Professor Ranjini Grove:

Welcome to spring quarter! I hope everyone enjoyed the very brief but highly needed break from school. I would like to take this opportunity to share a few things.

1. As many of you know, Joia Zhang (class of 2023) has kindly agreed to join the Editorial Board of Student’s Time! Joia and I are brainstorming ideas for future newsletters and we are looking to tell your stories. Please email us if you have ideas for possible articles: successes, information, experiences…

2. Seniors: Please mark your calendars! The Statistics Department will be celebrating graduates with an in-person ceremony which is scheduled for Friday June 10 at 11 am.

3. Juniors: We may be looking for volunteers to help with the graduation ceremony. Please look for an email from Mee Ling and be generous with your time because soon it will be your day in the sun and we will enlist the help of the next set of juniors to make your celebration memorable.

4. Satisfactory progress policy: Please be aware that all students are required to take at least one course which counts towards major requirements every quarter, with the exception of summer quarter.

5. I am in the process of moving offices and my new location is at PDL 301. I will be in and out of my office on Wednesdays and Fridays. Feel free to stop by and say hi if you are in the area. The best way to contact me however is still via email, and I prefer that students use statug@uw.edu when doing so.

6. DICE: The Diversity Committee is still looking for undergraduate student members. Please consider joining. It is a great way to meet people in the department.

With these reminders out of the way, I would like to turn my attention to the students we have decided to profile in this newsletter. It occurred to me last winter that when we think of people who further the education mission of our University, our mind often goes to faculty and graduate students. However, many undergraduate students play a vital role in this process as graders, tutors and even as TAs. In this issue you will hear from some of them. I hope hearing their stories will inspire you and perhaps even consider taking on one of these roles in the near future.

Happy Reading!

Ask Mee Ling:

Questions: “I am a STAT Data Science major. How can I register for CSE courses, such as CSE 442, CSE 412, CSE 414, as the courses are high in demand? I also need to take the ethics course. What are my options?”

Answer: “If the course has a section for undergraduate students in Data Science only please contact me before your registration date so I can add you to the data science undergraduate group. After it is done if the course has spaces available you should be able to register via MYUW. The options for ethics requirement are one of SOC 225, STAT 303 (new stat ethics course available in Autumn 2022) or INFO 350.”

Statistics B.S. Town Hall
April 28, 4-5
PDL C-301, Zoom link forthcoming
From the S.P.A Desk:

As we enter the final quarter of the academic year, we reflect on the bizarre circumstances that we have faced yet again this year. But we are proud to see how large SPA has become. Meetings have a consistently high attendance, showing our strong community and mutual support.

As a number of members are quickly approaching graduation, we hope to leave a legacy within SPA that can carry the club onwards for years to come. Our last quarter will be filled with traditional activities such as social meetings, a game night, and our beloved SPA spa day. With increasing sunlight though, we'll also have new and exciting outdoor events.

We, the two Co-Presidents, are honored to have lead SPA for two years and see it develop. We're privileged to see students mature through their academic and personal experiences while contributing to a thriving SPA.

If you are interested in joining SPA and have not joined our discord server yet, here is a link: https://discord.gg/k2k5f4CxMB. And if you have any other questions, you can always email us at lnachrig@uw.edu or olivert@uw.edu.

Happy Spring!

Your SPA Co-Presidents,
Lukas and Oliver

Dante Ramirez: STAT 302 TA

I had the pleasure of TA’ing for the Statistical Computing course, STAT 302. I was the TA of this course for two quarter, first working under Bryan D Martin in Summer 2021 and then under Peter Gao in Autumn 2021. When I took the course as a student, I practically lived in Bryan’s Zoom-link office hours every Thursday and Friday, which was partly out of necessity since programming was never my strong suit, but also because I really enjoyed discussing statistical software and its applications with him. I became such a mainstay in his office hours where I was usually the only student, that I began half-jokingly throwing around the idea that I would be a great TA for the course if he ever needed one. He said he’d keep me in mind. While I initially thought he just said that out of politeness, I checked my Canvas email a few weeks into summer and saw an email from him where he said he wanted to take me up on my offer. I was TA’ing for his Summer quarter STAT 302 course about four days later. When I would grade student labs, my routine was always the same; I would open up the SpeedGrader on canvas, then open up a word document so I could copy and paste certain feedback since students tended to make similar errors, and I would open up a YouTube tab to play a two-hour Ambient & Relaxing Resident Evil Music (w/ Rain and Storm Ambience) video which helped set my grading atmosphere. I would look through each students’ .html document to see if the week’s learned materials were there be it data visualizing, non-parametric prediction, or even style guidelines which were always emphasized. I generally did not have to deduct points too much, as students were welcomingly fluent in R code, and they were very thorough about reading the instructions even as precise as those instructions sometimes were. When I did deduct points, I would sometimes spend up to 45 minutes per student giving them feedback by explaining why they were marked down, where exactly in the lecture slides they could find helpful content, and of course, referring them to Bryan’s office hours where I could personally attest to its helpfulness. When I TA’ed for Peter I was a bit more involved with the curriculum side of things, as he sought my input as a past student and current TA. We discussed the SVD and PCA unit of the course and how to better the lesson plan for this unit which has historically been challenging for a lot of students, myself included. The projects were where I had the most fun! Bryan emphasized multiweek projects in place of traditional midterm exams, since traditional timed exams don’t make a lot of sense in a coding class as they aren’t representative of what students would do in the real world. I absolutely agree with his philosophy. Instead of stressful exams students are forced to cram for, these long multiweek projects really encouraged students to stretch their legs and play with large data sets that ranged from boardgame data to congressional voting data. Students were tasked to make meaningful plots with these datasets and then write well thought out reports to explain the findings in their plots. It was always a pleasure to see just how creative some students were with these topics, and I truly believe the future of data science is bright with us. Since all of my work was completed via Canvas, I don’t necessarily have
any pictures of myself working. So here instead is a picture of me on a summer hike at Gold Creek Trailhead, where I (probably) graded coding labs after I got home.

**Eli Grosman:**

**STAT 311 Grader**

After my internship was canceled, I was on the hunt for chances to gain experience over the summer. I remembered that I received an email from the Statistics department about opportunities to become a grader over summer quarter so I decided to apply. To my delight, I was accepted and soon began as a grader for Professor Cardoso’s STAT 311 section. My main responsibility was to grade and provide feedback on student’s weekly R assignments. I really enjoyed this experience and would recommend it to anyone looking to connect with the UW Statistics community or to get more practice with useful tools and techniques for statisticians.

**Suh Young Choi:**

**CSE 163 TA**  
**Odegaard Writing & Research Center Tutor**

What ho, folks! I’m Suh Young, and I have the awesome job of being both a tutor in the Odegaard Writing and Research Center and a TA for CSE 163! Spring 2022 will be my third quarter as a writing tutor and my second quarter as a TA. If I’m to be honest, I pretty much applied for both jobs on a bit of a whim. What else is a vaguely broke college student in need of some resume lines and extra dough to do? I’d tutored math, Latin, and writing in high school, so I figured I could give the OWRC tutor job a shot. One of the best shots I’ve taken in my life—though this assessment may change when I get to drinking age. I’ve always harbored a good nature and passion for writing of all sorts, and I discovered a growing fondness for one-on-one tutoring and educational practices during my first quarter tutoring. I’ve also learned quite a bit about myself as a writer and student as I help others with essays, personal statements, resumes, cover letters, and creative pieces. Even tutoring online, for all the technical snags and bugs, filled me with joy and pride at the end of an hour well spent. You could say the decision to apply to also TA for CSE 163 was quite motivated by the work I was already doing in the OWRC. I loved the work I did at the OWRC and wanted to go a step further in exploring education. I saw a hiring announcement circulating for the class, which happened to be the only CSE class I didn’t do too terribly in. One application form and Comic Sans-peppered interview later, I joined the CSE 163 teaching team last quarter. I got to work alongside some of the TAs that I had had as a student, and I really think I grew as a coworker, programmer, and budding educator. I’m excited to be back—so far, it looks like this will be my first quarter where I’ll be working entirely in-person (circumstances willing). Overall, I try to bring joy and enthusiasm in all the work I do. College is a weird time to be alive, especially in the world we live in. To me, being a TA and a tutor isn’t just about telling another person facts and teaching them material; it’s about creating and being part of a safe and supportive space for them to learn new things. I can definitely say that I’ve much, much more appreciation for the tutors and TAs that I’ve had along my own academic journey, even if I was a miserable student at times. Kudos to all of us, educators and educates alike—and happy Spring 2022!

**Max Bi:**

**CSE 154 TA**

I TAed for and am continuing to TA for CSE 154, Web Programming in the Winter and Spring quarters of 2022. I’ve been able to learn a lot from obtaining the opportunity and from the job itself, whether it’s an ordinary day teaching or grading
assignments. During winter quarter, I originally started applying for TA positions simply for interview experience. It had been a while since I was employed/sought employment due to the COVID pandemic, and I additionally felt that working to teach something I was interested in could benefit my own understanding of it. My instructor gave me the opportunity to interview at the last moment, but I still managed to secure the position.

A typical day on the job can vary a lot! Days where I am actively teaching however, are definitely the most interesting. I teach the first quiz section of the day at 9:30 am for an hour and then hold office hours for the class a couple hours after. Being able to interact with students in a live setting can definitely be difficult in the sense that it’s not always easy to improvise and come up with good answers to questions on the fly that weren’t explicitly prepared for. For this reason, the part of the job that I enjoy the most is grading coding assignments. Specifically, I enjoy the variety of feedback that I get to provide due to the class’s structure with more free-form Creative Projects where students are allowed to create a website that loosely adheres to guidelines using concepts learned in class and more structured Homeworks that have to follow a specification. Since I truly appreciate learning experiences where affirmation is given on things I did well and given reasons as to why/how something can be improved upon when I make mistakes, I try to extend the same favors to the students whose assignments I am grading, and it’s always a fun challenge to try and give the best feedback possible.

Being a TA for 154 has been a great experience. I was able to gain more than just the interview practice I had initially bargained for, from building communication skills with my coworkers to of course, strengthening my knowledge of the topics we teach in class. And of course, thanks to instructor Tal Wolman for bringing me on the team in the first place and for being helpful/responsive to questions/feedback among many other things! I’m excited to continue to be a 154 TA this quarter, with the addition of my new section co-instructor Max Beard, pictured on the left in the included photo.

Yuchen Sun:  

CPT Advice from an Actuarial Intern

This winter I’m incredibly grateful for the opportunity to intern at Milliman as an actuarial student. Over the past year I have studied to become a certified actuary and this opportunity gave me my first industry experience in the field.
I found this internship opportunity through an email sent by the actuarial club. In the interview for this position, I was asked questions related to SQL queries and definitions of statistical concepts such as confidence intervals. The STAT 34x series really prepared me well for the technical parts of these interviews.

As an actuarial student, my daily task is to develop tools used for hedging liabilities my clients accrue through selling insurance policies. I learn to use excel VBA, python, and SQL to analyze and manage risk. I integrate new SQL queries into existing valuation models to automatically pull the most recent data from our client. I used quadratic programming to optimize linear regressions to find relationships between funds and indices. I’m thankful for Professor Grove and our department’s support that made this internship during winter quarter possible. If you also want to compliment your studying with an internship, please consult ISS and our department’s website on CPT applications before you start applying.