Canadian Statistical Sciences Institute
Institut canadien des sciences statistiques
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News from CANSSI

Getting the word out---we continue various efforts to spread the news about CANSSI far and wide. This fall your department chair will have received posters advertising our programs, and providing a list of relevant dates for proposals. If you don't see these on your hallway walls, please stroll by the department office and ask about them!

Our first **Distinguished Visitor**, Peter Guttorp, gave an evening talk at UBC-Okanagan in October on "Understanding the local impact of a warming planet". The talk can be watched on YouTube, and we plan to soon have a YouTube channel of our own. The second Distinguished Visitor, Philippe Soulier, will be at the University of Ottawa later this term. For the Fields-CANSS Distinguished Lecture Series on Statistics (November 2016) we were delighted to welcome Donald Rubin of Harvard to Toronto. The next DLSS will be give by Raymond Carroll of Texas A&M University.

We had a very robust response to our call for proposals to establish **CANSSI Health Sciences Collaborating Centres.** These centres will strengthen links with provincial and national health agencies, and highlight the many biostatistical training efforts with which our colleagues around the country are engaged. The health sciences committee, led by Mary Thompson, is reviewing the proposals and will make recommendations to the Board in the coming months.

The Board of Directors approved a **new Collaborative Research Team**, "Statistical Analysis of Large Administrative Health Databases: Emerging Challenges and Strategies" led by Robert Platt, Grace Yi and Joan Hu. This is very timely, as there is increasing interest across the country in making these databases available for researchers, and linking health data to other forms of administrative data.

CRT research will be featured in a session at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in February, in three sessions at the Annual Meeting of the Statistical Society of Canada in June, and at the Joint Statistical Meetings in Baltimore in August. In addition, CRT researchers are preparing their best work for submission to the *Canadian Journal of Statistics* for a special issue highlighting CANSSI research.

We continue to collaborate with the mathematical sciences institutes on **industrial outreach**. Thierry Duchesne has been very active in encouraging groups to get involved

with this, and writes elsewhere in this newsletter about the benefits of industrial outreach, and about easy ways to get involved. The institutes are building a database of researchers and expertise in order to facilitate links between academic and partner organizations; you may have received a questionnaire by email from your local mathematical sciences institute, and I encourage you to take part in this effort.

CANSSI provides partial support to a number of **workshops**: upcoming highlights include three workshops at CRM as part of the thematic program "Risk in Complex Systems", a workshop in Winnipeg on May 9 and 10 on microbiome data, and a scoping workshop in medical biophysics in Toronto in April. We are also co-sponsoring a course, "Introduction to Machine Learning in the Digital Humanities", at the Digital Humanities Summer Institute at the University of Victoria---board member Chad Gaffield was instrumental in linking us with the DHSI.

Statisticians across the country, and indeed around the world, are trying to figure out their place in the new world of **data science**. Undergraduate and graduate programs are being launched, and many countries have established major research initiatives in data science: the Alan Turing Institute in the UK is perhaps the largest of these. A group of leaders in statistics, mathematics and machine learning are working to prepare the ground for a national network in data science. The growth in statistical sciences is closely tied to the explosion of interest in data science, but CANSSI needs a strategy for expanding our efforts in data science that also emphasizes our vision of statistical collaborations closely embedded in research in all fields of science. Over the next several months we will be focussed on developing a **strategic plan** to guide us in this and other matters. Your input will be welcome, as always.

Upcoming deadlines are always available at canssi.ca; ASA DataFest proposals are due on February 28 and proposals for the Distinguished Visitor Program on March 31.