



statisticians as part of their (otherwise large and diverse) teams. Some of our national laboratories are in slightly better shape, due to the aggressive leadership of people such as Keller-McNulty, Brent Pulsifer, and Dale Anderson, but even here the work that gets discussed in the open can appear to be a bit specialized, peripheral, and artificial. Perhaps their outputs are eagerly discussed in the corridors of power, but my sense is that the statisticians at the national labs are not receiving the attention they deserve, nor are they being allowed to fully play the role defined in their ostensible mission.

For the long-run health of our profession, we need to understand why there is so much indifference to the value we can add. It may be a perception problem—computers are sexy and statistics is not. It may be that we have been too timid and acquiesced in our own diminution; perhaps our careful expressions of uncertainty, limitation, and professional responsibility are not the kind of message policymakers want to hear. It may be that we have not trained up a generation of communicators, or that we have not worked to embed enough visionary statisticians at leadership levels in the military, the government, and industry. It also may be that we work too slowly. One major cultural difference between traditional statisticians and many other technical fields is that we do not use a laboratory model in which staffs of post-docs and graduate students collaborate to produce a steady stream of results, with junior hands doing the spadework while seniors focus on strategy.

The new hope in this arena is the Statistical and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute. It is sponsoring a year-long research program on national defense and homeland security under the leadership of Nell Sedransk and Larry Cox. The kickoff meeting for this is September 11–14 and the topics to be covered include all those listed above and whatever other areas the attendees determine should be on the docket. For the good of the profession, and for the good of the nation, I hope statisticians interested in this area will lend their strength and support to its success. ■

Average Love Songs

This lyric may be sung to the tune of Paul McCartney's 1976 #1 hit "Silly Love Songs" (italicized lyrics can be overlaid by a second vocalist while first vocalist sings "I love MU" refrain).

You'd think people would've had enough of av'rage love songs
On my TV, I see....it isn't so—oh no.
Is it mean to fill the world with av'rage love songs?
Is it Greek to you? I'd like to know
'cause here I go.....again

Ilove MU
Ilove MU
Add the values up and divide by their number
Ilove MU
The mean need not be a data value

Is it Greek to you? I'd like to know 'cause here I go.....again
Ilove MU
Ilove MU

Song length has a central limit
Just to get played at all!
120 beats per minute:
It's expected, it's expected,
Expected value for all.....

Ilove MU
The mean is in between the maximum and minimum
Ilove MU
The mean is routine with symmetry and no outliers
Ilove MU
Ilove MU

You'd think people would've had enough of av'rage love songs.
I follow my "mu's" and see it isn't so—oh no.
I play....a mean guitar....on av'rage love songs.
With X-barre chords.....

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(see the Winter 2002 issue of *STATS: the Magazine for Students of Statistics* for more songs)

