

STATCOM Network Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2 June 2008

STATCOM Network

There have been several new developments within the STATCOM Network over the past few months. In particular, several articles about the recent expansion of the network appeared in the April edition of *Amstat News* and the spring editions of *The Statistical Consultant* (the newsletter for the Section on Statistical Consulting, found at <http://www.amstat.org/sections/cnsl/newsletter.cfm>) and the *Newsletter for the Section on Statistical Education* (found at <http://www.amstat.org/sections/educ/newsletter/v13n1/index-nf.html>).

In addition, several new groups have been making

headway in establishing STATCOM programs, including a group at Five Colleges in Massachusetts and the University of Missouri (see page 4 for an update from the group at Five Colleges). We hope to continue this expansion of the network in the coming months.

Finally, there will be several STATCOM-related activities at the Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) in Denver, Colorado August 3-7. On Monday, August 4 from 8:30 – 10:20am, there will be a contributed poster session about STATCOM programs at six different universities. The open STATCOM informational meeting, “STATCOM: Stu-

dents Providing Pro Bono Consulting to the Community,” will be held on Tuesday, August 5 from 4:00 – 5:00pm. Following that, the STATCOM Network Business meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 5 from 6:00 – 7:00pm. During this meeting, we plan to discuss the next Network Outreach Coordinator, the possibility of a STATCOM logo, and continued network operations.

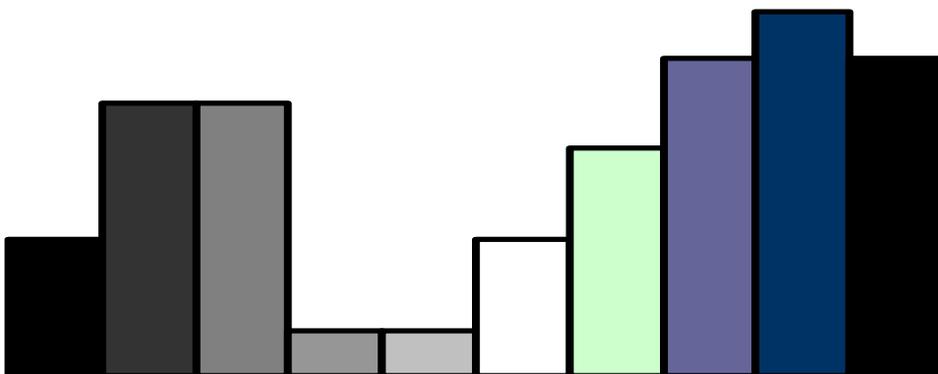
We look forward to seeing STATCOM participants from around the country in August!

— Andrea Rau
STATCOM Network coordinator
statcom-outreach@stat.purdue.edu

Special points of interest:

- Welcome to the second semi-annual issue of the STATCOM Network Newsletter!
- STATCOM at Five Colleges is underway, with several creative ideas for advertising.
- We hope to see you at STATCOM-related events in Denver this August at JSM 2008!

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STATCOM at Hasselt University

Statistics in the Community at Hasselt University (STATCOM UHASSELT) was formed in February 2007 as a community outreach organization within the Centre for Statistics (CenStat) at Hasselt University, an emulation of STATCOM at Purdue University. It is an organization of graduate students in the master of statistics program of CenStat, volunteering their time to provide free statistical consulting to non CenStat graduate students and PhD students. STATCOM UHASSELT is directed and staffed primarily by graduate students.

The pioneering members are close to the completion of their programs and new members were recruited and confirmed by the advisory board. STATCOM UHASSELT has been involved in many projects since its formation, including: analysis of induction of oxidative stress related responses in *Arabidopsis thaliana* following uranium exposure, research on non-formal and informal workplace learning in Flemish companies and organizations, improving the health situation in Limburg with the use of pedometers, and cross-sectional survey differences between people with severe mental illness who reside in supported housing and peo-

ple who have only case management, to mention a few.

STATCOM UHASSELT clients include researchers, schools, government agencies, health centers, homeless shelters, advocacy groups, libraries, adult learning centers, and other non-profit agencies and organizations. STATCOM UHASSELT has a Board of Advisors who are CenStat staff members, and they provide support and guidance to the student-run organization.

We would like to use this opportunity to invite STATCOM Outreach to join us as CenStat scientifically cele-

brates the 35th anniversary of Hasselt University, the 20th anniversary of the Master of Science in Biostatistics program, the 10th anniversary of the Center for Statistics, and the kick-off of the Interuniversity Institute for Biostatistics and statistical Bioinformatics (IB²):

20 years Master in Biostatistics

10 years Center for Statistics

Interuniversity Honorary Doctorate for Professor Norman Breslow



Annual Quetelet Prize Herman Callaert Leadership Award in Biostatistical Education and Dissemination

Kick-off Interuniversity Institute for Biostatistics and Statistical Bioinformatics - IB²

September 10-11, 2008
Hasselt University -
Campus Diepenbeek
Lecture Hall H6

— Prince Oyelola Adegboye
statcom@uhasselt.be



Some members of STATCOM UHasselt, Belgium.

Below, from right to left: Yvonna Castro, Vishva Manohara, Ali Mohammed, Ahmad Efendi,

Top, from right to left: Prince Oyelola Adegboye, Daniel Martinez, Akililu Habteab, Edmund Njeru

STATCOM at Iowa State University

During the spring semester, members of the executive committee for STATCOM at Iowa State have been working to advertise our services, obtain new clients, acquire funding for a graduate assistantship to support the director's position, and organize a poster session at JSM 2008.

To advertise our services, we sent a representative to the monthly meeting of the Human Services Council of Story County. At this meeting, representatives from volunteer organizations meet to discuss various issues and developments that affect the organizations collectively. At the January meeting, STATCOM was allotted five minutes to introduce the organization and discuss services we could provide to this group of potential clients. Many organizations showed interest. The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) became a new client almost immediately following the meeting. The initial project was not very statistical in nature; however, we accepted this client based on other possible projects discussed in an initial meeting. Currently, a survey to assess their members' project management preferences is underway!

Our executive committee identified the Ames Public Library as another potential client. The library has been

contacted and we are now in the process of shaping their requests into several projects. Our first client, the Volunteer Center of Story County (VCSC) continues to request our services. A large-scale survey project is being discussed for the summer and fall semesters. Two new clients have been referred to STATCOM at Iowa State through our faculty. One is the ISU Foundation, an organization at Iowa State. This project focuses on forecasting income from wills and estates expected in coming years. While this organization is not the "ideal" non-profit/city government organization, we accepted the client in order to gain experience and provide an opportunity to student members interested in volunteering. A second referral through a faculty member was from the City of Ames electric company. In this project, the electric company wishes to examine trends of bi-annual peak electric use and use this to forecast future peaks to ensure they will be able to provide adequate power to the city.

In addition to the steady inflow of clients and projects, another exciting development for us this spring has been the positive responses to the proposal and budget submitted at the end of the fall semester. Funding was requested for

two and a half years of a graduate assistantship—a position the director of STATCOM will fill. Our own Statistics Department promised to contribute a portion of this funding. Remaining costs were requested from the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) and the Offices of the Provost and President of Iowa State University. Early in the semester, the Dean of LAS agreed to provide the requested funding, in addition to a laptop we had also requested from the LAS College. Late in the semester, the Provost responded favorably with the suggestion to discuss the involvement of STATCOM with Extension Iowa State. After a meeting with Extension, we are excited to work with them in the coming years. Through the Extension Program Builder website, we will be able to advertise STATCOM to potential clients throughout Iowa. STATCOM remains a graduate student run organization, with complete control to accept or reject clients. We will also have the opportunity to discuss with our members the types of projects they are interested in working on and advertise this specifically on the Program Builder website. We are looking forward to this for next year!

Lastly, a last minute attempt to organize a Contributed Poster Session for STATCOM at JSM

Through the
Extension
Program
Builder website,
we will be able
to advertise
STATCOM to
potential clients
throughout
Iowa.

2008 was unsuccessful. Luckily, interested STATCOM Network members (University of Hasselt, University of Chicago, Purdue, Iowa State University, University of Washington, and University of Michigan) did submit contributed poster abstracts and JSM organizers placed them all in the same poster session on Monday August 4 from 8:30-10:20am. Each university will describe experiences they have had as an organization and/or projects they have worked on. We plan to organize a proper contributed or invited session for JSM 2009 and with some luck and starting ahead of the deadline, this should be a success!

— Jennifer Hockett
statcom@iastate.edu

What is the best structure for multi-university STATCOM?

STATCOM at Chicago

What is the best structure for multi-university STATCOM? Since the last issue of the STATCOM Network Newsletter, STATCOM at Chicago has been working to answer that question. Shaping the discussion are liability and funding issues.

First, we are learning that the universities under which STATCOMs operate are liable for any policy recommendations made on projects, even in the presence of the current liability waiver in use by STATCOMs. In the case of a multi-university STATCOM, all universities are targets in a law suit. To remove liability from the universities and keep administrators happy hosts of

STATCOM organizations, we in Chicago have determined a favorable solution: register STATCOM at Chicago as a legally separate not-for-profit (NFP) corporation and purchase a small liability insurance policy.

Fees associated with registering an NFP with state and federal governments, plus insurance costs, add a new challenge to the proposed liability solution. STATCOM at Chicago hopes to obtain an ASA Member Initiatives Grant in the coming year to cover the costs associated with creating an NFP and promoting the multi-university model through the STATCOM Network. Other possibilities to explore in-

clude "membership donations" from participating universities, other grants, and donations from the community. We welcome any other suggestions for obtaining funds.

Be sure to look for the STATCOM at Chicago poster at JSM 2008 alongside other STATCOM Network posters, where we will be presenting more details about creating multi-university STATCOMs and a current consulting project a team of DePaul students is working on. We look forward to sharing ideas with you!

— Meredith Wascher
mwascher@depaul.edu

STATCOM at Five Colleges

STATCOM at Five Colleges is a new chapter. We started at UMass Amherst with members from the Statistics, Biostatistics, Epidemiology and School of Management departments and are in the process of expanding to include members from other local schools - Mt. Holyoke College, Smith College, Amherst College and Hampshire College.

Our initial advertising has included creating a website, a Facebook page, announce-

ment on Craig's List, printing up business cards and contacting local non-profits.

At this point, we are still waiting to work on our first project. One potential project deals with analyzing commuter traffic within western Massachusetts or between western Massachusetts and the Boston metropolitan area to predict the effectiveness of an express bus and/or commuter rail services. During the summer

months, we hope to get this project up and running to create momentum for the new school year.

Michael Lavine, our faculty advisor, has just given us wonderful news that we were awarded a grant to purchase a laptop and help cover advertising expenses.

— David Resendes
davidresendes@yahoo.com

Our initial advertising has included creating a website, a Facebook page, and an announcement on Craig's List.

STATCOM at Purdue University

This has been a busy semester for STATCOM at Purdue University.

We continued to work on three projects that we had started in 2007. In addition, nine potential clients contacted us to start working on projects during either the Spring or Summer semester. Most of these projects involved the writing and analysis of surveys. Three of these clients had already worked with us in the past. All three are affiliated with either the Lafayette or West Lafayette governments. Three of the other clients are partner organizations of the United Way who contacted us after we made a presentation at a monthly business meeting of the local United Way chapter.

In order to both increase the number of students who could work on projects and improve the range of services that we could provide, we have reached out to graduate students in other departments at Purdue. In particular, this

semester we have benefited from the help of several members of the Sociology Department. Also, we have begun to send clients Scope of Work forms at the start of new projects. These have helped clarify deadlines and the services we provide for both the clients and our team members. This started after a suggestion by

Regina Becker, who is the Manager of Purdue's Statistical Consulting Service and our staff advisor. This year, she received our first STATCOM Appreciation Award in honor of her help in founding, advising, and attracting new clients to STATCOM at Purdue.

— Andrew Lewandowski
statcom@stat.purdue.edu



Members of STATCOM at Purdue give their final presentation to a client, the Wabash Center. From right to left: Glen DePalma, Allison Cummins, Duncan Leaf

To improve the range of service that we could provide, we have reached out to graduate students in other departments at Purdue.

