. The design metadata propagates automatically through every operation, which makes pipelines auditable, reproducible by construction, and free of the bookkeeping required to reattach strata, PSU identifiers, or weights after each step.

EXAMPLE

The NHANES public-use file ships with masked variance pseudo-stratum (SDMVSTRA) and pseudo-PSU (SDMVPSU) variables along with the appropriate two-year weight, here the MEC examination weight WTMEC2YR. Therefore, using svy to produce design-based estimates is straightforward:

```
import svy

data = svy.io.read_csv("nhanes_demo_bmx.csv")

design = svy.Design(
    stratum="SDMVSTRA",
    psu="SDMVPSU",
    wgt="WTMEC2YR",
)

nhanes = svy.Sample(data=data, design=design)

# Mean BMI for adults, with design-based SE
adults = nhanes.filter(svy.col("RIDAGEYR") >= 20)
print(adults.estimation.mean("BMXBMI"))
```

A design-adjusted logistic regression — for example, modeling hypertension on age, sex, and BMI — uses a parallel interface:

```
model = adults.glm.fit(
    y="hypertension",
    x=["RIDAGEYR", svy.Cat("RIAGENDR"), "BMXBMI"],
    family="binomial",
)
print(model)
```

For users familiar with R's survey package, the mapping is direct: svydesign() corresponds to svy.Design() together with svy.Sample(), svymean() to Sample.estimation.mean(), svyglm() to Sample.glm.fit(), and as.svrepdesign() is handled by passing a RepWeights configuration to svy.Design().

VALIDATION AND STATUS

svy has been compared with R's survey package across the full range of supported operations — Taylor linearization (means, totals, proportions, ratios), replication methods (BRR, jackknife, bootstrap, SDR), calibration (poststratification, GREG, raking), categorical analysis, and GLMs. Results agree to at least six significant digits in every case, except where svy adopts a different, justifiable adjustment by design — and in most of those instances the deviation aligns with the convention used in established software such as Stata. The full side-by-side comparison, including reproducible R and Python code, is available at svylab.com/learn/notes/posts/svy-vs-r-comparison.

The package is in active development; the current release is 0.18 (Beta). Core functionality is stable and production-ready. Small area estimation is provided through a companion package, `svy-sae` (powered by JAX); high-speed I/O for SAS, SPSS, and Stata files is provided through `svy-io`.

ACCESS

- **Installation command:** `pip install svy` (make sure Python and pip are already installed on your system)
- **Documentation:** svylab.com/docs/svy
- **Source code:** github.com/samplics-org/svy
- **Contact:** info@svylab.com

Feedback from the WSS community would be especially welcome as the package moves toward a 1.0 release — in particular from members working with NHANES, NHIS, BRFSS, CPS, ACS, and the other federal survey programs whose designs `svy` is built to handle.

Mamadou S. Diallo is the founder of Samplics and the author of svy and the earlier samplics package.

Petals and Probabilities
Celebrating Students' Day with WSS

The national cherry blossom festival happens to be one of the most attractive events around Washington D.C. during the spring and like everybody else, statisticians should experience the fun too! So, this year the student representative committee of WSS hosted the first ever *WSS Students' Day: Petals and Probabilities* in the spirit of celebrating the cherry blossoms by organizing a hackathon to predict the peak bloom date!

On February 21, 2026, WSS hosted an all-day hackathon at the Massive Data Institute (MDI), Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy. Twenty students from the DMV area as well as from neighboring states such as New Jersey gathered to develop predictive modeling of historical bloom data. The participants showcased their impressive critical thinking, unique ways of approaching the task and coming up with innovative solutions – something we admired in the next generation of statisticians among us!

We were also joined by WSS members including our President Benmei Liu, past president Jonathan Auerbach, social arrangements committee chair Gary Cline, and representative-at-large Leanna Moron. We hosted a successful meet-and-greet session with the WSS members in attendance for the students so that they get to involve themselves with WSS.

Winner of *Petals and Probabilities*:
We received a pool of strong and amazing submissions. The judges declared **Wesley DeMontigny**, a PhD student at the Biological Graduate Sciences Program at University of Maryland College Park, as the winner for his near accurate prediction of the peak bloom date! We will recognize the winner at the WSS annual awards ceremony on June 17th.

Gratitude to Our Sponsors:
A celebration of this magnitude is made possible only by the generosity of our community. We extend our deepest thanks to:

American Statistical Association for co-sponsoring the expense of the event;

Massive Data Institute at Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy for providing their stunning venue and volunteering to handle the logistics of the event.

A special thanks to **Jonathan Auerbach and his colleagues** at **George Mason University** for helping us with the content of the hackathon, including the datasets and GitHub repository set up. Without Jonathan addressing the students at the event and being available throughout the day to support them, a successful *Petals and Probabilities* would not have been possible.

Looking forward:
Witnessing the success of the first *WSS Students' Day* celebration, we are excited to keep the tradition going at the next *Petals and Probability* event in **February 2027**! We hope to bring more student involvement in WSS as we keep going.

Ujjayini Das and Patrick Roney
WSS Student Representative Committee (2025-present)



WSS Members Named as ASA Fellows

Let's give a well-deserved round of applause to:

- Lane Burgett
- Snigdhansu Chatterjee
- Andrea Cook
- Carolina Franco
- Theresa Kim
- Benmei Liu
- Lisa Mirel
- Pushpal Mukhopadhyay
- Binbing Yu

Thank you for your outstanding contributions to the statistical community and for advancing the field through your leadership, research, and service. Keep up the great work!
We also extend our appreciation to the WSS/SRMS Committee on ASA Fellows for its efforts in identifying, nominating, and supporting several of this year's honorees.

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