

## Andrew Zhou Wins Prestigious Award



Andrew Zhou

The title of Research Career Scientist is awarded to investigators who have demonstrated outstanding scientific achievement and who have made an important contribution to the Veteran Affairs (VA) research program.

X. H. Andrew Zhou, Ph.D., is a professor in the Department of Biostatistics at the University of Washington and the director of the Biostatistics Unit at the Health Services Research and Development (HSR&D) Center of Excellence in the Seattle VA Medical Center. He is the first statistician to receive this award, which he won for the following contributions he has made to the research program at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs:

1) Within the area of statistical research, Dr. Zhou has published 78 papers in refereed journals, including those in press. Within the area of collaborative research in the health sciences, Dr. Zhou has published 42 papers in refereed journals. He is the Principal Investigator on two VA-funded studies. The first is "New Statistical Methods for Analyzing Veterans'

Health Care Costs," where he and his colleagues have developed new statistical methods to enable the VA to more accurately predict future costs of all ten Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation price groups and provide VA researchers with a practical tool for dealing with common problems in cost analysis, which can significantly improve the quality of VA economics research. In his second VA grant, Dr. Zhou has developed better and more valid statistical methods for evaluating the effects of an intervention on health-related quality-of-life outcomes when some subjects are truncated by death.

2) Dr. Zhou has served on the VA HSR&D Scientific Merit Review Board, as well as the local HSR&D Review Committee.

3) He is also the founding president of the VA Statisticians' Association, which aims to improve communication among statisticians within the VA.

The VA's Research Career Scientist award is limited to about 30 researchers in the entire VA system and comes with 5 years of salary support.

*Dr. Zhou is the first statistician to win the VA's Research Career Scientist award.*

## Biostat Retreat Another Exceptional Gathering of Talent



L to R: Ken Rice, Kevin Cain, and Barbara McKnight

The rustic ambience of Pack Forest set the tone for last year's retreat (Sept. 20–21, 2007). A compelling batch of faculty presentations, an enthusiastically attended student poster session, an enormously entertaining talent show, and plenty of opportunity for social interaction made up the content of the festivities. Not bad for an overnight retreat!

In accordance with tradition, the three best student-poster presenters, as voted on separately by faculty, first-year students, and all other students, were awarded a cash prize of \$500 each. Winner of the faculty vote this year was Nan Hu ("Proportional Odds Model with Time-Varying Covariates"), while Julian Wolfson claimed the majority of the first-year students' votes ("Model Selection in High Dimensions When Closed-Form Likelihoods Are Not Available"), and Abby Shoben garnered the majority vote from the other students ("Oral Calcitriol Use and Mortality in Non-dialyzed Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease"). Congratulations go out to Nan, Julian, and Abby for a well-deserved honor.

Of course, the students also had their chance to vote on the best faculty presentation. This award went to Ken Rice for his talk, "Hypothesis Testing: New Frequentist Ways to Make Old Bayesian Mistakes." It couldn't have been an easy choice, with so many engaging presentations to choose from.

But what about that talent show? First-year students did a great job of fitting various performances into the structure of a comical human board-game skit. Among the most memorable acts of the night were Andrew Zhou, who played an instrumental piece of music on the traditional *erfu* (a two-stringed Chinese violin), and Ken Rice and Thomas Lumley's show-topping rendition of Tom Lehrer's "Poisoning Pigeons in the Park," which they renamed "Determining Sample Size for Avian Mortality (and Vice Versa)." Tickling the ivories in furtherance of this number was Biostat's own Betz Halloran.

Next year's retreat will be held at Sleeping Lady near Leavenworth, and we hope to see everyone there for another fulfilling exchange of scientific thought and artistic talent.