

Annual Careers Day

The sixth annual Statistical Careers Day and fifth annual Student Poster Competition were held at San Diego State University on Saturday, April 30, 2005. Drs. Cleridy Lennert-Cody and Rich Levine, San Diego Chapter Vice Presidents of Professional Affairs and Academic Affairs, respectively, organized the event.

Despite an ideal San Diego spring day and the competing attraction of laying out on the beach, the event attracted approximately 117 attendees, including high school, undergraduate, and graduate students from twelve colleges/universities and seven high schools, as well as statisticians from twenty-three organizations, industries, and academic programs. Though most attendees resided in southern California, students visited from as far as Boston and Australia! Funding, poster competition awards, and raffle prizes for the event were provided by the generous support of fifteen companies and academic programs/agencies: Amgen, Amylin, Biogen Idec, Cambridge University Press, Ligand, Minitab, National Search Associates, Pfizer, Power Information Network, ProSanos, Salford Systems, San Diego State University, Smith-Hanley, Insightful, SUDAAN, and Cambridge University Press.

The day opened with welcoming remarks by Dr. Nancy Lo, San Diego Chapter President, followed by an informative and thought-provoking keynote address “Forensic Statistics: The Bullets Match...But Who Cares” by Dr. Hal Stern, Professor and Chair of the Department of Statistics at the University of California, Irvine. Professor Stern’s talk covered many challenges facing forensic statisticians as they prepare quantitative analyses of courtroom evidence, particularly DNA evidence, bullet fragments, and fingerprint patterns. In an animated post-talk discussion with the audience, Professor Stern shared stories about his work with the FBI on such issues.

The morning concluded with a panel discussion entitled “What It’s Like to be a Statistician” with panelists Dr. Chris Ake of Veterans Affairs San Diego Healthcare System, Dr. Jan Callahan of Callahan Associates Inc., Dr. Mike Choukour of i3 StatProbe, and Professor Hal Stern. The panelists shared their educational and professional experiences, highlighting their motivations for selecting a career in statistics, and the fascinating projects in which statisticians are involved in. The audience spurred the discussion with excellent questions concerning the statistics job market and advice on successfully making the transition from statistics/science student to statistician.

Prior to lunch, the winners of the student poster competition were announced. First place was awarded to Stephanie Buckley from San Diego State University and to the team of Shan Brown, Kriza Belle Casem, Janice Esteban, Kyle Estes of Morse High School. Second place was awarded to the team of Melinda Artates and Chris Saquisame of Morse High School. Third place was awarded to the team of Stacy Cortez, Stephen Cortez, Kathy Datuin, and Hazel Rivera and the team of Daniel Leach, Mark Dayrit, Elizabeth Consunji, and Brianna Givens, both of Morse High School. An honorable mention was awarded to the team of Renato Palma, Juan Lopez, Christian Ferrer, and Omar Cooper of Morse High school.

Lunch in the gardens around the Little Theatre on the SDSU campus was followed by the Careers Fair. The towering eucalyptus, palm trees and campus campanile provided a stately

backdrop (and comforting shade!) to the event. The career fair and poster exhibitions were consequently a huge success as participants spent several hours talking with representatives from a number of different organizations about careers in statistics and statistics education opportunities. Other participating organizations were City of Hope Medical Center; DoD Center of Deployment Health Research; Elan Pharmaceuticals; Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission; Kaiser Permanente; Southwest Fisheries Science Center; Synteract; University of California, Irvine; and University of California, San Diego, Biostatistics.

Captions for pictures:

Pic 1: Keynote speaker Hal Stern from UC Irvine sharing his experiences as a forensic statistician.



Pic 2: Statisticians share knowledge and work experiences with students at the Career Fair. {Photo: Oralia Loza (picture #18)}

