STATISTICIANS AT WORK: INSPIRATION, ASPIRATION, AMBITION

Abstract

A key measure of the maturity and quality of a scientific community is how it judges and values accomplishments and (or versus) scholarship. To address this question, I will describe the motivation or drive for accomplishments and/or scholarship at three levels: inspiration, aspiration, ambition. They represent different (but not necessarily exclusive) mindsets or modi operandi. I will use several prominent examples in statistics history to explain or illustrate the acts of inspiration, aspiration, and ambition. They include: Pearson's arguments with Fisher and with Yule, some breakthrough work of Fisher, Neyman, Tukey, Box, Efron, etc. Then I will share some thoughts on what are good or bad mathematical statistics work. Throughout this talk, I will use the "lens" of inspiration, aspiration, and ambition in making my examinations, remarks and suggestions.

C F Jeff Wu
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Biography

Jeff Wu is Professor in the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he also holds the Coca-Cola Chair in Engineering Statistics. Prof. Wu is renowned for his work on the convergence of the EM algorithm, resampling methods such as bootstrap and jackknife, and industrial statistics, including design of experiments, and robust parameter design. Since the mid-80s, Prof. Wu has been a vocal advocate for the adoption of the term "data science" in place of "statistics." He has been elected a Fellow of various professional bodies, including the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, the Academia Sinica, and the US National Academy of Engineering. In recognition of his outstanding work, he has received prestigious awards including the COPSS Presidents' Award in 1987, the Shewhart Medal in 2008, the Pan Wenyuan Technology Award in 2008, the COPSS R. A. Fisher Lectureship in 2011, the Deming Lecturer Award in 2012, and the George Box Medal from ENBIS in 2017.

DATE:
THURSDAY, 23 NOV 2023
4:00 PM (SINGAPORE)

LOCATION:
#04-06, SEMINAR ROOM NUS

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10 LOWER KENT RIDGE ROAD

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