Undergraduate Commencement Celebration

Class of 2020
CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

The Department of Statistics is excited to congratulate our graduating students on the successful completion of their programs!

We wish you all the best in your future endeavors and hope you will keep in touch!
Professor Ed Ionides  
*Director of Undergraduate Programs in Statistics*

Graduation from the University of Michigan is a major accomplishment. I am writing to celebrate those who have graduated from the three major programs run by the Statistics Department (Data Science, Life Science Informatics, Statistics) as well as two minor programs (Minor in Applied Statistics, Minor in Statistics). These are rigorous programs, each of which combines a different blend of statistical theory, statistical methodology, data analysis, mathematics, computer science, and applications of statistics across the sciences, social sciences and engineering. You will all move on to your future goals well equipped with statistical skills and a broader education within the College of Literature, Science and the Arts.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has added uncertainties to the world. As society readjusts itself to the new realities, your skills collecting and interpreting data will be needed more than ever. Over the coming years, you will find yourselves in positions of responsibility and leadership. I hope that your analytic and inquisitive minds will be put to good use.

This is also a time to thank those who make our academic programs possible. The faculty, lecturers and staff in the Statistics Department are always a dedicated team, and this semester they have demonstrated it via an impressively seamless transition to running courses online. We also recognize the critical roles of parents, mentors and colleagues: nobody makes it to graduation without years of love and support. Finally, we thank our graduates for choosing to study with us.

Go Blue!
Dan Ciotlos
B.S. Statistics

Four years ago, I was told my plan was crazy, if not impossible. By desiring to double major in both biology and statistics, I was commencing on a journey that to most people seemed unattainable. My curiosity in the biological sciences has always been profound. Taking an introductory class in statistics, though, opened my eyes to a world where chaos is transformed into logic. Enrolling in advanced courses designed to build foundations in statistics, I discovered my aptitude for analyzing data and testing hypotheses. What at first glance seems to be random data is not – it’s a puzzle waiting to be solved.

Over time I learned that my interests align with the field of statistical genetics. I envision a future where the way medicine is prescribed and illnesses are screened for will frequently change as genetic markers for diseases are discovered. I wholeheartedly believe that investing my time in and contributing to genomic research through statistics is the future of modern medicine. DNA contains a vast array of information, and I seek to be one of the people that untangles the mystery that is the human genome. For that reason, I will continue to attend the University of Michigan to pursue a PhD in Biostatistics that will allow me to be one of the leaders and best in my chosen field.

The beauty of statistics is its universal application to all areas of research and I hope that every graduate finds a way to apply statistics to a field they are extremely passionate about. Statistics is the tool with which we can foster innovation and solve the most pressing problems currently affecting the world today. Following the wise words of my friend and fellow graduate Anna Billiard, I hope everyone finds a way to use statistics for public good.
Just like that seemingly endless ‘for’ loop we implemented for bootstrapping, I thought my undergraduate years would pass slowly, but evidently not, as I am now nearing the end of my undergraduate journey. It is a weird feeling, graduating without a commencement, without friends, without any human interaction. Yet, it is during times like this we take time to reflect and grow.

I was recently talking to my friends about their experience at U-M and their thoughts on graduating. Throughout these years, we have all matured so much as statisticians and as young adults, from not even knowing what a maximum likelihood estimator was, to being able to draw conclusions from complex datasets and answering real world questions. We have been exposed to all the tools and techniques that will allow us to continue blooming along this path. Not only that, but we have also been granted the opportunity to interact with the true leaders and best, our faculty and GSIs leading the field of statistics. With that, on behalf of the class of 2020, I would like to thank all our faculty and GSIs for empowering us to learn and grow so much. In addition, I would like to thank my friends and family for making these past three years so memorable and fun. And finally, I would like to thank Gina, I don’t think we could have ever asked for a better advisor.

Although this chapter is coming to a close, a new one awaits us. We have all made it through an immensely hard semester and I think we are all ready to take on the new challenges coming our way. I wish everyone in the class of 2020, otherwise known as the class of COVID-19, the best of luck in their future endeavors! Stay safe and stay healthy!
Elishua Shumpert  
*B.S. Statistics*

In my time during my undergraduate studies at University of Michigan, I have not only gained knowledge in statistics and data science, but I have learned a lot of important life lessons as well. As someone who has grown as an individual in college over the past 5 years, one takeaway that I want all my fellow graduates to know is that nothing is ever certain, guaranteed, or is a straight path. You may have a clear path mapped out for yourself, however, things won’t always turn out how you want them to.

As a freshman coming into college in 2015, I had my mind set in what I wanted to do and how I was going to accomplish it. Starting in college, I enjoyed learning and studying mathematics and my academic advisor recommended that I study actuarial science and become an actuary since I loved math so much. So, that would end up becoming the dream I wanted to achieve. I did well and achieved A grades in math up to Calc II, and once I got into higher level math classes I was just nearly passing. After failing my first actuarial exam, I gave up my dream of becoming an actuary and realized that it wasn’t something I was passionate about.

Still wanting to do something math-related, I chose to switch my major to statistics, and it was such a successful turn-around for me. I became interested and passionate about everything I was learning from theoretical statistics to data mining and machine learning. Perhaps the best moments in undergrad were tackling the challenges of working with data with the very best professors and GSIs in the Department of Statistics as leaders in the industry. I hope to one day to become a data scientist and in the near future and get a deeper understanding in analyzing big data. The moral of this story is that you may come in thinking you’re going to do one thing, but you’ll end up doing something way different. My message to all fellow graduates is to continue to work hard for your ambitions and make sure you are passionate about what you want to do in life!
OUTSTANDING UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR

Anna Billiard, Data Science
Dan Ciotlos, Statistics, Biology
Jingyi Jia, Statistics
Grace Li, Data Science, Statistics
Yicheng Ren, Data Science, Statistics, Mathematics
Elishua Shumpert, Statistics
Chenkai Sun, Statistics, Computer Science

HONORS

Jack Finkel
Jingyi Jia
Shijia Li
Ziyang Shao
Chenkai Sun
Xiaojun Wang
Xuekang Wu
MAJOR IN DATA SCIENCE

Imtiaz Adnan
Zachary Apell
Rachel Balon
Anna Billiard
Diyara Bissembayeva
Justin Blackman
Yanhuan Chen
John Dolan
Tyler Eastman
Kexin Feng
Samuel Fennelly
Nicholas Finelli
Jack Finkel
Christopher French
Harrison Grias
Humza Hemani
Jean Hue
Grant Huizenga
Eshan Jain
Cooper James
Natalia Jenuwine
Shirley Jiang
Dian Jing
Eric Johnson
Hyun Jung Koo
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Hanan Li
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Siyuan Li
Chin Hau Lim
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Shuyi Luo
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Saad Mallick
Sindhu Manchiraju
Vincent Meller
Evan Miller-Galow
Xinhui Mo
Qi Ni
Jin Fu Ooi
Ran Pan
Raymond Pang
Sashankh Parthasarathy
Aakash Patel
Mihir Patil
Katherine Phillips
Zhiqing Rao
Benjamin Rappoport
Yicheng Ren
Michael Resnick
Seth Saperstein
Hunter Satterthwaite
Noah Segal
Kai Xuan Shau
Matthew Shen
Premnath Shenoy
Jeremiah St Clair
Adam Stasinski
Adam Stebbins
Raymond Sukanto
Ryan Sullivan
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Michael Sweetland
Erina Tamada-Wu
Arya Tayebi
Wesley Tian
Di Wang
Luocen Wang
Ruicheng Wang
Xiaojun Wang
Jen Sheng Wong
Shunhao Wu
Xuekang Wu
Kun Yan
Connor Young
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Chenghao Zhang
Ruowang Zhang
Jason Zhao
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Yimeng Zhuang
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Kyle Kue
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Rivkah Levine
Grace Li

Jing Li
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Sally Metiva
Xinhui Mo
Jin Fu Ooi
Deric Pan
Aashna Patel
Yicheng Ren
Blade Robelly
Tessa Senders
Pooja Shah
Ziyang Shao
Kai Xuan Shau
Premnath Shenoy
Elishua Shumpert
Joshua Sinamo
Harnoor Singh
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Chenkai Sun
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Carson Johnson
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