# 2020 SSC Elections

Société statistique du Canada
Statistical Society of Canada

The election committee hereby publishes a list of candidates for positions on the executive and board of directors that will become vacant on July 1, 2020. In addition, candidates for positions on the executives of the sections are also provided. Candidates for the elected accreditation committees are forthcoming. Biographical sketches for all these candidates will appear later in *Liaison*.

**MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**
(Three-year terms)

**PRESIDENT-ELECT**
(President, 2021–22; Past President, 2022–23)
**Grace Yi**, Western University

**TREASURER**
**Patrick Brown**, University of Toronto

**MEETINGS COORDINATOR**
**Nadia Ghazzali**, University of Quebec at Trois-Rivières

**REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
(Two-year terms)

**ATLANTIC PROVINCES**
(One to be elected)
**Michael McIsaac**, UPEI
**Guohua Yan**, University of New Brunswick
**Asokan Varyath**, Memorial University of Newfoundland

**QUEBEC**
(Two to be elected)
**Cody Hyndman**, Concordia University
**Karim Oualkacha**, University of Quebec at Montréal
**Paramita Chaudhuri**, McGill University
**Denis Talbot**, Laval University

**ONTARIO**
(Two to be elected)
**Edward Chen**, Statistics Canada
**Zeny Feng**, University of Guelph
**Melanie Poulin-Costello**, Roche
**Michael Wallace**, University of Waterloo
**Olli Saarela**, University of Toronto

**MANITOBA–SASKATCHEWAN–NORTHWEST TERRITORIES–NUNAVUT**
(One to be elected)
**Mohammad Jafari Jozani**, University of Manitoba
**Yang Zhao**, University of Regina

**ALBERTA–BRITISH COLUMBIA–YUKON**
(One to be elected)
**Linglong Kong**, University of Alberta
**Ehsan Karim**, University of British Columbia

**SECTION EXECUTIVES**

**ACTUARIAL SCIENCE SECTION EXECUTIVE**
(Three-year terms; 2020–23)

PRESIDENT-ELECT
(President, 2021–22; Past President, 2022–23)
**Andrei Badescu**, University of Toronto

**BIOSTATISTICS SECTION EXECUTIVE**
(Three-year terms; 2020–23)

PRESIDENT-ELECT
(President, 2021–22; Past President, 2022–23)
**Rob Deardon**, University of Calgary

**BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS SECTION EXECUTIVE**
(Three-year terms; 2020–23)

PRESIDENT-ELECT
(President, 2021–22; Past President, 2022–23)
**Jean-François Plante**, HEC Montréal

**DATA SCIENCE AND ANALYTICS SECTION EXECUTIVE**
(Three-year terms; 2020–23, with the exception of President—two-year terms, 2020–22)

PRESIDENT
(Past President, 2021–22)
**Nathan Taback**, University of Toronto

PRESIDENT-ELECT
(President, 2021–22; Past President, 2022–23)
**Nathaniel Stevens**, University of Waterloo

SECRETARY
**Alberto Nettel-Aguirre**, University of Calgary

TREASURER
**Shirley Mills**, Carleton University

**PROBABILITY SECTION EXECUTIVE**
(Three-year terms; 2020–23)

PRESIDENT-ELECT
(President, 2021–22; Past President, 2022–23)
**Éric Marchand**, University of Sherbrooke

TREASURER
**Gennady Shaikhet**, Carleton University

**STATISTICAL EDUCATION SECTION EXECUTIVE**
(Three-year terms; 2020–23)

PRESIDENT-ELECT
(President, 2021–22; Past President, 2022–23)
**Bruce Dunham**, University of British Columbia

**SURVEY METHODS SECTION EXECUTIVE**
(Three-year terms; 2020–23)

PRESIDENT-ELECT
(President, 2021–22; Past President, 2022–23)
**Jean-François Beaumont**, Statistics Canada

**THE SSC ELECTION COMMITTEE 2019–2020**

**Robert Platt**, Chair and SSC Past-President, McGill University
**David Haziza**, University of Montréal
**Erica Moodie**, McGill University
**Soyean Kim**, Technical Safety BC
**Patrick Brown**, University of Toronto
**René Ferland**, UQAM
**Chunfang Devon Lin**, Queen's University
**Susie Fortier**, Statistics Canada
**Asokan Variyath**, Memorial University of Newfoundland
**Jean-François Renaud**, UQAM
**David Campbell**, Carleton University

## New Investigator Presentation Award at SSC 2020

Returning to the 2020 SSC Annual Meeting is the New Investigator Presentation Award for contributed talks given by new investigators. Entries will be judged on the quality of both the presentation and the underlying research. The award consists of a certificate and a $500 cash prize.

To be eligible for the award, the presenter must be within 5 years of beginning their first academic appointment (i.e., postdoc or assistant professor), and within 10 years of completing their PhD program. Presentations based on joint work with a collaborator who does not fit the definition of a new investigator are eligible, as long as the new investigator presents the work.

To enter, the new investigator must

- submit the abstract of the contributed talk through the meeting website;
- indicate at the time of submission of the abstract in the space provided on the meeting website that they wish to be considered for the award;
- email to sscnewinvest@ssc.ca the date they obtained their PhD and the date they began their first academic appointment, so that their eligibility can be confirmed.

Thank you in advance for your interest!

**Marie-Pier Côté**
Chair, New Investigator Committee

## Call for Student Teams for Case Studies in Data Analysis Competition 2020

The Case Studies in Data Analysis Poster Competition will be held during the annual meeting of Statistical Society of Canada (SSC) at Carleton University. The case studies are intended to provide enthusiastic teams of graduate and senior undergraduate students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge to the analysis of big datasets. Each participating team will choose to analyze one of the two datasets described below. Each team is strongly encouraged to identify a faculty member to support the members as they develop their analytic approach and final presentation. Team members will work together to present a poster summarizing their methods and analysis results at the annual meeting.

**Case Study 1: Predicting hourly electricity demand in Ontario**

Teams that select this case study will use the aggregated provincial-level hourly demand data for all sectors and annual demand data for each sector from the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) and the hourly air temperature and weather data from ETH Zurich and Imperial College London to develop statistical models to predict hourly electricity demand in the residential sector in Ontario.

**Case Study 2: Predicting podcast popularity in iTunes**

Teams that select this case study will use podcasts from iTunes to develop statistical models to extract features from the provided podcasts and predict the number of reviews for the podcasts based on the extracted features.

**Awards**

One award will be presented for the best poster in each of the two case studies. The value of the award from SSC for each case study in the 2020 competition is $750 with the expectation that this award is shared equally among the members of each winning team. An additional award with value of $750 will be awarded by CER to the second best team working on Case Study 1. The committee reserves the right to decline giving an award for each case study if the number of entries is insufficient.

SSC also provides a total of $3,000 travel award for all participating teams excluding the winning teams. It is expected that this award will be shared equally among the participating teams excluding the winning teams for both case studies.

Depending on the number of participating teams in each of the two case studies, 1–2 teams for each of the case studies will be selected as honourable mention. There is no cash prize for honourable mentions.

All participating students will receive a certificate of participation.

**Important Dates**

**TBA: Conference registration**

Teams interested in participating in the competition MUST register for the annual SSC meeting. We require each team to have at least one team member to register for the meeting (using student registration rate). Please check the deadline for the conference registration at https://ssc.ca/en/meetings/annual/2020-annual-meeting

**May 11, 2020**: **Competition registration**

Teams interested in participating in the competition must register by this date by emailing the chair of the case studies in data analysis committee, Dr. Pingzhao Hu (Pingzhao.hu@umanitoba.ca). The registration information should include names and emails of team leader, team members, and faculty mentor(s); university name, case study number, presentation title, and indication of the team member(s) who are registered for the SSC conference.

**May 18, 2020**: **Case Study 2 prediction result submission**

Teams interested in participating in Case Study 2 must submit their prediction result (an Excel file with two columns: podcast ID, the number of predicted reviews. Please do not round the results into integer numbers.) for each of the podcast in the unlabeled dataset by this date to Dr. Kathryn Morrison (kathryn@precision-analytics.ca). Please name the file as CaseStudyNumber_TeamLeaderFullName_UniversityName.xlsx. This prediction result will take 30% of your final poster judging score.

**May 18, 2020**: **Abstract and group photo submission**

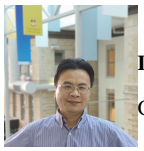
Teams interested in participating in the competition must submit an abstract (maximum 500 words) with sections of introduction, objective, methods, results and conclusions by this date to the chair of the case studies in data analysis committee, Dr. Pingzhao Hu (Pingzhao.hu@umanitoba.ca). **The abstract template can be downloaded here**. A group photo for each team should be also submitted by this date. Please name the files as CaseStudyNumber_TeamLeaderFullName_UniversityName.

**Team size**

We require that the number of team members (either undergraduate students or graduate students) in each team to be no more than four.

**Acknowledgements**
Many thanks to members of the case studies in data analysis committee for 2020 for their contributions: Dr. Kathryn Morrison, Precision Analytics Inc. and McGill University; Chel Hee Lee, Critical Care Medicine, Alberta Health Services & University of Calgary; Dr. Ehsan Karim, School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia; Dr. José Ribas Fernandes, Dr. Ryan Hum, Mr. Mantaj Hundal, Mr. Lukas Hansen, Mr. Michael Nadew, Mr. Matthew Hansen, Canada Energy Regulator.

**More details can be found at:** https://ssc.ca/en/meetings/annual/2020-annual-meeting/case-studies



**Dr. Pingzhao Hu**

Chair of the Case Studies in Data Analysis Committee

## Probability Section Update

Société statistique du Canada Statistical Society of Canada

The Probability Section is pleased to announce a machine learning related workshop, as well as the speakers in its four invited sessions for the 2020 SSC Annual Meeting at Carleton University in Ottawa.

**WORKSHOP:**

The section is sponsoring a workshop, organized and run by **Jay Newby** of the University of Alberta, entitled "Particle tracking in biology using machine learning." To quote from the abstract: “There are two basic ingredients for particle tracking: (1) microscopy videos of nanometer to micrometer sized "particles" suspended in a fluid and (2) a stochastic model of particle motion. Given these two ingredients, we can use machine learning methods to gain insight into micron-scale systems. Particle tracking has many applications in physics, chemistry, and biology. We will be focusing primarily on the latter [….] In biology, many new applications for particle tracking are beginning to emerge, thanks to advances in microscopy, machine learning, and neural networks.” We are very pleased to have Jay running this workshop.

**INVITED SESSIONS AND TENTATIVE SPEAKERS:**

The section is proposing the following four invited sessions for SSC 2020:

**50 years of Stochastics at Carleton University: Session in Honour of Miklos Csorgo**

Organized by: **Barbara Szyszkowicz**, Carleton University

Invited speakers:

**Yuliya Martsynyuk** (University of Manitoba)

Nonparametric Detection of Change in the Slope and Intercept in Linear Structural Errors-in-Variables Models

**Hao Yu** (Western University)

Nonlinear Statistical Inference and its Applications

**Masoud Nasari** (Carleton University)

On Randomly Weighted Data and Some of Their Applications

**50 years of Stochastics at Carleton University: Session in Honour of Donald A. Dawson**

Organized by: **Bouchra R. Nasri**, McGill University

Invited speakers:

**Luis Gorostiza** (CINVESTAV)

Percolation, Random Walks and Multilevel Branching Systems in Hierarchical Lattices

**Shui Feng** (McMaster University)

Kingman's Coalescent and Bayesian Nonparametric Analysis

**Jean Vaillancourt** (HEC Montréal)

Some Results (New and Old) for a Class of Interacting Branching Measure Valued Diffusions

**Directions to Goodness-of-Fit: a Memorial Session for Michael Stephens**

Organized by: **Richard Lockhart**, Simon Fraser University

Invited speakers:

**Louis-Paul Rivest** (Laval University)

Current Trends in Directional Data

**Simos Meintanis** (University of Athens)

Current Trends in Goodness-of-Fit

**Richard Lockhart** (Simon Fraser University)

Michael Stephens from Memory

**Advances in Research in Mathematical Finance**

Organized by: **Tony S. Wirjanto**, University of Waterloo

Invited speakers:

**Alexander Schied** (University of Waterloo)

Currency Target Zone Models, Price Impact, and Singular Stochastic Control

**Christoph Frei** (University of Alberta)

Optimal Closing Benchmarks in Financial Markets

**Silvana Pesenti** (University of Toronto)

To be announced

We are grateful to the organizers of the sessions for continuing to promote the diversity and depth of the Canadian probability community.

Watch for additional opportunities through contributed sessions in probability and mathematical statistics.

And if time allows you to stay on for a day or two in the nation’s capital, there will be additional talks on stochastic partial differential equations in Ottawa over the weekend of June 5 to 8, immediately following the SSC 2020 meeting.

**PROBABILITY STUDENT AWARD COMPETITION:**

In addition, the Probability Section will be sponsoring student competitions for talks and poster presentations at the annual SSC meeting. Details and instructions on how to apply for one of the competitions can be found on our section website:

https://ssc.ca/sites/default/files/imce/probability_-_student_research_awards_announce_2020_en.pdf

Please contact **René Ferland** at ferland.rene@uqam.ca for further information.

We look forward to continuing the tradition of a Probability Section dinner on the Monday evening of the SSC meeting. We encourage as many members as possible to join us for this enjoyable evening, held this year on June 1 with additional details to come.

**Jean Vaillancourt**
President, Probability Section

## Professor James V. Zidek Appointed to the Order of Canada 2019

"For his contributions to mathematical statistics and for his leadership in expanding the field in academia and government."

Professor **James V. Zidek** has been honoured by his appointment as an Officer of the Order of Canada, an appointment granted to those Canadians who make extraordinary contributions to the nation. The honour recognizes Dr. Zidek's leadership and influence in the advancement and application of the statistical sciences in Canada and internationally. Throughout his career, Dr. Zidek has shaped the very foundations of statistics, developing cutting edge techniques in a range of areas including Bayesian decision analysis, monitoring network design, and spatial prediction. He has applied his techniques to a striking array of areas to improve the health, welfare, and environment of Canadians. His impact is felt through his groundbreaking research, through the generations of students he has trained and inspired, and through his many leadership roles in the statistics community and in policy, in Canada and internationally.

Canada is admired throughout the world for the excellence of its national statistics office and respected for the importance it places on evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation. Dr. Zidek's work has contributed to this approach. He has pioneered new statistical methods that inform policies in a range of areas, from air pollution levels and the assessment of their adverse effects on health to setting standards of wood products. Because of his internationally respected expertise, Dr. Zidek has served on a number of scientific advisory committees.

Dr. Zidek has devoted much of his career to shaping statistical science in Canada as a discipline encompassing both theory and applied collaborative work. We see this in his founding and heading of the Statistics Department at the University of British Columbia, in his work at NSERC, in his input to Statistics Canada, and in his leadership and service in the Statistical Society of Canada.

## Dorothy Shoichet Award Winner Silvana Pesenti's Research Builds Bridges that Might Help Prevent the Next Financial Crisis

Insurance often gets a bad rap. For most of us, dealing with insurance companies is a necessary evil defined by unpleasant tasks such as filling out paperwork, defending claims, or spending money on ever increasing premiums.

For actuarial science researcher Silvana Pesenti, assistant professor in the Faculty of Arts & Science's Department of Statistical Sciences at the University of Toronto, insurance—and specifically risk assessment and regulations within the sector—is an exhilarating topic that she loves to spend time researching and talking about.

"When I tell people that I study mathematics and insurance, they often look at me sceptically, but from a mathematical point of view insurance is exceedingly interesting, because it's such a complex topic," Pesenti says.

"If you price a policy, you need to take a lot of different risks into account; the habits of people, particularly in health insurance, drastic changes in the weather, political tensions, all of it can play a significant role in how to assess risk."

Much of Pesenti's work focuses on helping insurance companies to navigate the complex process of understanding risks. Her research vision is to develop reliable statistical tools to assess the precision and accuracy of model results, and which can easily be used by people working in the industry.

"Many mathematical models which are currently in use in the insurance sector are outdated or are not fit-for-purpose. If you're interested in calculating your loss, you want to use a model that's good in modeling loss specifically—and not, let's say, capital gain. Otherwise, your results might be completely misleading."

Faulty risk assessments can have dire consequences—for individuals, but also for society at large.

Accurately calculating risk helps insurance companies treat their customers fairly and equally by, for example, not overcharging on premiums and prevent insolvency, which may leave people stranded without health insurance or pensions. Even more importantly, risk management can help prevent catastrophes, such as the 2008 financial crisis, which led to millions of people losing their life savings, family homes, and jobs.

"One aspect that led to the financial crisis was companies (mis-)using standard models that clearly didn't work well enough and the inadequacy of risk management," Pesenti says. "If you use models that aren't accurate, it can hurt an entire sector. That's true for calculating risk in the insurance sector but also in finance."

Recently, Pesenti and her fellow researchers developed a tailored and consistent risk assessment methodology that includes a shareable, open source code and data package, ready-to-use by anyone familiar with the coding language R.

"Practitioners don't necessarily have the time or mathematical background to keep up with the latest research advances and implement them in a programming language. That's the gap our R package fills," she says. "And it's really one of the aspects I love most about my research. It's huge potential of industry applications and that it builds bridges between academia and people in the industry."

In only four months, Pesenti's R package has been downloaded more than 900 times following its online launch in July, allowing insurance companies to do so called "reverse stress testing" of their insurance portfolios, in addition to more conventional stress testing.

"Normal stress testing is scenario-based, providing answers to questions such as, how will the entire insurance sector perform in a bad economy? Reverse stress testing is a lot more company-specific. A company can test which major risks will drive the company into insolvency," she says. "Our methodology is one of the first to provide a mathematically consistent foundation for both stress testing and reverse stress testing."

A company insuring, for example, people affected by wildfires, can use Pesenti's latest research to more accurately assess their performance if a catastrophe strikes—and make necessary changes to their policy based on the results. That way, insurance companies can minimize risk and even plan for scenarios where one adverse event triggers another, such as an earthquakes leading to a tsunami.

Pesenti's groundbreaking work in actuarial science, the discipline of applying mathematical and statistical methods to assess risk, recently earned her the prestigious Dorothy Shoichet Women Faculty Science Award of Excellence. The award supports up-and-coming female researchers by offering teaching relief, allowing women in academia to fully focus on their research.

"The Faculty of Arts & Science is pleased to congratulate Professor Pesenti on this terrific award that will allow her to advance her impactful research program that connects world-class fundamental statistical research to insurance practitioners," says Jay Pratt, vice-dean of research & infrastructure in A&S.

In addition to helping Pesenti focus on her passion for research, early career awards supporting women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) can play a role in diversifying the field, she says.

“There aren’t many women in my field and it’s especially important to get a boost early on to thrive in your career. You need to network, collaborate, and speak publicly about you work. This award will give me so much more flexibility and time to share my research with the people to make a difference and to put it to good use.”

## Tony Wirjanto Appointed as the Curator in Insurance and Asset Management for the World Economic Forum

On October 4, 2019, the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the University of Waterloo appointed Professor Tony Wirjanto as the Curator in Insurance and Asset Management for the WEF.

## The Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science Welcomes Assistant Professor Pengyu Wei

Pengyu Wei holds a PhD in Mathematics from Oxford University from 2018. He is joining us from a senior research associate position at the University of New South Wales Business School. His research interests include quantitative finance, risk management, and actuarial science. Given his research expertise at the interface between mathematical finance and actuarial science, Pengyu will create stronger linkages between existing faculty members in these two important areas.

## News from the University of Sherbrooke

News from the University of Sherbrooke

Klaus Herrmann joined the Department of Mathematics of the University of Sherbrooke as assistant professor on October 7, 2019. His research interests include copula-induced dependency structures, the clustering of dependent random variables, and multivariate risk measures. With a PhD from KU Leuven, Belgium (2015), Professor Herrmann joins Sherbrooke after postdoctoral work at KU Leuven, Waterloo, Concordia, and McGill.

## Waterloo Startup Aims to Revolutionize Food Delivery Industry

They won't graduate until next spring, but their startup has already taken flight.

The five founders of Gooloo recently earned a spot in the University of Waterloo's Concept $5K Finals, where they explained their business model to a panel of judges alongside nine other student teams.

"Only 6% of food delivery orders are placed from companies, and only 26% of food delivery orders are placed during weekdays," began Yuqian Li (Actuarial Science and Statistics) in her pitch on behalf of the Gooloo team. "The great potential of weekday lunch delivery services went unexploited. That's where Gooloo came in."

Li first sketched out the concept for Gooloo with four friends—Lu Lyu (Statistics), Yinong (Oliver) Wang (Computer Science and Statistics), Hansen Wang (Computer Engineering), and Zeyi Shen—in their first year at the University of Waterloo.

"We started to notice huge lines to buy lunch at different locations around campus," says Oliver Wang. "It was especially problematic for students with tight schedules. When we all started to work co-ops at local companies, we saw the same thing. Unlike people working in large downtown areas, people working in small- to mid-sized cities like Waterloo find fewer lunch spots near their office and experience long wait times."

The founders of Gooloo also identified a mismatch between student budgets and lunch prices. "For many students, prices at both university food courts and restaurants make daily lunches unaffordable," says Li.

In response to the expense and inconvenience they experienced firsthand, the five students came up with a unique solution—an online food court that provides free lunch delivery services to people living in population hotspots within small- to mid-sized cities.

"While giants like Uber provide delivery services, Gooloo brings revolution and innovation to North America's $25.4B food delivery industry," says Li.

Currently, customers can choose to purchase one, three, five, or 10 virtual meal tickets to store in their Google accounts and use to pre-order weekday lunches. Gooloo then partners with local restaurants to offer 15 lunch combos delivered in bulk to more than 35 major population hotspots in the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

By leveraging economies of scale to maximize cooking efficiency and reduce delivery times, Gooloo is able to provide discounted lunches to its customers. "Part of our competitive edge is our ability to offer high-quality lunch combos for an amazing deal," says Li.

After testing its business model on campus throughout 2018, Gooloo formally launched in February 2019 and has enjoyed steady growth throughout the year. Today, the company has captured the loyalty of 2,200 customers in Kitchener-Waterloo and fills more than 100 daily lunch orders.

"For now, we're still in the process of developing new ideas to improve our business model," says Lyu. "We want to become a data company, not just a delivery company. We want to apply AI and data concepts to better serve our customers and make more profits for the restaurants."

After finishing their studies in 2020, the founders of Gooloo plan to join local business incubators and initiate the process of raising capital. While they aspire to expand throughout Canada and the U.S., they've got their sights set on Hamilton and London in the near term. If Gooloo's first year in business is any indication, they're well on their way.

All 10 Concept $5K Final pitches can be viewed on the Concept by Velocity Facebook page.

## In Memory of Dennis O'Shaughnessy

It is with sadness that we announce the recent passing of **Dennis O'Shaughnessy**.

Dennis received his PhD in Mathematics from the University of Saskatchewan in 1968, and accepted a faculty position in the department soon afterward. He remained on faculty at the University of Saskatchewan until retirement, more than 40 years later.

Dennis was instrumental in determining the nature and character of his department, and in particular, in shaping the statistics component of the department. Very early in his career he introduced a number of applied statistics courses, and in 1992 he was successful in having the name of the department changed from "Department of Mathematics" to "Department of Mathematics and Statistics." He is remembered as a superb teacher, and mentor both to students and to junior colleagues.

Dennis was an early and enthusiastic advocate for a national statistical society. He saw the importance of a national organization that would connect statisticians in all sectors, whether in major centres or far-flung small groups. In those pre-internet days, SSC business was conducted from home, late at night by telephone, when long distance rates were discounted. Dennis saw working on SSC business and the annual meeting as important factors in breaking down the isolation of Canadian statisticians.

Dennis served on the board of the Statistical Science Association of Canada/Association canadienne de science statistique from 1973, the year after its incorporation, until it evolved into the SSC, and then continued on the board of the SSC from 1979 until 1981. He was SSC treasurer from 1989–1993. In those early days of the Society, the most important thing was keeping the SSC alive and active on a shoestring budget—something Dennis understood well, while raising visibility for the SSC and promoting the broader goals of bringing together academic and “blue-collar” statisticians, and ensuring that students would get involved and become enthusiastic supporters of the SSC.

In addition to spending time with family and friends, Dennis' non-academic interests included life on the farm, curling and hockey—only hanging up the blades this past spring. A true Saskatchewanian. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Amin Adatia, Dennis O'Shaughnessy, John Brewster, Brian Allen at the SSC in 1999

(Photo courtesy of Peter Macdonald)

## Colin R. Blyth (1922–2019)

Canadian statistician **Colin Ross Blyth** died on August 22, 2019, at the age of 96. Born in Guelph on October 24, 1922, he completed a BA in Mathematics in 1944 at Queen's University. He pursued graduate studies at the University of Toronto (MA, 1946) and at the University of California at Berkeley (PhD, 1950), where he was Erich Lehmann's first doctoral student.

Colin joined the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as an assistant professor in 1950; he was promoted to associate professor in 1955 and full professor in 1959. From 1952 to 1955, he was also a statistical consultant for the Illinois State Geological Survey. As of 1971 he was a statistics professor at Queen's University, where he remained until his retirement in 1987. During sabbatical leaves, he visited Stanford (1957–58), Oxford (1964–65), and the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque (1983–84). In 1992, he was also a visiting professor at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia.

Colin contributed to the development of classical mathematical statistics. His thesis was concerned with minimax decision procedures. He was the first to show that the average of a random sample of Gaussian variables is admissible and the method he used to prove this result bears his name. During his career, he authored or coauthored over 30 research papers in mathematics, statistics, and geology journals. He wrote on topics such as Stirling's approximation, Simpson's paradox, Cramér-Rao type inequalities, convolutions of Cauchy distributions, Neyman shortest unbiased confidence intervals, the relative efficiency of tests, as well as hypothesis estimation and acceptability profiles for two-by-two contingency tables. Many of his papers appeared in top-tier journals, including *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, the *Journal of the American Statistical Association* (*JASA*), and *Biometrika*.

At Urbana-Champaign, Colin supervised five PhD students: Madanlal T. Wasan (1960), Wayne Nelson (1965), Glen Meeden (1968), Raman N. Pillai (1968), and Robert Staudte (1968); they all had successful careers and gave Colin over 30 academic descendants. In recognition of his contributions to the profession, including as an associate editor for *JASA* from 1967 to 1971, Colin was made a fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (1974) and the American Statistical Association (1975). He was also granted membership to Pi Mu Epsilon and to Sigma Xi, both in 1949.

Colin was proud of his Scottish origins. His great grandfather Alexander, son of Glasgow brass founder Colin Blyth, came to the area in 1832 and married Janet McDonald, who had emigrated from Strathpeffer. Colin's forefathers were shoemakers in Leith from the early 1600s, and from 1634 each of them, and down to Alexander, married a Highland girl.

A music enthusiast, Colin became a piper in the mid 1930s and played in various bands in Guelph, Toronto, and Kingston, including the Rob Roy Pipe Band (1971–83). He also had a strong interest in languages and started learning Gaelic in 1965. He served as chief of the Kingston and Toronto Gaelic Societies, and as a trustee of Mòd Ontario. Combining these two passions, he wrote *Gaelic Names of Pipe Tunes* in 1994 and edited *Sullivan Ross Volume 1, A Restored Edition*, published in 2010, which provides a unique window on the (bagpipe and violin) music of rural Ontario in the second half of the 19th century.

Very active throughout his retirement, Colin composed poems (notably "Kate o'Shanter," published in *Scottish Field* in 1993 and reprinted in *The Burns Chronicle*, Spring 2009, p. 61) and became interested in prosody, the study of the rhythms and timing of verse; see, e.g., his paper "The prosody of Robert Burns" in *The Burn Chronicle*, 2009. Colin also published verse translations of mid 19th century German children's classics: *Struwwelpeter Tales of Hoffmann* (1995), *Struwwelpeter 2000* (2000) and *Max & Moritz 2000* (2006).

Colin is survived by his wife of 64 years, Valerie Thompson, and their children, Mary Alice Snetsinger (Rob), Georgina Roche, Colin M. (Trish), Heather (Rob Smith), Alec (Lisa), and Donald, and by nine grandchildren. He will be sorely missed.

**Figure caption:** Photograph of Colin R. Blyth taken while he was attending the *Struwwelpeter Reconsidered* conference held at the University of Minnesota, November 9–11, 1995.

**Photo credit:** Marion Herzog-Hoinkis

by **Christian Genest**, McGill University, Montréal

## 7th Bayes, Fiducial and Frequentist Statistics Conference, May 6–8, 2020


Statistics is still a young discipline with several different and competing paths in its approaches and foundations. The question of which methodology is best suited to this challenge is as important today as it has been for almost the entire history of statistics. Over the last six years, BFF meetings have served as a venue for researchers and practitioners to share ideas, update research progress, highlight important open problems in both theory and implementation, and most importantly discuss future directions of such research.

This workshop aims to bring together experts who are committed to the development of bridges between the three major approaches towards statistical inference, namely, Bayesian, frequentist and fiducial (BFF), with the aim of developing a firm foundation for the challenges of statistical inference in our data centric world. Emphasis is given to methodology, computation and the philosophical issues concerning the BFF foundations.

We dedicate this conference to Don Fraser's 95th birthday. Don is a professor emeritus in the Department of Statistical Sciences at the University of Toronto and is widely recognized as a pioneer of foundational statistics.

Everyone, including organizers, speakers, funded participants, non-funded participants, postdocs, students, etc., is expected to register and pay the appropriate fees. To purchase a ticket for the conference dinner, click here.

Present your work at the Poster Sessions (May 6–8, 12:00 p.m.–2:00 p.m.) in the atrium of the Fields Institute.

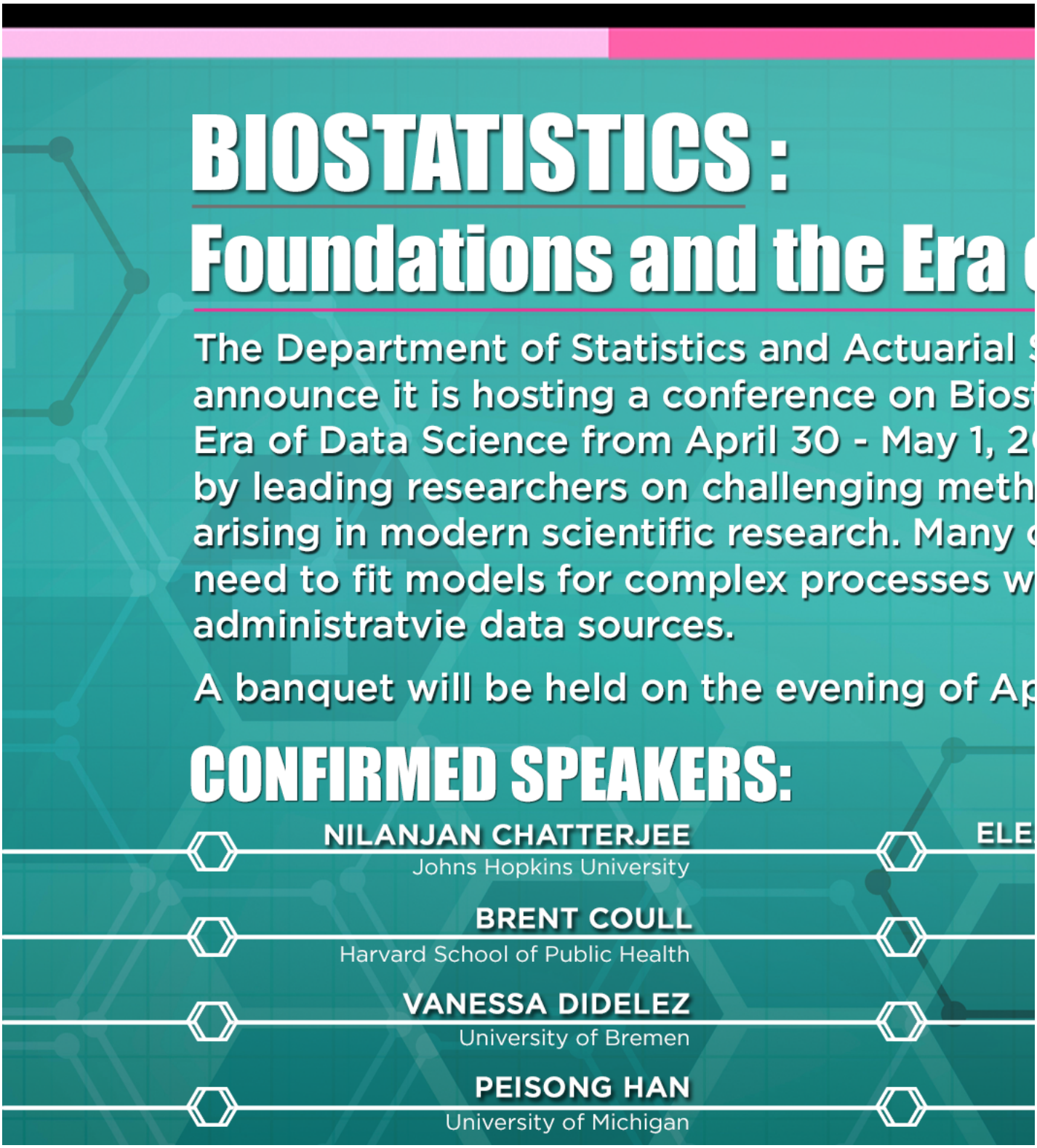
Junior researchers are encouraged to apply for funding.

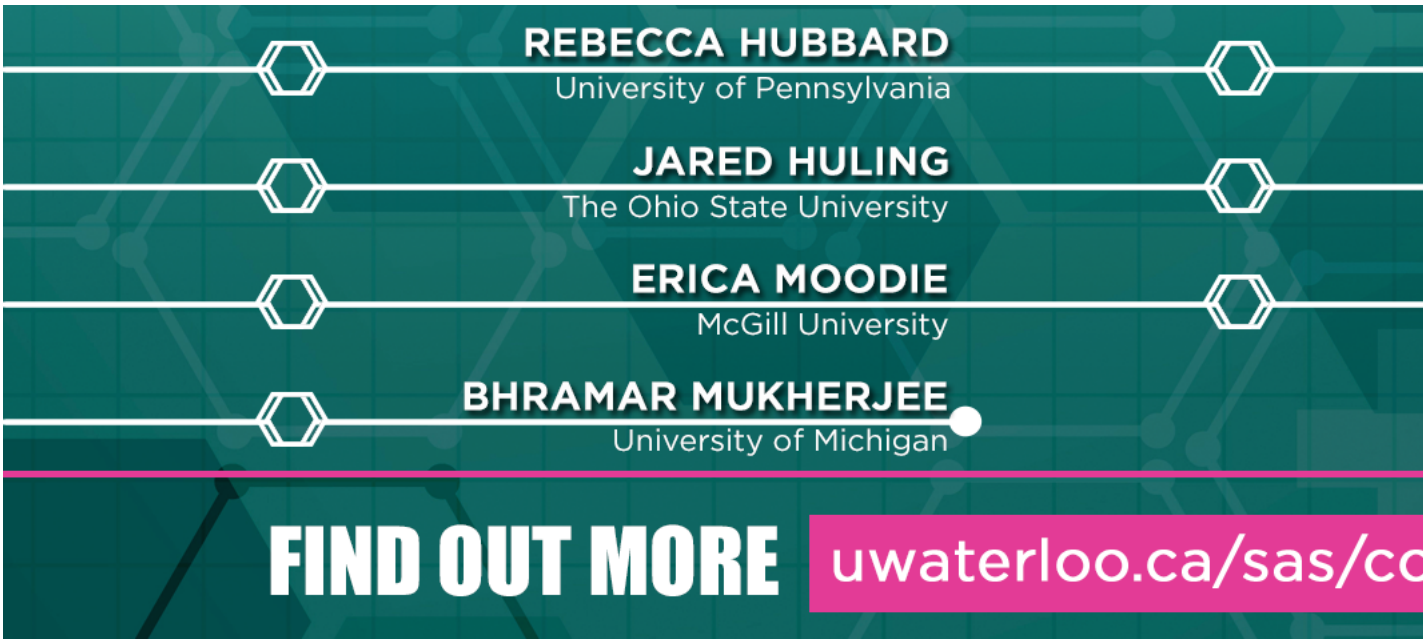
## International Symposium on Statistics and Econometrics (CISEM) 2020

The International Symposium on Statistics and Econometrics (CISEM) 2020 will be held in Robat, Morocco.

For details, please visit www.cisem2020.com

## Biostatistics Conference April 30–May 1, 2020

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