

Fall 2025 Newsletter

Social Statistics Section



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Letter from the Chair

Elizabeth Tipton (2025 Chair)



Dear SSS members,

I hope you found some time for rest and relaxation this summer. While I wasn't able to attend JSM, our Chair-Elect, Ben Hansen, led our Business Meeting and Mixer in my absence and reported that there was a good crowd. This year we welcomed members of the Government Statistics Section into our meeting and mixer, given that their section has been experiencing an especially difficult time given budget and staff reductions in the federal government.

At our meeting, Ben presented awards to our

student paper winners, as well as to our inaugural Social Statistics Mid-Career Scholar Award recipient, Avi Feller, an Associate Professor at the University of California - Berkeley. The award is to be given biennially, with a lifetime contribution award given in alternating years. Look for a call for nominations for the lifetime award in early 2026.

I want to highlight also that our section has a committee to support ASA fellow nominations. It will be chaired by the Past Chair which will be me for 2026. If you know of any section members deserving of nomination for ASA fellow, especially those who may have been overlooked, please contact me at tipton@northwestern.edu.

Thank you for all that you do, in your research and service, for social statistics, for science, and for society.

Elizabeth Tipton,
SSS Chair (2025)

Upcoming Deadlines and Events

2026 Joint Statistical Meetings Deadlines (Boston, Massachusetts):

December 10: Topic-Contributed session proposals

February 2: Abstract deadline

April 2: JSM Meeting & Event Requests

May 1: Registration and housing open

June 1: Draft manuscript deadline

June 1: Early registration deadline

July 2: Housing deadline

August 1 – August 6: 2026 Joint Statistical Meetings

Other Deadlines:

- Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship ([More information here!](#))

May 1 2026

- GSS/SRMS/SSS Student Paper Competition

November 15 2025

- Social Statistics Section Distinguished Scholar Award ([More information here!](#))

April 15 2026

From the Program Chair and Program Chair-Elect

**Maria Cuellar (2025
Program Chair)**



Reflections on JSM 2025:

At JSM 2025 in Nashville, the Social Statistics Section sponsored a dynamic set of sessions reflecting the theme Statistics, Data Science, and AI Enriching Society. Highlights included invited sessions on synthetic data for social good, machine learning for propensity scores, and uncertainty in model interpretation. Topic-contributed sessions addressed sensitivity analysis, AI in education, and enriching society through modern methods, along with a panel on justice surveys. Contributed sessions explored bias, inequality, networks, and historical change. Roundtables focused on data for social good and collaborative grant writing, and we hosted a lively poster session. Winners of the GSS/SRMS/SSS Student Paper Competition presented their work in a dedicated session.

**Xiaojing Wang (2025
Program Chair Elect)**



Looking to JSM 2026:

The Social Statistics Section will sponsor three invited sessions at JSM 2026 (Boston, August 1–6), aligned with the JSM theme, "Community in Action: Advancing Society". The program will feature one invited panel on "Statistical Design and Inference in the Era of Ubiquitous Data" and two invited paper sessions: "Advancing Privacy and Usability: Applications for Data-Informed Decisionmaking in Society" and "Understanding the Causal Effect of Key Interventions in Contemporary Society". For next year's JSM, we also welcome proposals for Topic-Contributed sessions, submissions to the Student Paper Competition, and contributed talks or posters from our members.



SSS Member Highlight: Beth Ann Griffin Senior Statistician at RAND

In the Spring 2024 newsletter, the SSS began highlighting members in newsletters. Our next highlighted member is Beth Ann Griffin. We hope you will enjoy reading about her background, activities, and vision for the future of social statistics.

Fun Fact: Beth Ann Griffin lives in Budapest, Hungary where she telecommutes for RAND as the spouse of a U.S. Diplomat serving overseas. She loves living overseas and has lived in Merida, Mexico; Tokyo, Japan; Podgorica, Montenegro; and Brussels, Belgium over the past 19 years.

Can you describe your current role?

I am a Senior Statistician at RAND, a nonprofit think tank where I have been for almost 20 years. My work focuses on using causal inference methods in public health research. Since 2018, I have been proudly serving as a co-director of the NIDA funded RAND-USC Opioid Policy Tools and Information Center (OPTIC) whose goal is to foster innovative research in opioid policy science, including disseminating methods, tools, and workshops to the research community and policymakers. In addition, I am currently serving as the lead statistician on a large-scale randomized control trial (RCT) of a collaborative care intervention for individuals with co-occurring mental health and opioid use disorders (OUD). I also have been busy on projects related to understanding children in the child welfare system as well as the impact of green space and redlining on cognitive decline on adults living in the U.S. I really love my day-to-day job and the work that I am engaged in on a daily basis!

Can you share one or two experiences that impacted your career direction?

Yes, for one - I was a math major in college and had always intended to pursue a PhD in pure mathematics. Interestingly, I really enjoyed one undergrad course I took that was focused on the epidemiology of infectious diseases, so I wrote application essays about how I wanted to develop more advanced methods for that space to pure math programs across the US. Fortunately, a professor at Columbia's mathematics department was courageous enough to call me and ask me if I knew about "biostatistics". I told her that I did not, and she told me to look it up on the internet. I immediately did and fell in love with it!! At that time, I was only two weeks away from grad school applications being due in December, & I quickly got my applications into 5 different biostats programs. And, we can definitely say that changed my career direction for the better!!

What professional meetings / conferences do you regularly attend?

I have three meetings that I love to attend for similar reasons: (1) the bi-annual International Conference on Health Policy Statistics (ICHPS); (2) the annual Addiction Health Services Research (AHSR) meeting; and (3) the annual American Causal Inference Conference (ACIC). All three are smaller in size (e.g., between 200-400 attendees) and focus on the latest and greatest research going on in my main areas of work. As such, I learn a lot, get caught up, enjoy seeing my friends and peers as well as getting connecting to the next generation of researchers in my areas. I find myself refreshed when I return from these conferences.

SSS Member Highlight Continued:

What area of social statistics do you believe warrants more study?

The statistical issue that I think is critical right now – for all my projects – is the need to estimate effect heterogeneity in a thoughtful way. Recently, I used machine learning to help me do this for data from my RCT studying collaborative care to help us understand for whom the intervention worked best. It was surprisingly easy to do (shout out to Carly Brantner and Daniel Obeng for the mcate package!!). The analysis enabled us to identify which segments of the population might benefit the most from our collaborative care intervention, thereby facilitating more targeted and effective use of the intervention in practice. I would love to be able to use these same methods in public policy evaluations, because we expect that state and local community environments are likely to drive variation in the effects of different policies related to the gun and opioid crises (and beyond). Unfortunately, machine learning cannot be as easily used here, because the sample sizes are so constrained. More thoughtful research is needed from our social statisticians on how to do this in a thoughtful and robust way.

Avi Feller awarded Social Statistics Mid-Career Award



Avi Feller is awarded the 2025 Mid-Career Award by the Social Statistics Section of the ASA for his contributions to causal inference, with groundbreaking and fundamental contributions in areas that include methods for policy evaluation - including randomized trials and synthetic control designs - as well as approaches for treatment effect heterogeneity and understanding the effects of varying levels of participation in an intervention. Avi is an Associate Professor at the UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy and the Department of Statistics.

Elizabeth Wagner awarded Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship



Elizabeth Wagner is the recipient of the 2025 Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship. This is in recognition of her work evaluating firearm policies and her dedication to advancing statistical knowledge for government service. Elizabeth is a Senior Research Data Analyst at the Center for Gun Violence Solutions at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Social Statistics Section Social Media

The Social Statistics Section is on social media!

Follow us on X/Twitter ([@amstat_sss](#)).

If you have material you would like us to share, send us a message!

Social Statistics Section Executive Committee

Elizabeth Tipton: Chair

Dylan Small: Past-Chair

Ben Hansen: Chair-Elect

Tyler McCormick: Secretary / Treasurer

Maria Cuellar: Program Chair

Xiaojing Wang: Program Chair-Elect

Claire Kelling: Publications Officer

Ruoqi Yu: Council of Sections Representative

Moira Skelley: Staff Liaison

Please find more information about SSS [here](#).
