

Newsletter of the South African Statistical Association (SASA)

Postal Address: SASA, PO Box 3341, Matieland, 7602 South Africa
Website: www.sastat.org.za

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President's message

After weathering what has turned out to be a mild winter indeed (particularly for those of us lucky enough to spend the worst of it discussing Statistics on the beaches of Rio) it comes as a bit of a shock to see the first signs of spring indicating that 2015 is almost on its last legs. Indeed, based on the many familiar South African faces at the ISI conference, time must be flying for everyone who is still catching up after this lovely and instructive South American excursion.

The SASA constitution has been undergoing a thorough review during the course of the past year with the intent to keep our policies relevant. The EC is currently in the process of compiling a list of proposed additions and modifications, which will be

Editorial

By Mardi

Dear SASA members

The SASA2015 conference to be hosted by the University of Pretoria and Statistics SA from Sunday 29 November to Wednesday 2 December 2015 with workshops on 28, 29 November and 3, 4 December 2015 has a program filled with a variety of interesting topics. Make an effort not

presented to members for comment and further suggestions during the AGM.

The year offers one further source of excitement in the form of the SASA conference, which many of us are now looking forward to more than to the rugby world cup. This feeling is not motivated purely by our views on how the odds favour teams that have lost against Argentina! Instead, the prospect of the SASA/NRF bursary-holders workshop is contributing to the eager anticipation surrounding this event. During the workshop, mentors will host talks, panel discussions will be held, and students will present on their progress to date.

We look forward to seeing you all at the SASA2015 conference!

Welcome - new members!

- Mr S Britz, Lecturer, University of Cape Town, steviebritz@gmail.com
- Mr O Davies, Researcher/Post graduate, University of Fort Hare, daviesobaromi@gmail.com
- Dr AF Fagbamigbe, Lecturer, University of Ibadan, franstel74@yahoo.com
- Dr MG Marokane, Information analyst, The Lgroup Limited, marokaneg@webmail.co.za

to miss out on this event!

This issue of the newsletter contains the president's column, the announcement of the 2015 AGM, and the call for the 2016 SASA conference host and overseas visitors. In the news from the education committee the winners of the 2014/2015 SASA student project competition sponsored by SAS® are announced. Congratulations to you all! Information on SASA scholarship and bursaries is also given. There is also feedback from bursary recipients. Read about the experiences of Stephen Reid studying at Stanford University in California in the USA.

A report on the conference of the International Federation of Classification Societies (IFCS) held in Italy is included. ICCSSA reports on some new developments.

Welcome to all new

- Mr R Mutambayi, Lecturer, University of Fort Hare, mmutambayi@ufh.ac.za
- Dr J Ndege, Lecturer, University of Fort Hare, jndege@ufh.ac.za
- Mr K Rammutla, Senior Manager: Analytics, SA Postbank, KwenaLR@gmail.com
- Prof H Raubenheimer, Associate Professor, North-West University, Helgard.Raubenheimer@nwu.ac.za
- Mr SW Rheeder, North-West University, sw.rheeder@hotmail.com
- Mrs M Ritchie, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, michaelabeckley@gmail.com
- Mr, MB Seitshiro, Lecturer, North-West University, modisane.seitshiro@nwu.ac.za
- Mr YA Shiferaw Lecturer, University of Johannesburg, yegna2009@gmail.com

Call for Conference Host 2016

Any institution wishing to host the annual SASA conference in 2016 should please contact the secretary of the Executive Committee by 15 October 2016.

Call for nominations for visitors for the 2016 Conference

Any SASA member wishing to nominate an overseas visitor for the 2016 SASA Conference, please contact the secretary of the Executive Committee by 15 October 2016.

Inger.Fabris-Rotelli@up.ac.za

members. See you all at the conference!

Mardi

For contact details, submissions and advertising [click here](#)



SASA 2015 Conference

57th Annual Conference of the South African Statistical Association that will take place 29 Nov2015 – Wednesday 2 Dec 2015 at the University of Pretoria.

[Download 2nd](#)

[Announcement](#)

[Download Preliminary Programme](#)

Notice

The SASA AGM is scheduled for 11:30 to

12:30 on Tuesday 1
December 2015. If you
want to put any item on
the agenda, contact the
secretary of the Executive
Committee by 15 October
2015.

Education news

2nd Year Bursary Recipients

This year Mr Oratilwe Mokoena from the University of Limpopo and Mr Thokozani Mchunu from the University of KwaZulu-Natal were awarded 2nd year SASA bursaries. Each provided some comments (edited) on their experience of statistics and their plans for the future.

[Read what each recipient has to say](#)



2nd Year Bursary Recipients

[Photo left] 2nd year bursary recipient Thokozani Mchunu (Left) with Prof Delia North (Right) at UKZN.

[Photo right] 2nd year Bursary recipient Oratilwe Mokoena (UL)

Honours Project Competition Sponsored by SAS®

It is the SASA Education Committee's pleasure to announce the winners of the 2014/2015 SASA Honours project competition.

[Read](#) [more](#)

SASA 2nd Year Scholarship and Bursary Information

HoD's and academics, please inform potential students about the SASA scholarship and bursaries.

Students (studying statistics) who will commence their third year studies at any South African university in January/February 2016 are eligible for the awards. Application forms are available on the SASA website. Potential students must complete the form in its entirety; any omissions and the forms are viewed as incomplete and hence not considered. The form must then be returned by the academic referee (not the applicant) to Mr WJ Brettenny, Department of Statistics, PO Box 77000, NMMU, Port Elizabeth, 6031. All applications must reach Mr Brettenny no later than 31 December 2015. *Applications received thereafter will not be considered.* A maximum of three awards will be made.

For additional information contact Mr WJ Brettenny (warren.brettenny@nmmu.ac.za).

Third Year Scholarship and Bursary Announcement

ATTENTION:

HoD's and academics, please inform current third year students about the scholarship (based on merit) and bursaries (merit and need) sponsored by SASA, SAS and ICCSSA.

Students who are planning to enrol for an honours degree in statistics in 2016 at any South African university are eligible for the awards. Entries open in September and application forms will be available from the SASA website.

Completed forms must be submitted to Dr L Fletcher, Department of Statistics, Private Bag X20, Hatfield, 0028; electronic (scanned) applications are also accepted, please email to Lizelle.Fletcher@up.ac.za. Part I of the form must reach Dr Fletcher no later than 30 December 2015. In the case of applying for a bursary, Part II of the form, to be completed by an academic referee, must be returned by the academic referee (not the applicant).

FOCUS ON ALUMNI: STEPHEN REID (2005 – 2010)



Stephen with his supervisor Prof Robert Tibshirani in front of the Statistics Department at Stanford.

Stephen enrolled as a first year BCom (Actuarial Science) student in 2005 at the University of Stellenbosch. In 2007 he obtained the BCom degree Cum Laude with distinctions in all his modules over the three years, in fact his lowest mark was 83%. In 2008 he obtained the BCom Honours degree in Actuarial Science Cum Laude and based on his excellent study record he was awarded the Chancellors medal for the most deserving student graduated in 2008 at the University of Stellenbosch. In 2009 he obtained the BCom Honours degree in Mathematical Statistics and Economics Cum Laude and in 2010 the MCom degree in Mathematical Statistics also Cum Laude. Certainly one of the best students in the history of the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science at the University of Stellenbosch.

In 2011 he enrolled as a PhD student in the Department of Statistics at Stanford University in California in the USA, one of the ivy-league Statistics Departments in the world. His supervisor for his PhD study is the well-known

Prof Robert Tibshirani.

[Read the full story](#)

ICCSSA - New Developments



On 24 July 2015 ICCSSA held its first breakfast seminar. The talk was given by Professor Paul Fatti on “Big Data, Data Science and Analytics – The End of Statistics”. It was well received and initiated a very lively discussion. The event was sponsored by SAS and SACNASP. The ICCSSA Board has decided that over the next few years the ICCSSA convention would be replaced by regular ICCSSA seminars.

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On Wednesday 29 July 2015 the SACNASP Council adopted Statistical Science as a separate field of practice - separate from Mathematical Science. The Minister of Science and Technology approved the recommendation by the SACNASP council and has requested to gazette Statistical Science as a field of

practice. Therefore, ICCSSA will commence with setting up its processes to register present ICCSSA members who are not members of SACNASP with SACNASP. Several discussions need to take place around registration, annual membership / registration fees, card structure, and linking with continuous professional development (CPD) and accreditation of courses.

SACNASP is moving towards not just registering scientists as of a particular date, but also ensuring that they remain up-to-date with the latest developments in their field through a structured CPD programme. Once the CPD system is set up within SACNASP, ICCSSA would use SACNASP's structure to administer the CPD programme. Going forward, people will be referred to submit their membership application, accreditation of courses, etc. to SACNASP and ICCSSA will enter into an agreement with SACNASP as to how the funding would be distributed.

In addition, SACNASP now accepts applications from Statisticians who were not trained through the traditional natural science (BSc.) stream, such as BCom. (Statistics) graduates. This has been made possible by the creation of new categories of registration, i.e. Associate Natural Scientist for people with an Honours degree equivalent or higher, as well as the Technical Associate category for those with a B-degree or related diplomas. Dr Roelof Coetzer and Prof Jacky Galpin have been appointed to the new SACNASP Council as from 1 May 2015.

IFCS conference

The biennial IFCS conference presents the opportunity for researchers in the field of classification and related methods to network and form part of a global community. The conference was held at the University of Bologna (Italy), which was founded in 1088 and has been in operation ever since, making it the oldest

university in the world. Five delegates from the Western Cape represented MDAG, a special interest group of SASA, at the three-day conference from 6-8 July.

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