

STATtr@k

New to JSM? Read This Before You Go

The largest congregation of statisticians in the world happens every August during the Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM). More than 6,000 people attend these meetings, which are sponsored by 12 statistical societies, including the American Statistical Association. The meetings offer a variety of activities such as attending research presentations, interviewing for jobs, taking professional development courses and workshops, and browsing the exhibit hall. With so many opportunities, new attendees can be overwhelmed by their first JSM experience.

Based on my familiarity with attending meetings over the last 19 years and the experiences of student groups I have led, I'm going to provide some tips for getting the most out of JSM. If you would like to share your own recommendations, I encourage you to submit a comment below.

Before JSM

Most new attendees who choose to present their research do so in a contributed session via an oral or poster presentation. The deadline to submit an abstract for acceptance into the program was in early February. For those who did this, additional proof of progress (e.g., drafts of a paper) for the presentation must be submitted by mid-May.

A preliminary program listing the presentation schedule is now available (www2.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2019/onlineprogram/index.cfm).



Because there may be more than 40 concurrent presentations at any time, it is best to arrive at JSM with an idea of which you want to attend. This can be done by examining the session titles and performing keyword searches in the online program prior to JSM.

Oral presentations are separated into invited, topic-contributed, and contributed sessions, with each session lasting 1 hour and 50 minutes. Invited and topic-contributed sessions include groups of related presentations submitted together and selected by JSM Program Committee members. These presentations each last for 25 or more minutes for invited and 20 minutes for topic-contributed. Contributed sessions include groups of 15-minute oral presentations. Unlike invited and topic-contributed sessions, contributed presentations are submitted individually and then grouped by JSM Program Committee members.

Poster presentations are also separated into invited, topic-contributed, and contributed sessions, with the majority in

contributed sessions. These types of presentations involve speakers being next to their displayed poster and available for questions during the entire session. Most posters are of the traditional paper format, but an increasing number are in an electronic format paired with a four-minute oral presentation. For this combination of presentation types, the oral portion is given first in what is known as a "speed" session. A few hours later, the corresponding electronic poster presentation takes place.

Online registration for JSM begins around May 1. For members of a sponsoring statistical society, the cost is \$465 during the early registration period. The cost increases to \$565 if you register at JSM.

Registration for student members is only \$130, and this rate is available at any time. Also starting around May 1, you can reserve a hotel room through the JSM website. A number of hotels near the convention center are designated as official conference hotels, and they discount their normal rates. However, even with a discount, you can expect



Christopher Bilder is a professor in the department of statistics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a fellow of the ASA.



MASTER'S IN BIostatISTICS

1 YEAR OPTION!

4 TRACKS:

Biostatistics

Genomics and
Bioinformatics

Health Care Analytics

Social and Behavioral
Science



Internship

#2 US Hospital
Affiliated with School

MONTHLY WEBINARS
ON PROGRAM

[http://epbiwww.case.edu/
ms-biostatistics](http://epbiwww.case.edu/ms-biostatistics)

MORE INFO?

ms-biostatistics@case.edu



Exterior shot of the big blue bear at the Colorado Convention Center
Photo courtesy of VISIT DENVER

to pay \$200 or more per night for a room.

Attending JSM can be expensive. Students have several options to reduce the cost burden. First, ask your adviser or department for funding. Many departments offer financial support for students who present their research at JSM. Students also may qualify for funding from the student activities office on their campus. For example, when I was a student, my department's statistics club received funding this way, which paid for most of my first JSM expenses.

In addition to school-based resources, many ASA sections sponsor student paper competitions that provide travel support to winners. For example, the Biometrics Section sponsors the David P. Byar Young Investigators Award, with \$2,000 awarded to the winner and separate \$1,000 awards given to authors of other outstanding papers. Most competitions require a completed paper to be submitted *many months prior to JSM*.

At JSM

JSM begins with Professional Development courses on a Saturday in late July. Business casual clothing is the most prevalent attire, but some attendees wear suits and others wear T-shirts and shorts. When you arrive at JSM, go to the registration counter at the convention center to pick up your name badge (if not already mailed to you) and additional conference materials.

There is a significant online presence during JSM. A major resource is the JSM app and online program. Both contain all the information you need, including a convention center map. Also, the ASA posts the most up-to-date news about JSM through its Twitter (@AmstatNews) and Facebook accounts. Attendees at JSM can use #JSM2019 to tag their JSM-related posts.

To welcome and orient new attendees, the JSM First-Time Attendee Orientation and Reception is scheduled for early Sunday afternoon. At this



JSM DOCENT AND HERE TO HELP!

New to JSM? Docents will be there to help. You will find them at JSM wearing an orange button, and they will be at the First-Time Attendee Orientation and Reception to answer any questions you may have. Visit ww2.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2019/moretodo.cfm for more information.

reception, docents will be present (identified with a special orange button by their name badge) to answer any questions you may have about the meetings.

These docents will be available throughout the conference as well.

On Sunday evening, the Opening Mixer will be held in the exhibit hall. This event is open to all attendees, and drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

The main sessions start Sunday at 2:00 p.m. Many of the research presentations are difficult to understand completely. My goal for a session is to have 1–2 presentations in which I learn something relevant to my teaching or research interests. This may seem rather low, but these items add up after attending many sessions.

For attendees who teach introductory courses, the sessions sponsored by the ASA Section on Statistical Education are often the easiest to understand. Many share innovative ideas about how to teach particular topics.

Introductory overview lectures are another type of session with easier-to-understand topics. Recent lectures have included introductions to variable selection, statistical learning, and quantile regression. There are also many Professional Development courses and workshops available for an additional fee. However, you can attend a course for free by volunteering prior to JSM to be a monitor. Monitors perform duties such as distributing and picking up materials

during the course. As an added benefit, monitors can attend one additional course for free without any duties. Those who are interested should contact Rick Peterson at rick@amstat.org.

Featured talks at JSM are usually scheduled for late afternoon on Monday through Wednesday. On Tuesday evening, the ASA president's address is given, along with an introduction to the new ASA fellows and recognition of many award winners. The fellow's introduction is especially interesting because approximately 60 ASA members (<0.33% of all members) are recognized for their contributions to the statistics profession.

In addition to presentations, the JSM exhibit hall features more than 90 companies and organizations showing their products and services. Many exhibitors give away free items (e.g., candy, pens, etc.). All the major statistics textbook publishers and software companies also are there. Textbook publishers usually offer a discount on their books during JSM and often for a short time after. The exhibit hall also includes electronic charging stations and tables that can be used for meetings. Additionally, it's the location for poster presentations and Spotlight, where you can get a small taste of the city JSM is taking place in.

The JSM Career Service provides a way for job seekers and employers to meet. Pre-registration is required, and the fee is discounted if you register before mid-July. The service works by providing an online message center for job seekers and employers to indicate their interest in each other. Once a

common interest is established, an interview can be arranged for during the meetings.

Other activities at JSM include the following:

- Shopping at the ASA Store to purchase a statistics-themed T-shirt or mug
- Attending an organized roundtable discussion during breakfast or lunch about a topic of interest (pre-registration is required)
- Taking a little time off from JSM for sightseeing or attending a sporting event

After JSM

JSM ends in the early afternoon on Thursday. Don't let what happens at JSM stay at JSM! The first thing I do after the meetings is prepare a short review of my activities. Using notes I took during sessions, I summarize items from presentations I want to examine further. I also summarize meetings I had with individuals about research or other important topics. Much of this review process starts at the airport while waiting for my return flight.

If you give a presentation at JSM, you may submit a corresponding paper to be published in the conference proceedings. Papers are not peer-reviewed in the same manner as for journals, but authors are encouraged to have others examine their paper before submission. The proceedings are published online around December. Authors retain the right to publish their research later in a peer-reviewed journal. ■