DECEMBER 2025
VOL. 32 NO. 4

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR BAYESIAN ANALYSIS

THE ISBA BULLETIN

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR BAYESIAN ANALYSIS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Michele Guindani
president@bayesian.org

It has been a true honor to serve ISBA as President over the past year. As our Society enters its 34th year, I would like to congratulate President-Elect Judith Rousseau, incoming Executive Treasurer Leo Duan, Program Chair-Elect David Frazier, and our newly elected Board members Alejandra Avalos Pacheco, David Dahl, Beatrice Franzolini, and Stephanie van der Pas.

At the same time, I would like to bid a fond farewell to our departing officers and Board members: Past President Aad van der Vaart, Executive Treasurer Yanxun Xu, Past Program Chair Sergios Agapiou, and Board members Tamara Broderick, Subhashis Ghosal, Claire Gormley, and Matteo Ruggiero. Their contributions have been substantial, often behind the scenes, always essential. They have helped sustain all of ISBA's activities over the past three years, providing continuity, thoughtful leadership, and steady support for the Society's work.

Preparation is well underway for the **2026 ISBA World Meeting**, which will be held June 28-July 3, 2026 in Nagoya, Japan. We are expecting a strong turnout, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight one of the things that makes ISBA meetings special: the poster sessions. At ISBA conferences, posters are not an "add-on." They are a cornerstone of the meeting: well-attended, high-traffic forums for in-depth discussion and lively exchange. Poster sessions are often the most attended and sought-after moments of the conference. If you are considering attending the meeting in Nagoya, I strongly encourage you to consider the poster session: it is one of the best ways to receive feedback, meet collaborators, and be part of the intellectual heartbeat of the meeting.

We are committed to keeping the meeting accessible, especially for PhD students and early-career researchers, for whom attending an international meeting can be financially out of reach. ISBA's travel support (including awards targeted to junior researchers) is one of the most direct ways we can broaden participation and bring new voices into the meeting.

IN THIS ISSUE

In this spirit, I would like to make a **special appeal to potential sponsors and institutional partners**: additional sponsorship directly supports travel awards and often makes the difference between a young researcher being able to attend or having to stay home. If you or your organization are in a position to contribute, I warmly encourage you to consider sponsoring ISBA's travel support for the Nagoya meeting and helping us bring as many members of the global Bayesian community together as possible.

I am also pleased to confirm that **free memberships** are now available for verified PhD students who reside in countries with a low per-capita Gross National Income (GNI). We extend our thanks to j-ISBA for championing this important and inclusive update to our membership structure. This change will take effect on January 1, 2026.

New Section on Bayesian AI. I am excited to share the approval of a new ISBA Section on Bayesian AI. Its goal is to strengthen interaction between the Bayesian statistics and AI communities, and to advance the research, application, and dissemination of Bayesian inference in machine learning and AI, through workshops, sessions across meetings and webinars, travel awards and prizes. The Section will promote scalable Bayesian methods for modern AI and encourage the development of accessible software. The initial officers are: Sinead Williamson (Chair, 2026–2027), Julyan Arbel (Chair-Elect, 2026–2028), Vincent Fortuin (Program Chair, 2026–2028), Theodore Papamarkou (Treasurer, 2026–2028), and Sara Wade (Secretary, 2026–2027).

A conversation with Mike West. I would also like to highlight a recent conversation with Mike West by Hedibert F. Lopes and Filippo Ascolani. In this extended interview, Mike West (Duke University) reflects on his path into statistics, the development of statistics at Duke, and the evolution of ideas that shaped modern Bayesian time series and dynamic modeling, along with broader perspectives on decision analysis, interdisciplinary work, mentoring, and professional service (including his past ISBA leadership). The article will be of interest to both early-career researchers and those who have followed the growth of Bayesian statistics over the past few decades. I hope many of you will take a look and share it with colleagues and friends.

Working on the future of ISBA conferences. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of ISBA Conferences, established in September 2025. As you will read in this bulletin, the Committee is preparing a comprehensive assessment of the environmental impact of our meetings and the barriers to inclusive participation, with the explicit goal of informing medium- and long-term planning. Building on the broader discussion ISBA has been having about conference formats and their future, the Committee is also launching a membership survey to gather input from the community; I strongly encourage everyone to participate, as your responses will directly shape the recommendations and the Society's strategic direction.

Before closing, I would like to pause to remember Harry van Zanten, who passed away in early August 2025 after a long illness. Harry was widely respected for foundational contributions to modern Bayesian nonparametrics and stochastic processes. I remember him very fondly as a brilliant, humble, and genuinely kind person. He will be deeply missed. We plan to hold a session in his honor at the 2026 ISBA World Meeting in Nagoya.

Finally, as I conclude my term, I would like to thank all of you for considering ISBA your home. ISBA's strength has always come from the passion, generosity, and sustained engagement of its members. I am especially grateful to the officers of our Sections and Chapters, and to all those who have taken on committee responsibilities and other service roles, for the time and care they devote to the Society. With Antonio Lijoi assuming the presidency, I extend my very best wishes for a successful term. I look forward to seeing the Society continue to evolve under his leadership, and I hope to see many of you in Nagoya for the 2026 ISBA World Meeting.

FROM THE EDITOR

Francesco Denti
francesco.denti@unipd.it

As 2025 draws to a close, so does my second year as Editor. I would like to once again thank everyone who contributes to the Bulletin and makes this publication possible.

This issue opens with a beautiful obituary in memory of Harry van Zanten, followed by updates from the Program Council, Bayesian Analysis, and the Prize Committee. Be sure not to miss the report from the Ad Hoc Committee tasked with reflecting on the future of ISBA conferences - and please take a moment to complete the associated survey!

We also bring you news from j-ISBA, along with updates on what is happening across the broader Bayesian community. Finally, this issue features important information on teaching Bayesian statistics and celebrates the newly elected members from the most recent ISBA elections.

ISBA community, enjoy!

REMEMBERING HARRY VAN ZANTEN

Botond Szabó and Aad van der Vaart
botond.szabo@unibocconi.it, A.W.vanderVaart@tudelft.nl

It is with intense sadness that we announce the passing of Harry van Zanten. On August 5, 2025, Harry died at the age of 52, peacefully in his home in Amsterdam surrounded by his loved ones. For the last few years, he coped with a cancer that sadly turned out to be untreatable. He leaves behind his wife Carolien and two sons, Hero and Midas, who had just finished a bachelor's degree or was admitted to conservatory, family and many friends. Harry was an exceptional colleague, mentor and friend. His work in Bayesian statistics and stochastic processes has had a great impact on the field and will help shape the next generations of researchers.

Harry was born on November 15, 1972, in Hoogeveen in the north-east of the Netherlands, and visited high school in Barneveld, a small town belonging to the so-called "bible belt" in the middle of the Netherlands and known for the many poultry farms surrounding it. Becoming a mathematician was not an obvious career path, but one that he started by entering the mathematics program at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and followed through for his love of mathematical beauty, besides several excursions. He finished a PhD under guidance of Peter Spreij and Kacha Dhzaparidze at the Centrum voor Wiskunde and Informatica and the University of Amsterdam in 2001 on Martingales and Diffusions, Limit Theory and Statistical Inference, a title that well expresses his interest in probability and its applications

in statistics. He later would say that he liked statistics, as long as (or especially if) it had some martingales or stochastic processes in it.

After completing his PhD, Harry at first chose not to pursue an ordinary academic career and joined Nyfer, an institute for applied economic research. He described his work there as performing linear regression of various types, all focused on proving the correctness of some idea of the director of the institute. It was a time that "financial mathematics", in the form of option pricing theory and risk management, was becoming fashionable at the Amsterdam universities, for both teaching and research. Given Harry's love for martingales, it was not too difficult to lure him back into academia. He started as an assistant professor at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and proceeded rapidly through the academic ranks in the Netherlands, becoming full professor at the Technische Universiteit Eindhoven in 2009, only eight years after his PhD defence. Subsequently he changed university twice, first to the University of Amsterdam, and then to the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, thus closing the circle. While practical considerations were important (since his days as an undergraduate student he never really left Amsterdam), his moves also reveal some restlessness, doubts about the value of an academic career or discomfort with the egos of its most famous protagonists or university bureaucracy. It still came as a big surprise to all colleagues close to him, when some five years ago he announced that he would step down from his professorship, keeping it only for one day a week to work with students. This was before his illness started and changed everything, and on questioning also without a specific plan of what to do next. Something with consultation, he would answer. He had been doing practical statistical work on the side already, unconnected to his purely mathematical research work. Thus, Harry hovered back and forth between different worlds: probability or statistics, purely mathematical research versus practical statistics, academic life or the (real) world with friends and family.

Although the usual rejections we all face were not strange to him, Harry received plenty of recognition. In 2010 he was honoured with the Van Dantzig prize as the most promising researcher in statistics and operations research in the Netherlands under the age of 40. While walking a very fast career path, he received the VENI, VIDI and VICI grants for exceptional talent from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research as well as smaller awards. He was a fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics.

Harry's most acclaimed research was on the rigorous, mathematical understanding of Bayesian methods. He derived guarantees but also exposed limitations, for the accuracy of nonparametric methods judged from the non-Bayesian ("frequentist-Bayes") point of view. One derives a posterior distribution fully within the Bayesian paradigm but then studies its properties under the assumption that the data is in reality generated according to a fixed distribution, typically one of the possibilities under the prior. Does the posterior distribution contract to this distribution (so-called consistency)? How fast does it contract if the data becomes more informative? Does the spread in the posterior distribution give a realistic quantification of the statistical uncertainty (is a credible set a confidence set)? Are there computational shortcuts to the posterior distribution with similar accuracy? Harry's deep knowledge and love of martingales and stochastic processes turned out to be a useful basis for studying properties of Bayesian procedures in standard nonparametric models like regression and density estimation. They were also essential to analysing more involved observational models such as diffusion processes and inverse problems, of which Harry is one of the initiators. One of his most influential contributions is the paper "Rates of contraction of posterior distributions based on Gaussian process priors". This connected contraction rates of posterior distributions derived from using a Gaussian process as prior for a regression or log density function (a popular practice in machine learning) to the small ball probability of the Gaussian process. The probability that the sample paths of the process remain within epsilon of a given "true" function, as epsilon tends to zero, determines the posterior contraction rate. The prior matters.

Besides on Bayesian statistics, Harry published on topics in probability, such as series expansions of fractional Brownian motion, martingale inequalities and central limit theorems. His papers appeared in top probability journals (AP, PTRF), top statistical journals (AoS, Bernoulli) and top machine learning venues (JMLR, NeurIPS).

Harry had a keen understanding of administrative processes at the university, and this made that he would rather be not too involved if he could. However, he was an active member of our community, perhaps with his biggest involvement being the organization of the Bayesian Nonparametric Meeting (2014) and the European Meeting of Statisticians (2015), both in Amsterdam. He was also one of the initiators of the Amsterdam "Bayes Club" (and later the "thematic seminar"), which organised seminars and brought together researchers in Amsterdam in the ten years surrounding 2010. The meetings were often concluded with beers and pub food and gathered a crowd of faculty and PhD students. It was a fruitful and fun time for statistics in the Netherlands.

Harry was a dedicated and generous mentor. He supervised 13 PhD students and several postdocs, on topics in Bayesian nonparametrics, stochastic processes and finance. He cared deeply about the well-being of his students, also outside of work, and was very approachable and easy going. Harry had a great sense of humour, making joint research with him a lot of fun and meeting up something to look forward too.

In his non-academic life, Harry liked to sail. He co-owned his sailboat and was busy with renovating it during the winter season, making shorter and longer sailing trips during the summer, with friends and family, in particular his brother, to places as far as the North Sea or the Mediterranean Sea. He also was also knowledgeable about music, a passion he shared with and transferred to his children.

He will be missed, by both younger and older colleagues.

FROM THE PROGRAM COUNCIL

Sameer Deshpande
program-council@bayesian.org

2026 ISBA World Meeting

Program Updates. The Scientific Committee received over 650 proposals for contributed talks and posters for the upcoming 2026 ISBA World Meeting, which is scheduled to take place in Nagoya, Japan from June 28 to July 3, 2026. Thanks to everyone who submitted a proposal!

After careful review of all proposals, the Committee selected 40 proposals to be delivered as contributed talks and invited the remaining proposals to be presented during one of three poster sessions at the meeting. Decisions were sent in mid-December. If you submitted a proposal but have not received a decision, please contact the Program Council at program-council@bayesian.org.

Registration. You can now register for the meeting at this link. ISBA members receive a discount of 100 USD. To take advantage of this discount, you must first sign into your ISBA account (there is a log-in link in the top-right of the registration page).

Check out the meeting website for local travel information including directions to Nagoya and the venue, a list of accommodation options, and some local attractions. We look forward to seeing everyone in Nagoya next summer.

Endorsement Requests

If you are planning a meeting and would like to request financial (co-)sponsorship or non-financial endorsement from ISBA, please submit your request to the Program Council. Detailed information on how to submit such requests is available at this link.

Planning A Meeting?

If you are planning to organize an ISBA-endorsed or (co)-sponsored meeting, please check with the Program Council before confirming your meeting dates. This is to avoid scheduling multiple meetings at the same time or too close together.

UPDATES FROM BA

Igor Prünster
igor@unibocconi.it

As the year draws to a close, I am pleased to share a few updates from *Bayesian Analysis*.

BA at Major International Meetings in 2026

I am delighted to announce the *Bayesian Analysis Highlights* session at the 2026 ISBA World Meeting in Nagoya (June 28–July 3, 2026). This session will showcase three highlights among the recently accepted papers in the journal:

- Sudipto Banerjee (University of California, Los Angeles)
  Bayesian inference for spatial-temporal non-Gaussian data using predictive stacking
  Joint work with S. Pan, L. Zhang, and J. R. Bradley
- Sarah Filippi (Imperial College London)
  Group Spike-and-Slab Variational Bayes
  Joint work with M. Komodromos, M. Evangelou, and K. Ray
- Subhashis Ghosal (North Carolina State University)
  Bayesian Semi-supervised Multi-category Classification under Nonparanormality
  Joint work with R. Zhu and S. Ghosh

Bayesian Analysis will also be featured at the Joint Statistical Meetings 2026 in Boston (August 1–6, 2026). I am particularly pleased to report that our attempt to resume the tradition of having a *Bayesian Analysis* session at JSM, interrupted during the pandemic, has been successful: the proposal was accepted as an invited session, with an outstanding lineup:

- Amy Herring (Duke University)
  Bayesian Modeling of Nearly Mutually Orthogonal Processes
  Joint work with J. Matuk and D. B. Dunson
- Peter Müller (University of Texas at Austin)
  DPGLM: A Semiparametric Bayesian GLM with Inhomogeneous Normalized Random Measures
  Joint work with E. Alam and P. J. Rathouz
- Debdeep Pati (University of Wisconsin)
  Robust Probabilistic Inference via a Constrained Transport Metric
  Joint work with A. Chakraborty and A. Bhattacharya
- Marina Vannucci (Rice University)
  A Bayesian Approach for Inference on Mixed Graphical Models
  Joint work with M. Florez, A. Gottard, C. McAdams, and M. Guindani

These sessions showcase the breadth of topics and the strength of recent work appearing in *Bayesian Analysis*. I thank all speakers for their contributions and warmly encourage you to attend these sessions.

Lindley Prize

I would also like to provide a brief update concerning the Lindley Prize. The December 2025 issue includes a dedicated section with the seven papers in contention. These contributions were presented at the 2024 ISBA World Meeting in Venice and subsequently accepted for publication in *Bayesian Analysis*. Choosing a winner among them will not be easy, and I am very grateful to the Lindley Prize Committee for their careful and thoughtful work. The winner will be announced during the World Meeting in Nagoya.

As we approach the end of the year, I would like to wish all readers happy holidays and a happy New Year. If you find a quiet moment over the holiday break, I encourage you to take a look at the many excellent papers recently accepted and now available in the Advance Publication section of the journal.

FROM THE PRIZE COMMITTEE

Botond Szabó
botond.szabo@unibocconi.it

The ISBA Prize Committee and sub-committees have continued their important work within ISBA. The next ISBA Awards Ceremony will take place during our ISBA World Meeting held in Nagoya, Japan, from June 28 to July 3, 2026. In this issue, we announce the finalists in both categories.

Savage 2025 Award Finalists

In the Category of **Applied Methodology**, the four finalists (in alphabetical order of their last name) are

- Brandon Carter (University of Texas at Austin) for the thesis: "Bayesian Spatial Models for Discrete Data: Methodological Advances with Applications in Urban Sociology". Supervisor: Catherine A. Calder.
- Jorge Castillo-Mateo (University of Zaragoza) for the thesis: "Stochastic models for the spatio-temporal analysis of extremes: Applications to the analysis of climate change". Supervisors: Ana C. Cebri'an Guajardo and Alan E. Gelfand.
- Changwoo Lee (Texas A&M University) for the thesis: "Probabilistic clustering methods for complex data and related topics". Supervisor: Huiyan Sang.
- Michael Schwob (University of Texas at Austin) for the thesis: "Bayesian Hierarchical Models for Dependent Ecological Data". Supervisor: Mevin B. Hooten.

In the Category of **Theory and Methods**, the four finalists (in alphabetical order of their last name) are:

- Filippo Ascolani (Bocconi University) for the thesis: "Hierarchical structures in Bayesian Statistics". Supervisors: Igor Prünster and Antonio Lijoi.
- Hyunwoong Chang (University of Texas at Dallas) for the thesis: "Convergence analysis of Markov chain Monte Carlo methods for model selection problems". Supervisors: Quan Zhou and Suojin Wang.
- Samhita Pal (North Carolina State University) for the thesis: "Bayesian Inference in High-dimensional regression Models using Sparse Projection-Posterior". Supervisor: Subhashis Ghoshal.
- Yuren Zhou (Duke University): "Bayesian Deep Discrete Latent Structures". Supervisor: David B. Dunson.

The Savage Award 2025 sub-committees comprised of Veera Baladandayuthapani (University of Michigan), Noirrit Kiran Chandra (University of Texas - Dallas), Daniele Durante (Bocconi University), Claire Gormley (University College Dublin), Jeff Miller (Harvard University, chair), Yang Ni (Texas A&M University), Yasuhiro Omori (University of Tokyo), Garritt Page (Brigham Young University), and Yixin Wang (University of Michigan) for the category of Applied Methodology, and Federico Camerlenghi (University of Milano-Bicocca), Fabrizio Leisen (King's College London), Feng Liang (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), David Nott (National University of Singapore), Fernando Quintana (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile), and Athanasios Kottas (University of California, chair) for the category of Theory and Methods. They were all very impressed with the high quality of submissions this year and congratulate all applicants on their fine contributions to Bayesian statistics.

The Savage Award finalists' presentations are scheduled for June 30 and July 1, and the award ceremony will take place during the banquet on Friday, July 3. You are all warmly invited to attend, and we hope to see many of you there!

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE OF ISBA CONFERENCES

Guido Consonni, Kate Lee, Gertraud Malsiner-Walli, and Christian Robert
guido.consonni@unicatt.it

In September 2025, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of ISBA Conferences was established by the ISBA Executive Committee. Its charge is to produce a comprehensive report on the environmental impact and inclusivity of ISBA meetings, and to develop strategic ideas for future conference formats. The aim is to support medium- and long-term planning rather than influence meetings already scheduled. Members of the Committee are Guido Consonni, Kate Lee, Gertraud Malsiner-Walli, and Christian Robert.

The net contribution of international conferences and workshops to research is undeniable. By bringing different communities together, they provide a special, relatively secluded environment in which discussions and debates can take place more easily, foster the emergence of new collaborations, and offer researchers on the move opportunities to secure new positions. Additionally, meetings often represent a significant source of revenue for scientific societies, which in turn is frequently used for valuable purposes such as supporting early-career researchers.

The Committee recognizes all these benefits and does not advocate the termination of international conferences. Rather, it aims to balance these benefits with the imperatives of environmental sustainability and inclusive participation, both of which are essential to social progress and to the future of our planet.

Environmental sustainability

We start from the premise that there is broad scientific consensus that greenhouse-gas emissions must not only be halted but reversed in order to limit severe and potentially irreversible climate impacts. While this challenge applies across all sectors of society, here we focus on academic practices, especially those associated with large international meetings.

Traditional in-person conference formats come with substantial environmental costs.[1] Recent estimates suggest that per-person emissions for a single conference can reach several thousand kilograms of CO_2 equivalent, particularly when long-distance flights are involved.

Conference-related emissions arise from multiple components, including air travel, local transportation, accommodation, food provision, and energy use associated with venue operation. Among these, air travel is by far the dominant factor: a single intercontinental return flight may exceed what the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change considers a sustainable yearly per-capita carbon budget. In our view, this makes it imperative for academics to rethink travel practices.

Inclusive participation

Inclusive participation in scientific meetings is not only a matter of fairness, but also of scientific quality: diverse participation broadens perspectives, enriches discussion, and strengthens the research community. At the same time, while conferences are crucial for exchanging ideas and building networks, they can also be sites of unintentional exclusion.

Financial costs - such as international travel, accommodation, and registration fees - can make attendance difficult, especially for early-career researchers and those without dedicated funding. Administrative constraints, including scheduling conflicts and institutional permissions, can further restrict participation. Together, these barriers create unequal opportunities for career development.[2]

Visa challenges present another obstacle. Researchers from many regions face complex paperwork, long delays, and the possibility of refusal, all of which generate uncertainty and emotional strain and contribute to structurally unequal access to global academic exchange.

Caregiving responsibilities, such as childcare and eldercare, can further limit participation, often affecting women and primary caregivers disproportionately. Health limitations may also reduce individuals' ability to travel, while disabilities can restrict participation when appropriate accessibility support is lacking.

Finally, language barriers, cultural differences, and disciplinary norms may discourage participation by individuals from under-represented groups. Creating intellectually welcoming and culturally sensitive environments is therefore essential.

These concerns have motivated growing interest in alternative conference formats, including fully virtual conferences, hybrid meetings with local hubs and online participation, and multi-hub events in which geographically dispersed groups meet locally and connect digitally. These formats can drastically reduce long-distance travel and associated emissions, while at the same time broadening access and fostering more inclusive participation.

[1] Funke M. & Lago P. (2022). "Let's Start Reducing the Carbon Footprint of Academic Conferences." In C. Calero et al. (Eds.), *2022 International Conference on ICT for Sustainability (ICT4S)* (pp. 160–171). IEEE. https://doi.org/10.1109/ICT4S55073.2022.00027

[2] Joo R. et al. (2022). "Ten simple rules to host an inclusive conference." *PLOS Computational Biology* 18(7): e1010164. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1010164

Conference metrics

To gather information on conferences of particular relevance to the ISBA community, we contacted the organizers of several ISBA-related meetings and workshops held over the last four years, including the 2024 ISBA World Meeting in Venice. We requested data on participation patterns, geographical distribution, hybrid or virtual components, accessibility measures, carbon-footprint considerations, and other organizational practices.

We are grateful to the organizers who responded promptly and shared detailed information. Drawing on these data, we drafted a more structured set of metrics targeting three broad areas: Accessibility and Inclusivity, Format and Outreach, and Environmental Sustainability. We plan to share this document with future ISBA conference organizers in order to obtain a clearer picture of how ISBA meetings perform across these dimensions and to better understand the challenges faced by local organizers and by the leadership of ISBA.

Survey

The Committee warmly invites ISBA members to share their perspectives on the environmental sustainability, inclusivity, and accessibility of ISBA meetings, and hopes to stimulate awareness and discussion of these issues within the Society. To this end, we have prepared a *Survey on Meeting Experiences to Inform Future ISBA Events*, which can be found at this link. ISBA members can also use the following QR code to access the survey. Completing the survey takes about 5–10 minutes, depending on whether you choose to add comments.

JUNIOR ISBA

Matteo Giordano
jisba.section@gmail.com

Dear Bayesian Community, as we approach the end of the year, I am delighted to share some exciting updates from the j-ISBA section.

Blackwell-Rosenbluth Award Winners

Firstly, we are thrilled to announce the winners of this year's Blackwell-Rosenbluth Award by ISBA and j-ISBA, recognizing outstanding contributions by early-career researchers based on their overall contribution to the field and the community.

UTC- time-zone winners:

- Nianqiao "Phiyllis" Ju (Darthmouth College)
- Geoff Pleiss (University of British Columbia)
- Beniamino Hadj-Amar (University of South Carolina)

UTC+ time-zone winners:

- Francesco Denti (University of Padova)
- Beatrice Franzolini (University of Milan-Bicocca)
- Jun Yang (University of Copenhagen)

We express our heartfelt gratitude to the two scientific committees of the award for their diligent work. New nominations for the Blackwell-Rosenbluth Award will open in early 2026, and we encourage you to consider nominating deserving early-career researchers. All information can be found at this link.

BAYSM 2026, 26-27 June, Chiba, Japan: Abstract Submission Open

We are excited to welcome submissions for the BAYSM 2026, taking place at Chiba University, Chiba, Japan, on 26-27 June 2026, just before the ISBA World Meeting in Nagoya. The deadline for abstract submissions is January 15, 2026.

We invite contributions on a wide range of topics related to Bayesian theory, methods, and applications. Please submit an extended abstract (700–1,000 words) in PDF format. Adherence to the specified length is essential for full consideration.

To submit your extended abstract, visit the BAYSM 2026 website. Registration will open in the new year. We look forward to your contributions and participation!

Incoming board members

Francesco Gaffi (Chair Elect). Francesco is an Assistant Professor of Statistics at the Department of Economics, University of Bergamo. Previously, he was a Postdoctoral Associate in Statistics at the Department of Mathematics, University of Maryland, College Park, and the Robert and Sara Lumpkins Postdoctoral Fellow in Statistics at the Department of Applied and Computational Mathematics and Statistics, University of Notre Dame, mentored by Lizhen Lin. Francesco's research interests include topics in Bayesian nonparametrics and network data analysis, particularly random partitions and permutations for dynamic and multilayer networks, in the context of node clustering, edge prediction, and graph matching.

Nicolas Bianco (Program Chair). Nicolas is a postdoctoral researcher in Statistics and Data Science within the Methods for Big Data research group at the Scientific Computing Center of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. Nicolas is interested in Bayesian statistics for the analysis of high-dimensional data, focusing on both theoretical and computational aspects, and in experiencing interesting applications. His current work focuses on Bayesian inference for variable selection in complex settings and recent challenges in spatio-temporal data analysis.

Emma Landry (Secretary). Emma is a fifth-year PhD candidate in Biostatistics at UCLA, working with Donatello Telesca. Prior to joining UCLA, she obtained her integrated master's in Mathematics from Imperial College London, where she completed a thesis under the supervision of Seth Flaxman.

Emma's research focuses on Bayesian methods in functional data analysis, motivated by applications to neuroscience. Her goal is to develop robust methodology for non-Euclidean data, in particular for density-valued observations.

j-ISBA's 2025 in numbers

Finally, as the year comes to a close, here is a summary of the main j-ISBA activities in 2025, in case you missed anything, and a look ahead to 2026:

- **1 in-person online conference** (BAYSM 2025). This was our largest event yet, with more than 180 participants. Thank you once again to the organizers and everyone else involved! We look forward to seeing you at BAYSM 2026 in Chiba, Japan!
- **4 Best Long Talk Awards, 4 Best Short Talk Awards, and 6 Blackwell-Rosenbluth Awards.** Thank you to everyone involved in the organization and in the scientific committees behind these important recognitions for early-career researchers (from those managing the Google submission forms to the prize awards transfers, and those tasked with making difficult decisions).
- **4 organized sessions** at conferences worldwide. Please keep an eye on the j-ISBA event page for all the updates.
- **298 members**: this is the most important number of all, marking the highest number of members in years with- out an ISBA World Meeting. We are delighted to witness the consistent growth of the j-ISBA community and remain committed to expanding our community-engagement events and activities in the coming year. Don't forget to renew your membership to stay connected with us! Thank you to all j-ISBA members for making this section an incredible community to be part of, and to the entire ISBA community for their constant support of the "younger" members!

NEWS FROM THE WORLD

Déborah Sulem
deborah.sulem@usi.ch

Q&A: what do you ~~believe~~ think?

Have you changed your teaching practice in the last few years and how?

Mike West (Duke University, Emeritus)

Well, I have not been involved in active, full-time teaching since the start of 2023, so my teaching practice(s) have inherently changed enormously in the "last few years"! I moved to Emeritus status at Duke University in 2024, and had stepped aside from regular teaching as a routine over the preceding year or two. That said, I continue to "teach" in active PhD student advising and mentoring, and maintain interests in professional short-courses.

I will say almost nothing here on the enormous challenges faced in teaching broad undergraduate courses– and other, also broad, graduate courses for heterogeneous student audiences. In recent years, the pressures

to integrate technology, aspects of non-statistical data science and AI tools have been, and are, fundamental forcing factors in how we adapt and modify teaching strategies and evolve our teaching philosophies. I am, perhaps, fortunate in having so recently stepped aside from routine engagement in teaching that I do not have to face the resulting challenges personally day-to-day! The pace of change and scale of challenges are enormous, and all of our teaching is and should be sensitively adapting in major ways. I have commented recently on some of these challenges broadly– not specific to teaching, but very much germane; I will leave that aside here, though some readers might be interested in my comments in the final section of Lopes & Ascolani ([1] below). In teaching, one overarching theme and central concern for me is that we maintain commitment to foundational thinking– the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of statistics and decision analysis– and ensure the presence of coherent reasoning throughout all of our teaching of statistics, however applied and algorithmic it may otherwise become.

Much of my teaching over the last several years was at the graduate level– introductory and advanced PhD and MS courses in core areas of statistics and Bayesian analysis–, so my comments are heavily reflective of experiences in such contexts. And, given my departure from regular teaching in recent years, I'll take the liberty of morphing the posed question to that of exploring a few aspects in the evolution of my teaching, mostly reflecting on what I understood over recent years as to what (I think) has worked best for our students and me. All just wholly reflective on my own experiences, and not at all suggestive or putatively prescriptive for others.

One of my recurrent courses in recent years was an introductory graduate course (mainly for new PhD students, with a sprinkling of Master's) on probability and statistical modelling. The course aims at a broad and deep introduction to what I regard as core topics for Bayesian statistics: multivariate distribution theory, a range of simulation theory and methodology, core theory of Markov processes relevant to theory and methods of MCMC, aspects of graphical modelling and related topics (foundations and decision analysis enter in, of course, though are better represented in one of my other courses). My version of this particular course evolved over many years with, typically, major annual updates– mostly additions but some deletions. The final version includes hundreds of pages of detailed notes, hundreds of exercises along with a large code and data base– the course grew in the telling! The course spans from quite theoretical aspects, through methodology, and to very applied topics. With this course as a main example, I identify three general reasons why I've enjoyed teaching, what I think worked and why.

First, examples, examples examples! Examples in-class, and many, detailed examples for weekly homework (and exams). Whether simple theoretical illustrations, more detailed derivations, counterexamples, coding examples, examples to explore and experiment with models, methods and data, or– importantly– examples that drive the students ahead of the regular class topics. Most good teaching is teaching by example.

Second, running examples for progressive building of students' experiences with core ideas and connecting to new topics. I have never been a fan of teaching a series of topics, moving on to the next after "mastering the last". There is a role for this in some areas of teaching, but my own practice has been firmly that of progressive learning. A good example in this particular course is the use of a simple first-order, autoregressive model: a vehicle for introducing a broad range of topics and examples in distribution theory, many notions of dependence, ranges of example contexts for simulation ideas and methods, core aspects of graphical modelling, fundamental theory of Markov chains and a range of methodological aspects of MCMC; and, a building block for more elaborate applied models. Revisiting prior examples repeatedly over the course, extending and modifying to link to new, current topics, became a standard strategy in all of my teaching.

Third, tie teaching into personal research (and other) interests, especially current interests. It took quite a few years of teaching before I came to recognise that I enjoy it and feel good about what and how I teach. Cumulated experience, mastery of core ideas and technical material (and an increasing bank of historical anecdotes and vignettes!) form the core; but, the integration into everyday teaching of my current interests– whether drawn from current research ideas, models, data and/or applications– substantially helped to define the foundation of my own teaching. Teaching is fun and effective when it is fun for the teacher and the students, and the level of engagement of the teacher is key to both. Anchoring part of the course– and each class– around some aspects of my research interests– historical as well as topical examples and unanswered, often vague questions– has been key to my own enjoyment in teaching. Most importantly, this has, I believe, really made a difference in terms

of student engagement and my own view of teaching success.

[1] Hedibert F. Lopes & Filippo Ascolani (2025) *A Conversation with Mike West*. Available on ArXiv.

Brieuc Lehmann (University College London)

I started my role as a lecturer at UCL almost four years ago to this day, during which time I have been fortunate to lead on a first-year module on programming fundamentals for students in statistics and data science. Over this period, my teaching practice has changed substantially, largely in response to the rapid rise of generative AI and its impact on how students learn and are assessed.

Tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini are now remarkably effective at programming, and the temptation for students to use these tools is incredibly high. This has made it increasingly difficult to use unsupervised assessments such as take-home coursework to reliably test individual understanding. As a result, we're moving back towards more in-class assessment and exams, which feels like a step backwards, but ultimately necessary while assessment practices adapt to the widespread availability of AI.

At the same time, I've been using AI extensively to help me prepare teaching material. I've found it particularly useful for generating exercises and examples, and it's also really effective at improving clarity and simplifying language, which is especially beneficial for students for whom English is not a first language. This has freed me to focus less on covering the content exhaustively and more on motivating curiosity and engagement, which I personally find much more interesting and rewarding.

Upcoming Meetings, Conferences, and Workshops

ISBA sponsored or endorsed events

- Bayes on the Beach 2026, 9-11 February 2026, University of Wollongong, Australia. This biennial conference held in Australia is organised by the Bayesian Research & Applications Group in collaboration with the University of Wollongong and QUT Centre for Data Science; the Australian chapter of ISBA; the Statistical Society of Australia, Bayesian Statistics Section; and Queensland University of Technology (QUT). The meeting provides an opportunity for Australian and international researchers to present and discuss the most recent research developments in Bayesian statistics.
- 2026 Best of Statistical Science Workshop (BOSS 2026), 24-25 April 2026, Department of Statistics at Texas A&M, USA. BOSS 2026 brings together leading experts, faculty, and students for two days of engaging discussions, presentations, and networking opportunities. Whether you're a student, researcher, or industry professional, this event is a great opportunity to connect and explore the latest advancements in statistical science.
- The Bayesian Young Statisticians Meeting (BAYSM) 2026, 26-27 July 2026, Chiba University, Japan. The keynote speakers will be Prof. Kerrie Mengersen and Prof. Kengo Kamatani. Abstract submission deadline: 16 January 2026.
- ISBA World Meeting 2026, 28 June - 3 July 2026, Nagoya, Japan. Deadline for contributed talks and posters: 21 November.
- The 9th Eastern Asia Chapter Conference (EAC-ISBA 2026), 23-25 July 2026, Yunnan University in Kunming, China. The conference will include keynote presentations, parallel invited sessions, contributed sessions, and poster sessions. Further details and updates are available on the conference website.

Other events

- 16th Workshop on Stochastic Models, Statistics and Their Applications (SMSA), 18-20 March 2026, University of Würzburg, Germany. This conference puts together recent advances in areas related to stochastic modeling, statistical inference, statistical learning and their applications. Contributions motivated by or addressing issues in engineering, industry, natural sciences and other applications are particularly welcomed. Deadline for contributed talks submissions: 8 January 2026.
- International Symposium on Nonparametric Statistics (ISNPS 2026), 22-26 June 2026, Thessaloniki, Greece. The symposium showcases recent advances and emerging trends in all areas of nonparametric statistics and machine learning. Its scientific program will feature plenary lectures by leading experts, special invited sessions, contributed talks, and a dedicated student poster session, with travel support awarded to the winners. In addition, there will be a student paper competition, with the winners presenting in a special invited session. Contributed Talks and Posters Submissions: 2 April 2026. Student Competition Submission deadline: 31 January 2026.
- European Meeting of Statisticians 2026, 24-28 August 2026, Lugano, Switzerland. This conference is sponsored by the European Regional Committee of the Bernoulli Society, and is the main conference in statistics and probability in Europe. This meeting features 7 plenary speakers, 21 invited sessions and many contributed sessions.

And don't forget

- Latin American Congress of Probability and Mathematical Statistics (XVII CLAPEM), 2-6 March 2026, Montevideo, Uruguay. This meeting is organised by the Latin American Society of Probability and Mathematical Statistics (SLAPEM) and the Latin American Regional Committee (LARC) of the Bernoulli Society.
- 4^{th} Bayesian Nonparametrics Networking Workshop, 6-10 July 2026, Seoul, South Korea. This meeting is organised by the Bayesian NonParametrics (BNP) Section and aims to enhance networking within the BNP community, particularly for junior researchers. Look on the website for updates.
- Institute of Mathematical Statistics Annual Meeting 2026, 6-9 July 2026, Salzburg, Austria. Registration and abstract submission will open in January 2026.

TEACHING BAYES

Federica Zoe Ricci
fricci1@swarthmore.edu

News from BERaP

Let's welcome the incoming board members of the Section on Bayesian Education Research and Practice (BERaP):

Becky Tang (Chair-Elect). Becky is an Assistant Professor of Statistics at Middlebury College in Vermont (USA). Becky - who is the current Secretary of the BERaP section - is interested in statistics

education and mentoring, particularly with regard to increasing accessibility to students of underrepresented backgrounds and bringing Bayesian statistics into the undergraduate curriculum. She received her PhD in Statistical Sciences in 2022 from Duke University, working with Alan Gelfand and James Clark. Her current research interests include joint species distribution models for various animals and plant communities.

Vanda Inacio (Program Chair). Vanda is a Reader (Associate Professor) in Statistics at the University of Edinburgh. Quoting from her website, Vanda's work is "*approximately equally split between research, teaching, and administration*" and she "*actually enjoys all three*"; she firmly believes that "*we can change lives through education that is free or, at the very least, accessible.*" Vanda received her PhD in Statistics and Operations Research at the University of Lisbon in 2012 and subsequently worked as an Assistant Professor at the Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile before joining the University of Edinburgh. Her research has primarily focused on biostatistics, particularly on the statistical evaluation of biomarkers and diagnostic tests.

Shaoyang Ning (Secretary). Shaoyang is an Assistant Professor of Statistics at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania (USA). Shaoyang is Co-Chair of the Undergraduate Statistics Project Competition and of the Electronic Undergraduate Statistics Research Conference, sponsored by ASA and CAUSE. He received his PhD in Statistics from Harvard in 2018, advised by Jun S. Liu. His current research focuses on the study and design of statistical methods for integrative data analysis.

Michael Pearce (Treasurer). Michael is an Assistant Professor of Statistics at Reed College in Oregon (USA). At Reed, Michael introduced an undergraduate course in Bayesian Statistics, made accessible through the use of active learning techniques that he presented at JSM in 2024. He received his PhD in Statistics in 2023 at the University of Washington, advised by Elena A. Erosheva. His research focuses on ordinal data methods, model-based clustering, and statistical demography.

We have asked the current board members - Monika Hu (Binghamton University), Mine Dogucu (University of California, Irvine), Becky Tang (Middlebury College), and Bertil Wegmann (Linköping University) - to share their experience with the incoming BERaP board members:

- *What have been some effective initiatives of BERaP and how would you like to see them continue to develop in the future? Are there any ideas or insights you'd like to pass along to the newly elected BERaP board members as they begin their term?* MD: We have done a few webinars in the past. They were relatively well attended. The new board can possibly continue those. MH: I agree with Mine, and I think the Bayesian education community has a good lineup of potential webinar speakers. BT: As a returning member of the board, I would also very much like to continue hosting webinars. BW: I think, too, that it would be fruitful to continue with webinars.

- *Thinking about the next ISBA meeting in Nagoya and future ISBA meetings, how would you like the BERaP section to be integrated into the meetings' programs?* MH: In one ISBA meeting in recent years, BERaP organized a mixer of some sort, and though I wasn't there, I heard it was well attended, so it might be worth doing it again. MD: Folks interested in presenting education-related work at ISBA conferences and webinars can always feel free to reach out to the board or program officer. There might be opportunities for getting these into a session or webinar. BT and BW echoed MH and MD's comments.

- *Are there existing teaching resources that you believe are under-utilized and you would like to highlight?* MD: One good thing in terms of teaching resources is that those who are not necessarily focused on education but do applied research can use BERaP to promote work that utilizes simpler models that can be used in class as examples.

- *Any other considerations that you would like to share?* BT: I hope that future BERaP events will grow to be even more international in both audience and speakers. I am personally curious about when in the curriculum and how Bayesian methods are taught outside of the United States (where I am based).

Upcoming Meetings, Conferences, and Workshops

- The Bayesian Young Statisticians Meeting (BAYSM), 26-27 July 2026. Perhaps not many young Bayesian statisticians know that BAYSM accepts submissions related to Bayesian education! Abstract submission deadline: 16 January 2026.
- The Electronic Conference On Teaching Statistics (eCOTS). The 2026 Electronic Conference on Teaching Statistics will be held online from June 15–18, 2026, with the theme "*Sparking Joy and Discovery in a World of AI.*". Proposals for breakout sessions, posters and beyond, workshops, reading groups, regional meetings, and birds-of-a-feather gatherings are being accepted through early January.
- EAPOST Workshops. If you would like to be introduced to resources on teaching the statistical investigation process, multi-variable thinking, and simulation-based inference, EAPOST (Expanding and Assessing the Art and Practice of Statistical Thinking) will be offering a free in-person workshop and several Friday webinars in January of 2026.

New Educational Research and Resources

- Estimating Tanks - Communication in Mathematical Statistics. If you are looking for ways to engage students in writing about theoretical results, in a recent open-access article on the Journal of Statistics and Data Science Education, Amy Wagaman (Amherst College) introduced a project developed for a course in mathematical statistics. Several fundamental statistical topics are introduced in this course, including Bayesian inference. The article provides a detailed description of the project, assessment strategies, including a rubric and example student work.
- An Inspiring Story of Teaching Statistics Through Sports Applications. Members of the Bayesian community passionate about sports may enjoy reading the second part of an interview with Jim Albert, which focuses on teaching statistics through sports and wanders into the wider world of sports analytics. This interview can also be listened to as a podcast.

ISBA ELECTION RESULTS 2025

Xinyi Xu
xinyi@stat.osu.edu

ISBA General Elections

President Elect

Judith Rousseau	Université Paris-Dauphine

Treasurer

Leo Duan	University of Florida

ISBA Board of Directors

Alejandra Avalos Pacheco	JKU Linz
David Dahl	Brigham Young University
Beatrice Franzolini	University of Milano-Bicocca
Stéphanie van der Pas	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

J-ISBA Section

Chair-Elect
Francesco Gaffi — Bocconi University

Program Chair
Nicolas Bianco — KIT

Secretary
Emma Landry — UCLA

BNP Section

Chair-Elect
Jim Griffin — University College London

Program Chair
Tommaso Rigon — University of Milano-Bicocca

Treasurer
Filippo Ascolani — Duke University

BERaP Section

Chair-Elect
Becky Tang — Middlebury College

Program Chair
Vanda Inacio — University of Edinburgh

Secretary
Shaoyang Ning — Swarthmore College

Treasurer
Michael Pearce — Reed College

EFaB Section

Chair-Elect
Roberto Casarin — Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Treasurer
Maria Kalli — King's College London

OBayes Section

Program Chair
Rui Paulo — Universidade de Lisboa

Treasurer
Erica Porter — Clemson University

EnviBayes Section

Chair-Elect
David Bolin — KAUST

Treasurer
Whitney Huang — Clemson University

Bayes Comp Section

Chair-Elect
Christopher Drovandi — Queensland University of Technology

Program Chair
Yang Ni — University of Texas at Austin