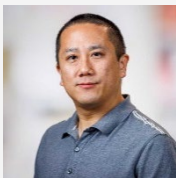


A Stochastic Newsletter

SUMMER 2026

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

The program is growing! [Marlena Bannick](#) and [Ben Kuznets-Speck](#) and will be joining the Biostatistics Program as Assistant Professors. Marlena comes to us from a position as a Biostatistician at Seattle Children's, where her research focuses on flexible and adaptive clinical trial design. She will start in September 2026. Ben comes to us from a postdoctoral fellowship at Northwestern University, where his research sits at the intersection of machine learning, statistical physics, and biology. Ben will start in January 2027.



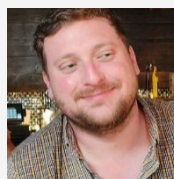
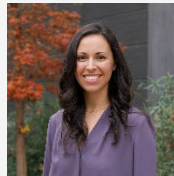
Congratulations to [Mike Wu](#) on receiving the 2026 ASA SSGG Founder's Award! Given annually by the ASA Section on Statistics in Genomics and Genetics, the award honors a member whose leadership and service have made a lasting impact on the field and broader biomedical community.

Congratulations to [Ruth Etzioni](#), elected to the Washington State Academy of Sciences! She was recognized for pioneering statistical models that transformed cancer early detection and screening policy, plus her leadership and mentorship across the field.



[Wei Sun](#) and collaborators at UC Berkeley published an exciting paper in PLOS Computational Biology on graph neural networks for cell classification

Congratulations to [Yingqi Zhao](#) and [Jingyi Jessica Li](#), who have been named to the American Statistical Association Fellows. The ASA Fellow designation is among the association's highest honors, recognizing members for their professional contributions, leadership, and commitment to statistical science. In addition, Jessica Li was elected to the 2026 Class of ISCB Fellows. Well done, Jessica and Yingqi!



PAPERS AND PREPRINTS

Chongzhi Di

[Muscular Strength and Mortality in Women Aged 63 to 99 Years.](#) *JAMA Netw Open*.

Etzioni Lab

[The analysis of cancer screening trials in which the outcome is the incidence of late-stage disease.](#) *Eur J Epidemiol*.

[Impact of Multicancer Screening on Late-Stage Cancer at Diagnosis in Breast Cancer Survivors: A Modeling Study.](#) *JCO Precis Oncol*.

Ziding Feng

[Towards early detection of pancreatic cancer: The current status of cohort studies by the Diabetes-Pancreatic Ductal Adenocarcinoma Working Group.](#) *Pancreatol*.

Chad He

[HCC surveillance in hepatitis C: A longitudinal algorithm improves alpha-fetoprotein screening.](#) *Hepatol Commun*

Li Hsu Group

[Evaluating statistical models for overdispersed multi-omics data: a multiplex immunofluorescence case study.](#) *Am J Epidemiol*.

Charles Kooperberg

[Colocalization of eQTLs With Type 2 Diabetes and Glycemic Traits Using Whole-Genome Sequences in Diverse Populations From the NHLBI Trans-Omics in Precision Medicine \(TOPMed\) Program.](#) *Diabetes*.

JSB/Li Lab

[Flexible and scalable inference of spatially varying correlation in spatial transcriptomics with spCorr.](#) *Genome Res.* 2026

[Nullstrap: A Simple, High-Power, and Fast Framework for FDR Control in Variable Selection for Diverse High-Dimensional Models.](#) *arXiv* 2501.05012v2

Jing Ma

[Plant-based whole-food diets are feasible during auto-HCT and are associated with dose-dependent microbiome modulation.](#) *Blood Adv*.

SWOG

[Development and validation of a risk prediction model for acute care use among older advanced cancer patients on clinical trials.](#) *J Natl Cancer Inst*.

Wu Group

[Cellular neighborhoods govern antitumor T-cell infiltration following anti-CTLA-4 in melanoma with primary resistance to anti-PD-1.](#) *Cancer Discov*.

Sun Lab

[Supervised deep learning with gene functional annotation for cell classification.](#) *PLoS Comput Biol*.

Sun, Hsu, and Kooperberg

[Alterations of Plasma Metabolites Associated with Sickle Cell Trait.](#) *Clin J Am Soc Nephrol*

Yingqi Zhao Group

[Optimizing Sequential Decision Rules for Prostate Cancer Biopsy Management: A Multi-Objective Statistical Framework.](#) *J Am Statist Assoc*.

Yingye Zheng Group

[Clinical Validation of a Multiplex Urine Biomarker Assay for Surveillance of Recurrent Bladder Cancer.](#) *Clin Cancer Res*.

[Detection of bladder cancer in patients with microscopic hematuria using Oncuria-Detect: results of a prospective, multicenter international study.](#) *J Transl Med*.

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SUMMER 2026

SEATTLE STAT GROWS

SeattleStatGROWS is back at it! This summer they are hosting 21 undergraduates, ranging from recent high school graduates to recent undergrads, for an 8-week research experience with our faculty and staff.

To kick things off, program alumni came back to meet the new cohort and take them out to lunch, a real past meets present moment for the program. Beyond hands-on research projects, students will get an introduction to RStudio, hear career journeys from Fred Hutch scientists, learn about ongoing research from across the program, and get the inside scoop on the hiring process from our HR recruiters.



Faculty mentors this year include Li Hsu & Yifei Wang, Carolyn Rutter, Jessica Li, Tim Randolph, Allison Meisner, Cathy Tangen, Fei Gao, Jing Ma, Gary Zhao, Kevin Lin, Megan Othuis, and Ruth Etzioni & her team.

NEW AI FORUM FOR FHCC BIostatISTICIANS

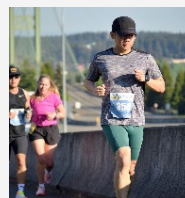
After our successful AI Statistics symposium last May, faculty requested a forum for sharing AI tools and datasets. We have launched a new Teams community, called the Biostat AI Forum. The space is meant for biostatistics faculty to share AI tools they have built or found, ask questions, and find resources and guidance on AI use. The community is open to all. If you would like to be added, email Noelle at nnoble@fredhutch.org.

WORLD CUP HIGHLIGHTS

Well, we only have one highlight, really, since my favorite team did not make it to the finals. Charles Kooperberg traveled with his family to Dallas to cheer his beloved Oranje when they played Japan. His jersey number reflects the number of years he served as our Program Head. Hup Holland Hup!

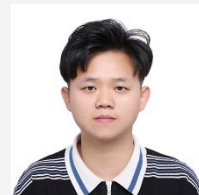


POSTDOC CORNER



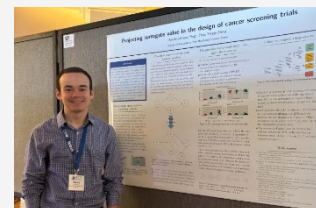
Congratulations to Yifei Wang of the Hsu Group, who finished the Tacoma City Marathon on May 3rd, 2026, with a finishing time of 3:52! Way to go Yifei!

Changhu Wang of the Li Lab received the Chen Hu Endowed Trainee Travel Fund award to present his paper, "Nullstrap-DE: A General Framework for Calibrating FDR and Preserving Power in Differential Expression Methods, with Applications to DESeq2 and edgeR" at RECOMB 2026. Congratulations, Changhu!



Steve Salerno from the Leek Lab accepted a position as an Assistant Professor at Washington University Bursky School of Public Health

Arnold Johnsen of the Zhao Group presented his work on evaluating surrogate endpoints for cancer screening trials at the Society for Clinical Trials 47th Annual meeting.



Several postdocs will present at JSM2026 this year, including Yifei Wang (Hsu Group): "Meta-Generalized Method of Moments for Integrating External Studies under Heterogeneity"; Arnold Johnsen (Zhao Group): "Surrogate-assisted causal survival analysis for cancer screening trials"; Yuzheng Dun (Wu Group): "A Two-Stage Kernel Approach for Testing Microbiome-Environment Interaction." Yuzheng will also chair the Contributed Papers section "Bayesian Methodology for Genomics."