Qiang Wu, PhD

Qiang Wu, PhD is an Associate Professor in Department of Biostatistics. He joined ECU as an assistant professor in 2007 after he completed his PhD in Statistics at University of Pittsburgh. His methodological research focuses on mixture models, permutation inference in linear regressions, and Kullback-Leibler risk in distribution estimation. He is also heavily involved in collaborations with researchers across ECU and helping them develop research proposals for grant funding. To give some examples, he collaborated with Dr. Stephanie Jilcott Pitts from Department of Public Health on Obesity and Access to Farmers’ Markets, Partnership to Improve Community Health, and NC Community Transformation Project. He collaborated with Dr. Qu Lu from Brody School of Medicine on Cell-Cell Junction Protein as Biomarker for Prostate Cancer. He also collaborated with Dr. Bhabhi Mayee Das from Department of Kinesiology on Pirates for health: healthy eating, active living through a hybrid intervention. In his spare time, Dr. Wu is pretty active. He runs and plays basketball.

What do you like best about working at ECU?

ECU, especially College of Allied Health Sciences and Department of Biostatistics, have an inclusive and supportive working environment. When I was interviewing at ECU, I felt great warmth from my Department Chair, Dr. Paul Voss and other fellows in the department and our former Dean Dr. Stephen Thomas. During my employment, they've always been very supportive to me in various ways. In work, we have protected time for conducting individual research. We also have great opportunities for collaboration with researchers across ECU. Department of Biostatistics is a unique entity that fulfills the research and teaching goals of ECU, and I feel fortunate to be part of it. In life, my fellow colleagues have offered me a great amount of help and I enjoyed the moments with them.

What do you find most exciting about your research and its potential?

I am excited to see my methodological research have an impact on the fundamentals of statistical inference, especially in mixture models, linear regressions, and distribution estimation. I am excited to see my collaborative research help improve public health in eastern North Carolina, especially for those underserved. I am also excited to contribute to medical research in cancer screening and weight control. Although not all research proposals that I helped with have been funded, I am always excited about their creative ideas and value the opportunities to be involved.

What excites you about teaching?
Teaching statistics, especially to non-stats major students, is known to be challenging, because statistics may seem counter-intuitive for first-time learners. I am excited to see my students grasping a way of statistical thinking from my class. But, I am even more excited when my students show enthusiasm in learning statistics. That’s not where we end but it is the only way toward success.

**What do you hope students take away from their experiences from working with you on your research?**

As a service department, we don’t have our own graduate students. But we have many opportunities to advice students on their own research. It is most important for me to convey to them appropriate ways to design studies, collect data, and conduct statistical analyses. By working with me, they should not only get the results for the current study but learn knowledge that is useful for future studies.

**What is your favorite teaching or research moment?**

I always like to try something new to foster the learning of my students. When I was teaching our graduate course BIOS 7021, I developed some web applets to demonstrate stats concepts and do interactive computations. These applets are intuitive and easy to use. When they were applied on some real data examples, especially datasets provided by students, students paid the most attention and actively involved in the class. I think the enthusiasm is the key to learn statistics.