



AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION  
Promoting the Practice and Profession of Statistics®

732 North Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-1943

(703) 684-1221 ■ [www.amstat.org](http://www.amstat.org) ■ [asainfo@amstat.org](mailto:asainfo@amstat.org)

[www.facebook.com/AmstatNews](https://www.facebook.com/AmstatNews) [www.twitter.com/AmstatNews](https://www.twitter.com/AmstatNews)

August 30, 2023

Dear President Gee, Provost Reed, and the WVU Board of Governors,

On behalf of the American Statistical Association, I urge West Virginia University to continue its PhD program in mathematics. WVU's elimination of this program would extend a worrying trend going back to 2018 when the university terminated its master's and doctoral program in statistics, relegated the department of statistics to a sub-department, and subsequently lost many of its top faculty. The university's moves in the mathematical sciences are particularly perplexing because jobs in statistics and the mathematical sciences have been among the fastest growing over the past decade and are projected to be among the fastest growth jobs over the next decade, according to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov). As importantly, PhD programs in mathematics are a cornerstone for research and graduate programs in engineering and the sciences.

These moves are way out of sync with national trends and job demands. The number of master's degrees in statistics awarded each year by US universities has grown 150% since 2010, bachelor's degrees by 520%.<sup>1</sup> In that same span, the number of universities awarding master's degrees has grown from 127 to 162, for bachelor's degrees, from 95 to 176. When WVU terminated its master's in statistics, its program ranked in the top 30 out of 160 universities for number of such degrees awarded from 2003 through 2018.

Not only would eliminating the mathematics PhD program send the wrong message to students, faculty, and potential employers, it would undermine the university's research and graduate programs and put West Virginia students at a disadvantage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century job market. We urge you to maintain West Virginia University's PhD program in mathematics and bolster its programs to connect West Virginia students to the well-paying jobs of the 21st century.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ron Wasserstein, PhD  
Executive Director

CC: Greg Dunaway, Dean, Eberly College of Arts and Sciences; Frances Tack, Chair, WVU Faculty Senate; G. Corey Farris, Dean of Students.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.amstat.org/education/statistics-and-biostatistics-degree-data>