

ASA Expands Scope, Outreach to Foster Growth, Collaboration in Data Science

Section name change one of many ongoing efforts in the data revolution

ALEXANDRIA, VA (May 11, 2016) – In an effort to better emphasize the unique interdisciplinary nature of statistics and its [foundational role](#) in the field of data science, the American Statistical Association’s section on Statistical Learning and Data Mining has revised its charter and changed its name to the section on [Statistical Learning and Data Science](#). The move also reflects the broader scope of ASA members’ activities in the burgeoning field of data science. Members of the section approved the change during the ASA’s recent election process.

“The need to better understand and use data has never been greater, but fulfilling that need has created a demand for collaboration among a multitude of disciplines and involvement from diverse professionals with broadly applicable skills,” said Jessica Utts, president of the ASA and chair of the department of statistics at the University of California, Irvine. “While statistics—[as the science of learning from data](#)—is necessary for turning data into knowledge and action, it’s not the only critical component within data science. When statistics, database management and distributed/parallel computing combine, we will see growth in cross-trained experts who are better equipped to solve complex challenges in today’s massive data revolution.”

“More than symbolic, this change represents a practical evolution as many of our members find themselves increasingly working with other scientists and professionals who bring to the table equally dynamic, yet different, skills,” said Richard De Veaux, 2016 chair of the ASA Statistical Learning and Data Science Section and professor of statistics at Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts. “Our members embrace this change and are excited that it not only captures our broader activities, but also highlights advocacy efforts to ensure that statistics is truly at the center of data science education, research and practice.”

The section name change is the latest in a series of steps the ASA is taking to solidify a relationship between statistics and data science. Last summer, the ASA Board of Directors issued a [statement](#) and well-received [member communication](#) about the foundational role of statistics in data science. Additionally,

- The ASA’s widely recognized conference for women in statistics has been renamed and revamped as the “[Women in Statistics and Data Science Conference](#)” and now includes expanded content and emphasis on data science.
- The ASA has joined with IEEE and ACM to conduct the [2016 International Conference on Data Science and Advanced Analytics](#).
- A new award has been established recognizing the most prolific paper in *Statistical Analysis and Data Mining: The ASA Data Science Journal*.

- [This is Statistics](#), the ASA's public education campaign, features profiles of data scientists.
- The ASA has met with industry leaders and engaged government officials at the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation and White House Office of Science and Technology Policy on the role of statistics in data science.
- The ASA's flagship publication, *Amstat News*, explored undergraduate data science educational opportunities.

This July, the ASA will conduct a [workshop for biostatistics and statistics](#) department chairs so they are successful at navigating the educational and research challenges and opportunities with the emergence of data science. Weeks later, the [2016 Joint Statistical Meetings](#) will take place in Chicago and include hundreds of sessions, presentations and papers devoted to [data science](#).

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About the American Statistical Association

The ASA is the world's largest community of statisticians and the oldest continuously operating professional science society in the United States. Its members serve in industry, government and academia in more than 90 countries, advancing research and promoting sound statistical practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare. For additional information, please visit the ASA website at www.amstat.org.

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