Early History of Modern Statistics
in the South (1930-1957)
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The South has been a leader in organizing and developing departments of Statistics. It is true a department of Bio-statistics was organized in the Medical School of Johns Hopkins University in 1918 and George Washington had a department of Mathematical Statistics as early as 1936. These two universities had only a token program for graduate students in Statistics.

The recent increase in the number of the departments of Statistics in the South began with North Carolina State and the coming of Miss Gertrude Cox in 1940 from Iowa State. She was trained in psychology and her training under Professor George Snedecor for her M.S. degree and experience in the Laboratory made her well qualified for the type of program desired by North Carolina State. As soon as Miss Cox arrived in North Carolina things began to happen. She was able to get sizeable grants from the General Education Board, which enabled her to organize the department of Experimental Statistics with training in Statistics as well as consulting. Professor Jack Rigney, Dr. R. L. Anderson and Mr. A. L. Finkner were the first faculty to join her staff.

One of Miss Cox's earliest activities was a summer session which was held in Raleigh in 1941. The attendance at this summer session provided a roster of the leaders in statistics that were
later to develop many of the programs throughout the south. Among the visiting professors for this session were Dr. Harold Hotelling of Columbia University, Professor Bliss of Yale University, and Professor Snedecor of Iowa State. Some of the students, including members of other faculties and government, were Walter A. Hendrix, D. R. Embody, R. J. Monroe, T. A. Bancroft, A. J. King, Boyd Harshbarger, Margaret Hagood, C. C. Li, J. H. Torrie, C. H. Hamilton, Paul G. HoMeyer, J. G. Osborne, J. F. Kenny, W. J. Youdon, D. B. Delury, C. F. Kossack, F. M. Wadley, and George Tyler.

In 1946 Miss Cox organized the Institute of Statistics that combined the training in Statistics at the University of North Carolina and State College. The theory courses were to be given at the University and the method courses at State College. The Department at the University was called mathematical statistics and at the State College Experimental Statistics, but both were part of the Institute of Statistics in which Miss Cox was the director. Dr. Harold Hotelling joined the Institute of Statistics at Chapel Hill in 1946.

The Virginia Polytechnic Institute gave courses in Statistics as early as 1927. In 1934 a course was given in mathematical statistics and in 1942 a statistical option and a statistical laboratory was provided by the joint arrangement with the Mathematics Department and the Agricultural Economics Department under the direction of Professor Boyd Harshbarger. Statistics and the Statistical Laboratory were made a separate department in 1949 with instruction in the College of Arts & Sciences and the Laboratory a part of the Agricultural Experiment Station.
In 1947 a Regional Statistical Graduate Summer Session was held at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute. This session had the cooperation of North Carolina State College, Iowa State College, and the Bureau of Agriculture estimates U.S.D.A. The faculty of this session besides the faculty from Virginia Polytechnic Institute included Professor George Snedecor of Iowa State, Dr. R. G. Kendall of the University of London, Dr. R. C. Bose of India, Mr. Walter Hendricks of the U.S.D.A., Dr. George Brown of Iowa State, Dr. H. L. Lucas of North Carolina State and Dr. Charles Metzner of the University of Michigan. Among the distinguished colloquial speakers were Dr. Harold Hotelling, Professor Gertrude Cox, Dr. Charles Sarle and Dr. Edward Deming. Over one hundred students attended from thirty-seven states and six foreign countries.

Oklahoma State University with Statistics under the direction of Dr. Carl Marshall awarded its first M.S. degree in Mathematics with "Emphasis in Statistics" in 1949 and its first Ph.D. degree in Mathematics with "Emphasis in Statistics" in 1954. The Department name was changed to Department of Mathematics and Statistics in 1961. Two other mathematics departments with options in statistics were the University of Florida and the University of Georgia where the Statistical programs were under the direction of Dr. Herbert Meyers and Dr. Clifford A. Cohen respectively.

There were statistical options in the Business Department of the University of Alabama under Dr. H. H. Chapman, and in the Bureau of Business Research, University of Texas under Dr. John R. Stockton.
Georgia Institute of Technology had an offering in Statistics under the direction of Dr. Joseph J. Moder. There were courses and statistical consulting in colleges and universities in the South not named above in such departments as Genetics, Sociology, Economics, in the colleges of Agriculture, Colleges of Engineering, and the Agriculture Experiment Stations.

The great stimulating and unifying force for Statistics in the South was the Southern Regional Education Board. It began by them organizing the Advisory Commission on Statistics which met March 5, 1953 and met again April 19-20, 1953 in Atlanta, Georgia. The Commission members with Miss Gertrude Cox as chairman met four times in 1953 and 1954. They planned and started the series of Southern Regional Graduate Summer Schools, the first one was held at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in the summer, 1954. They sponsored an inventory with Dr. H. H. Chapman serving as Inventory Supervisor. The inventory results were published in a bulletin "Statistics in Southern Colleges and Universities" which was published by the Southern Regional Education Board in 1955. They planned, organized and held a second Southern Regional Conference on Statistics at Roanoke, Virginia, July 7-10, 1954. At the December 1954 meeting of the Advisory Commission on Statistics, this Commission was terminated.

The Regional Committee on Statistics was formed in 1955 with Professor Boyd Harshbarger as chairman and consists of representatives of those institutions in the South that joined in a Memorandum of Agreement. This first Memorandum was in effect for the period 1956-60. It was revised and adopted to be in effect for a second
five year period, 1961-65. The third Memorandum of Agreement was in effect for the period 1966-1970. It sets forth the procedures and conditions for the regional cooperative arrangement. The purpose, membership, organization and functions for the Regional Committee on Statistics are specified.

Beginning in the summer 1954, the Southern Regional Education Board, acting through its Regional Committee on Statistics, sponsored a series of Regional Graduate Summer Sessions in Statistics. A list of these sessions through 1967 follows:

(1) 1954, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, June 9-July 17
(2) 1955, University of Florida, Gainesville, June 21-July 29
(3) 1956, N. C. State College, Raleigh, June 11-July 20
(4) 1957, VPI, Blacksburg, June 12-July 20
(5) 1958, Oklahoma State Univ., Stillwater, June 16-July 25
(6) 1959, N. C. State Univ., Raleigh, June 8-July 17
(7) 1960, University of Florida, Gainesville, June 20-July 29
(8) 1961, VPI, Blacksburg, June 15-July 22
(9) 1962, Oklahoma State Univ., Stillwater, June 11-August 11
(10) 1963, N. C. State College, Raleigh, June 10-July 19
(11) 1964, VPI, Blacksburg, June 11-July 18
(12) 1965, Oklahoma State Univ., Stillwater, June 7-August 6
(13) 1966, University of Georgia, Athens, June 13-July 22
(14) 1967, VPI, Blacksburg, June 14-July 23

The functions of the Committee on Statistics as specified in the first Memorandum of Agreement were:

I. Purpose of the Committee

The Regional Committee on Statistics will provide the participating institutions a means of:

1. acting together to carry out the specific recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Statistics and of the two Southern Regional Conferences on Statistics, and

2. joint planning and cooperative action by which they can coordinate and supplement their respective educational, research and service programs in statistics to meet more effectively the present and future needs of the region.
II. Functions of the Committee

1. The Regional Committee on Statistics will devise ways of implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Statistics and of the two Southern Regional Conferences on Statistics, in particular the following:

   a. continuation of the periodic Southern Regional Conferences on Statistics

   b. encouragement and sponsorship of inter-university short courses on statistical methods for potential users of statistical consulting services

   c. development and distribution of brochures both to publicize opportunities for graduate study in statistics in the South and to publicize the collective statistical consulting personnel and facilities available in the region

   d. preparation and maintenance of an active list of the statistical research activities in progress in the South

   e. maintenance of a clearing house of information on demands for statistical research and services in the region

   f. exchange of statistical personnel among the participating institutions to enable the smaller institutions better to attract and undertake specific research projects

   g. encouragement of cooperation among universities on statistical research programs

   h. encouragement of local and regional meetings with scientific societies

   i. further exploration of the possibilities of establishing regional computational laboratories and a cooperative institute for statistical research.

2. The Regional Committee on Statistics shall serve in an advisory capacity to the schools operating the Southern Regional Graduate Summer Sessions in Statistics.

3. The Regional Committee on Statistics will explore and attack other problems in statistic instruction, research and service which may be of mutual concern to the universities of the region.
The original Committee on Statistics of the Southern Regional Education Board consisted of

Boyd Harshbarger, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Chairman (1955-1959)

Gertrude Cox, North Carolina State

John K. Folger, Southern Regional Education Board, Secretary

E. Broadus Browne, University of Georgia

G. E. Albert, University of Tennessee

Dana Card, University of Kentucky

H. H. Chapman, University of Alabama

T. W. Hildebrandt, Oak Ridge Institute for Nuclear Studies

Carl Marshall, Oklahoma A & M

Herbert Meyer, University of Florida

George Nicholson, University of North Carolina

John Stockton, University of Texas

Rutledge Vining, University of Virginia

Also see Statistics in the Southern Colleges and Universities by SREB.