

Causality in Statistics Education Award



The American Statistical Association is pleased to announce that the first Causality in Statistics Education Award will go to Felix Elwert of the department of sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for his innovative two-day course, Causal Inference with Directed Acyclic Graphs. Elwert will receive a \$5,000 prize and an award plaque at the 2013 Joint Statistical Meetings in Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Honorary mentions will go to Tyler VanderWeele of the Harvard School of Public Health for his class, Methods for Mediation and Interaction, and to Richard Scheines and (the late) Steven Klepper of Carnegie Mellon University for their course, Empirical Research Methods for the Social Sciences.

Slides for the main sections of Elwert's short course covering about eight lecture hours and accompanying publications are available at www.ssc.wisc.edu/~felwert/causality (<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~felwert/causality>). The course is aimed at graduate students and applied quantitative researchers in the behavioral and biomedical sciences. It covers a review of causal and counterfactual concepts; principles of directed acyclic graphs; nonparametric identification by conditioning; conceptual differences between confounding, over-control, and selection bias; examples and exercises.

The ASA is proud to announce a new prize, Causality in Statistics Education, aimed at encouraging the teaching of basic causal inference in introductory statistics courses.

The prize carries a monetary award of \$5,000 per year. Donated by Judea Pearl, the prize is motivated by the growing importance of introducing core elements of causal inference into undergraduate and lower-division graduate classes in statistics. For additional information about the motivation for the award, see the *Amstat News* article at magazine.amstat.org/blog/2012/11/01/pearl/ (<http://magazine.amstat.org/blog/2012/11/01/pearl/>).

The prize will be given by the ASA in 2013, 2014, and 2015 to a person or team that does the most to enhance the teaching and learning of causal inference in statistics. Winners will be announced on or about May 31 each year and presented with the prize at a major ASA conference.

Winners will be selected by the members of the prize committee, who will administer submissions and judge their merit according to the following criteria:

- The extent to which the material submitted equips students with skills needed for effective causal reasoning. These include:
 - 1a. Ability to correctly classify problems, assumptions, and claims into two distinct categories: causal vs. associational
 - 1b. Ability to take a given causal problem and articulate in some mathematical language (e.g., counterfactuals, equations, or graphs) both the target quantity to be estimated and the assumptions one is prepared to make (and defend) to facilitate a solution
 - 1c. Ability to determine, in simple cases, whether control for covariates is needed for estimating the target quantity, what covariates need be controlled, what the resulting estimand is, and how it can be estimated using the observed data
 - 1d. Ability to take a simple scenario (or model), determine whether it has statistically testable implications, and apply data to test the assumed scenario
- The extent to which the submitted material assists statistics instructors in gaining an understanding of the basics of causal inference (as outlined in 1a-d) and prepares them to teach these basics in undergraduate and lower-division graduate classes in statistics.

Nominated material can be in a variety of forms, including exemplary content such as class notes, books, or chapters with associated lesson plans; excellent resources for teachers such as annotated instruction manuals; or innovative student activities with pedagogical and content notes, especially those using broadly accessible technology.

The deadline for submission has been extended to March 15, 2013. Submissions should include a cover letter that provides information about the nominee, type of material suggested as an important contribution, the intended audience, and an abstract of why the material is nominated, along with the nominated work. Submissions and questions should be sent to the ASA office at educinfo@amstat.org (<mailto:educinfo@amstat.org>).

Prize Committee

Dennis Pearl (Ohio State University, CAUSE, co-chair)

Judea Pearl (University of California, Los Angeles, co-chair)

Daniel Kaplan (Macalester College)

Maya Petersen (University of California, Berkeley)

Michael Posner (Villanova University)

Larry Wasserman (Carnegie Mellon University)

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www.amstat.org/education/causalityprize/?title=Causality%20in%20Statistics%20Education%20Award&ate=AT-ra-50f45e6d6f2e0a1b/-/-/530ce690edc9c544/2/52dfdd6d04daf70e&frommenu=1&ips=1&uid=52dfdd6d04daf70e&ct=1&pre=http%3A%2F%2Fandrewgelman.com%2F2012%2F12%2F15%2Fnew-prize-on-causality-in-statistics-education%2F&tt=0&captcha_provider=nucaptcha

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