ASA Receives NSF Grant for Two-Year College Data Science Summit
2018 symposium to address curriculum development challenges; establish guidelines, resources

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (October 10, 2017) – Recognizing the growing demand for students and professionals with data science skills as part of the ongoing big data revolution, the National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded the ASA a $50,000 grant to conduct a symposium that will foster the establishment and growth of data science programs at two-year colleges. The symposium is tentatively scheduled for May 10–11, 2018.

"Two-year colleges serve as a vital link in the nation's post-secondary education system, whether preparing students to attend four-year degree programs or enter the workforce with an associate's degree. As they continue to gain in popularity, a tremendous opportunity exists for them to help shape the future of data science by producing data-savvy and statistically-literate graduates," said ASA President Barry D. Nussbaum. "We're very excited to be able to convene a symposium that will help pave a path forward for data science at two-year colleges and help fulfill the business demand for professionals with data science skills and students' thirst for knowledge in these burgeoning fields."

Over the course of two days, administrators and educators from both two- and four-year colleges and universities, representatives from industry and members of relevant professional societies will collaborate to create a dialogue leading to the development of guidelines and resources for a two-year data science emphasis.

While data science courses and programs are sprouting up at two-year colleges across the United States, establishing programs remains a challenge. As data science incorporates statistics, computer science, mathematics and engineering, two-year colleges may need to create new infrastructure to handle cross-departmental collaboration, career planning resources and course development. Additionally, there needs to be an understanding of the types of data science jobs that can be filled by students with two-year degrees for the benefit of the school, students and prospective employers.

The symposium will build on previous and concurrent efforts exploring the need and importance of data science curriculum at the undergraduate level. While initiated by the ASA, the symposium's organizing committee represents a diverse group of disciplines and perspectives and is mindful that data science is multidisciplinary with no particular focus area being more important than another. This view is consistent with the ASA's 2015 statement, the Role of Statistics in Data Science," and the NSF Transdisciplinary Research in Principles of Data Science program.

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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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