Columbians Taking Initiative

Want Statistics Help? Look No Further . . .

By Alex Lyda

Columbia offers statistical consulting service to local nonprofits

The programs through data analytics provides the expertise to understand trends and strengthen programs through data analysis, as said by Pomperantz, assistant director of Mentoring USA.

The service is staffed by doctoral students in the Department of Statistics and overseen by statistics faculty. Consultants are involved in all aspects of a study: designing databases, developing statistical methods, choosing software packages, interpreting data output and drawing conclusions. The level of activity ranges from simple advice to actual data analysis.

Operating on and off again for more than 25 years, the service was originally started to support research activities at Columbia in which statistics play an integral part, according to statistics professor Daniel Rubinowitz.

Over the years, the service has broadened its range of applications to include health policy (genomics) data on biochemistry, earth sciences and astrophysics; and educational testing data, as well as statistical consulting, as stated by Mentoring USA.

The Street Vendor Project (SVP) is another local client. With a grant from the poverty-fighting Robin Hood Foundation, SVP recently surveyed some 100 street vendors below Canal Street in the wake of Sept. 11, collecting data on demographics, socioeconomic conditions, and problems associated with street vending.

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