

SPRING 2025 ISSUE

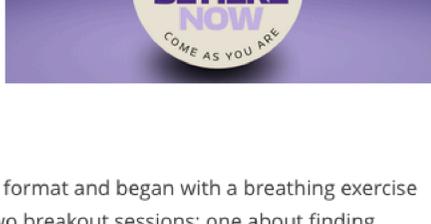
Spotlight on Mental Health



By Kevin Lin and Minh Vo

Be Here Now: A new biostatistics community event

To foster community among students, staff, and faculty in the department, the EDI Mental Health sub-committee launched its first "Be Here Now" session on February 24.



The session used a hybrid in-person/Zoom format and began with a breathing exercise to help focus restless minds, followed by two breakout sessions: one about finding commonalities and getting to know one another, and another that involved personal reflections on how resilience, mindfulness, and (self) compassion synergize in one's day-to-day life. The session ended by teaching a simple exercise to de-escalate one's tension. Minh Vo, who recently completed UW [REsilient Attitudes and Living \(BE REAL\)](#) training, facilitated the session along with fellow subcommittee members Kevin Lin and Yifan Lin.

Attendees voiced support for future sessions, **the next session will be today, April 1, 2025 at 2:30 p.m.** We hope to see you there!

Get [details about today's event](#), or you may direct your questions about the event to Kevin Lin (kzlin@uw.edu).

**Mental Health Resource Guide**

Mental health challenges can be complex, and finding the resources to support individual needs in a given situation isn't always straightforward. To help department members find such resources, the EDI Committee has developed a [mental health guide](#) tailored to the needs of our department.

The guide outlines essential mental health and wellness resources, both within and beyond UW, to assist students, staff (including postdocs), and faculty in understanding their options. It provides practical guidance on common challenges such as navigating the search for a therapist, understanding insurance, transitioning between internal and external support systems, understanding group and individual counseling service, telehealth options, and mental health resources for instructors.

Whether you're looking for immediate help or long-term strategies, we hope this guide serves as a useful starting point in prioritizing mental well-being. If you have suggestions on what types of content you would like to see in this guide, please let Kevin know (kzlin@uw.edu)! The Mental Health sub-committee is open to all ideas.



Becoming an Undocu Ally

By Robin Meija

UW is home to [Leadership Without Borders \(LWB\)](#), a center dedicated to supporting undocumented students on campus—and one of just two such centers for undocumented students in the state of Washington. In addition to supporting students directly, LWB provides trainings, such as the [Undocu Ally Training](#) which I attended in February with about 60 other staff and faculty.

Undocumented students face a range of challenges and bring a wealth of experience to campus. Through a mix of well-designed presentations, video, and activities, we learned about issues undocumented students face, the supports available on campus, and about allyship, including not expecting students to educate us, supporting students in ways that emphasize their own agency by serving as a resource and guide, and listening to student experiences if they choose to share.

LWB offers [Undocu Ally Training](#) once a quarter and the next is scheduled on Friday, May 9. I am happy to discuss my experience or share some of the materials, but also recommend the full training.

For more information, [read the full story](#).

Community Updates

By Nina Galanter, Kat Hoffman, and Robin Meija

Students organize session on retirement planning

Financial decisions made early in life can impact fiscal stability later on, but not everyone has access to financial literacy education growing up. To address this, Biostatistics students Kat Hoffman and Nina Galanter organized a February 12 session with a representative from Fidelity Investments, the company that manages some of the University of Washington retirement funds.

The representative explained how students can begin to save for retirement, both through their employment at UW and through personal accounts, showed how small contributions can grow over time through compound interest, explained pre- vs post-tax accounts and the pros and cons of each, and gave practical tips for managing personal finances, such as moving emergency savings to a high-yield savings account.

Students asked many questions and found the presentation enlightening. The information was especially important for those who grew up in countries with different government retirement structures, or in families or communities with less access to financial literacy education. The hope is to offer a financial literacy session annually.

Graduate students mentor PhD applicants

In the autumn quarter, Biostatistics PhD students Nolan Cole, Anand Hemmady, Yuhan Qian, and Kat Hoffman, along with eight Statistics graduate students, served as volunteer mentors for the Pre-Application Review Service (PARS), a program co-sponsored by the UW departments of Biostatistics and Statistics.

PARS provides mentorship to applicants from historically marginalized communities by reviewing and providing feedback on PhD applications. The program is open to students applying to any graduate program in statistics or biostatistics, regardless of whether they choose to apply to the University of Washington.

"As someone who participated in PARS when I was a PhD applicant, it was rewarding to engage with this year's applicants and provide feedback throughout their application process," said Hoffman.

This year, PARS provided feedback to 89 applicants, 54% of whom identified as a gender that is underrepresented in statistics, 84% as an applicant of color, and 44% as a first generation student.

Food drive targets student hunger during finals

The Department of Biostatistics hosted a food bin March 3-14 as part of the "Fuel for Finals" food drive organized by the School of Public Health (SPH) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee.

The food drive resulted from discussions between the SPH EDI committee, with support of the Biostatistics EDI committee, and representatives from the [UW Food Pantry](#), to better understand the problem of student hunger on campus. The pantry has observed increasing need this year and said Fall 2024 was the busiest quarter in its history.

The SPH EDI committee hopes to make the drives a recurring event, and is exploring ways to support the Food Pantry in pursuing additional resources. Other needs highlighted by the meetings include donation of toiletries and period supplies, in particular sanitary napkins.

Community Member Spotlight

**Ameer Dharamshi**

PhD student

[Read more](#)**Michael Bowers**

Web Information Specialist

[Read more](#)**Robin Meija**

Assistant Teaching Professor

[Read more](#)**INTERESTED IN JOINING EDI?**

We are always seeking students, post-docs, staff, and faculty who would like to serve as committee members. Your input is invaluable, and it is extremely important that our committee represents the voices in our department.

What is the time commitment?

The committee meets on a weekly basis, with some additional work outside of the meetings. We always have an action item list that keeps our mission moving forward, with some months busier than others.

To join, send an email to the EDI co-chair at biostgp@uw.edu letting us know you would like to join and we can provide you with information on the date and time of our next meeting as well as any other upcoming events that may be of interest.

EDI Newsletter Archives<https://biostat.washington.edu/about/diversity>