



# Minutes of The Annual Meeting of Statistics@SLU

22.02.2018

## Participants

Claudia von Brömssen, Hilda Edlund, Jan-Eric Englund, Johannes Forkman, Adam Flöhr, Anders Muszta, Arne Pommerening, Bo Ranneby, Jaime Uria-Diez.

## Exchange of current local matters

Arne began by recalling the minutes of the last annual members' meeting on 16.02.2017 for a better contrast with the current situation. Jan-Eric and Adam reported an R drop-in session at Alnarp that they have recently started up.

Arne informed the members of Statistics@SLU about the imminent staff losses in the Umeå unit, i.e. Anders Muszta leaving on 06.03.2018 and Jaime Uria-Diez on 30.04.2018. This will reduce the Graduate School in Applied Statistics and Scientific Programming to only one active member of staff, i.e. Arne, who has a busy schedule. Various options have been considered for bridging 2018, for example involving Umeå University in consultation, but both the Graduate School and the consultation unit at Umeå cannot continue without a replacement of Anders Muszta by 2019. Arne has already drafted an advert for a senior lectureship in statistics and the Forest Resource Management Department is now considering whether a replacement of Anders Muszta is financially viable.

Hilda added information on the cyclic nature of the BSc- and MSc-student consultations she is involved in and Jaime reported the continued success of the R consultation at Umeå.

Johannes gave an account of his current PhD supervision work at Ultuna. Claudia explained how she dealt with the staff crisis at Ultuna after Mikael Andersson-Franko had left. She hired temporary staff for teaching courses and has not taken on more teaching herself. Recently Per-Anders Hansson, Head of the Department of Energy and Technology, as agreed to create another full-time position in statistics in addition to the senior lectureship that is currently being filled (15 applications to date).

Bo Ranneby said that he is more interested in larger projects of research consultation and recently was offered to participate in a moose project at the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Environmental Sciences.

## Changes in Statistics@SLU

We reviewed our experience with the Agresso software that we have been using for logging down consultation time in 2017. For a number of reasons we came to the conclusion that we better return to our old system of using MS Excel spreadsheets.

Arne briefly reported the Matérn room opening in October 2017 and encouraged everybody to organise similar events from time to time, as they are great for networking and for emphasising the importance of the Centre's work.

We then discussed the secretary post established in October 2017 and currently filled by Jaime. Jaime's work has been a great support for Arne, but since Jaime will leave Umeå soon, we decided to save the funds involved in this position for expenses related to consultation and workshops. We also agreed to introduce local email addresses for each unit in addition to the director's email in order to ease Arne's workload. The discussion also suggested that a slight increase of Arne's percentage might be a better reflection of his current overall workload in the Centre.

*Arne to inform  
Per Olofsson*

*Arne to contact IT*

We briefly reviewed the meeting between the Steering Committee of Statistics@SLU and the Head of Departments responsible for employing statisticians who are members of the Centre. We agreed that although no firm decisions were made the dialogue contributes to a better long-term understanding of the role of Statistics@SLU and its members within SLU.

We recalled that Statistics@SLU could not contribute much to the current KoN evaluation. In October 2017, Göran Ståhl suggested a separate, specific evaluation of Statistics@SLU in 2020. Bo Ranneby mentioned that the need for raising statistical skills was recognised as a result of KoN 2009.

Jaime presented the results of a recent Netigate enquiry at Umeå where clients could provide feedback on their consultation experience. The participation in this enquiry was low and the feedback was generally positive. In the following coffee break the group took a look at the new Matérn consultation room.

Claudia and Jan-Eric recently have had contact with the Bioinformatics Network. Claudia intends to work towards an advanced programming course with the Network. Both Jan-Erik and Claudia are encouraged to continue their collaboration with the Bioinformatics Network and to act as contacts on behalf of Statistics@SLU.

There was a brief discussion on possible (SLU and national) grants that we could follow up as a Centre. Claudia is considering the possibility to apply for an SLU education grant for undergraduate courses, however, the deadline is imminent.

Arne informed the members that there will be meetings of the Steering Committee on 16.04.2018 (0200-0300pm, by telephone) and on 27.09.2018 (0930-

0330 at Ultuna). The latter will also include the head of departments that employ statisticians of Statistics@SLU.

After lunch Göran Bostedt gave a presentation of the ECOS (Ecology & Society) research school, a joint venture between the Department of Forest Economics and the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Environmental Sciences. This was very interesting and we had good discussion about possible collaboration.

## **Graduate School, research courses**

We recalled the discussion on the unification process of our graduate schools/research courses at the meeting of the Steering Committee on 27.10.2017. A true unification of the Graduate School/research courses will not happen and our current remit is limited to a better coordination of course time tables, format and flyers. We agreed striving towards that end in August or September when planning for next year's courses. Arne briefly summarised the main points of a research-school meeting at Umeå on 06.02.2018.

Arne presented his R primer course on GitHub (<https://github.com/apommering/R-course>) as a possibility for running courses with contact hours and distance-learning variants of the same course. The system also allows maintaining different versions of the same course and is well interfaced with RStudio.

Claudia will organise a workshop on automated reporting using R at Ultuna in June 2018 and Arne will have a workshop on individual/agent-based modelling at Umeå in August 2018. The latter also involves IUFRO and some ecological societies.

## **Website, presentations and AOB**

Hilda gave an overview of the current state of the Centre's website. We all agreed that the website looks good and is informative. All new information and suggestions should be directed to Hilda for the continued development of the site.

We discussed the question whether Hilda and Adam need to be formally confirmed as statistical consultants by the Steering Committee of Statistics@SLU. Arne recommended a simple process by which each head of unit checks and confirms the eligibility of any person submitting consultation hours as part of the reimbursement process. For reassurance Arne will have this question confirmed by the Steering Committee in the next meeting. At the same time he will check whether a temporary solution of using consultants from Umeå University is fine with the Steering Committee.

Claudia reported her experience with the life-cycle analysis study group, where she learned herself while discussing the topic with specialists and potential users.

Adam and Jan-Eric gave a stimulating and much appreciated presentation on unexpected results when running Anova functions in R compared to SAS and textbooks. The presentation reminded us of the need to thoroughly check R packages prior to widespread application.

Arne Pommerening, director.