2026 Hukum Chandra Memorial Prize

We are proud to share that Professor Yan Li and Associate Professor Sixia Chen are the joint recipients of the 2026 Hukum Chandra Memorial Prize.

Dr. Yan Li

Dr. Sixia Chen

About the Hukum Chandra Memorial Prize

The IASS established a biennial prize in 2022 in honour of Dr Hukum Chandra who passed away in 2021. Dr Chandra was a remarkable statistician and much-missed colleague who authored many important papers in small area estimation, survey and official statistics and the application of demography to statistics, for which he was recognised by the prestigious Cochran-Hansen Award.

The prize is awarded to a mid-career statistician whose work is related to that of Hukum Chandra, namely survey sampling, small area estimation, official statistics, spatial analysis applied to official and survey statistics, and agricultural statistics. The prize is aimed at mid-career researchers whose career stage is close to Dr Chandra's career trajectory.

The prize includes an honorarium of 500 euros, and invited presentations in the IASS webinar series in October and November 2026. Further details will be announced closer to the dates.

About Dr. Sixia Chen and Dr. Yan Li

Sixia Chen (University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, USA) and Yan Li (University of Maryland, USA) are leading researchers in survey statistics and methodology. Sixia Chen's work has advanced the analysis of missing data, complex surveys and integrated data sources, with important applications in public health and health disparities research. Yan Li's research has advanced the design and analysis of complex surveys, nonprobability samples and population health studies, particularly in improving population representativeness and addressing selection bias. Both have published extensively in leading statistical journals and have provided distinguished leadership through research, education and service to the international survey statistics community.

Selection Committee

The prize recipient was selected from a strong field by a three-person committee, consisting of Robert Clark (chair), Alina Matei and Maria Giovanna Ranalli.

Robert Clark,

Chair of the 2026 Hukum Chandra Prize Committee

The 33rd Annual Morris Hansen Lecture

Dr. Partha Lahiri

The Washinton Statistical Society's 33rd Annual Morris Hansen Lecture was delivered by **Dr. Partha Lahiri** of the University of Maryland on March 30, 2026 at Summit Consulting LLC, with 105+ attendees.

The lecture, titled `*Combining Information from Multiple Data Sources Using Statistical Modeling and Methods',* featured discussions by Rebecca Steorts of Duke University and Lisa Mirel of the National Science Foundation. The session was chaired by Carolina Franco. A catered reception followed the lecture.

About the Morris Hansen Memorial Lecture Series

The Morris Hansen Lecture series was established by the Washington Statistical Society (WSS) in 1990 with financial support from Westat, Inc. to honor Morris Hansen, whose pioneering contributions to survey sampling and related statistical methods during his long and distinguished career at the Census Bureau and at Westat established many standards and methods, mostly still in use, for the conduct of surveys. Morris Hansen served as the inaugural president of the International Association of Survey Statisticians (IASS). The Morris Hansen Lecture usually is held in the fall of the year, typically October or November. The usual format is to have a primary speaker of outstanding merit cover an important topic of wide interest, and two discussants, one local. The Hansen Lecture series seeks to achieve balance between theory, applications, and policy; and to highlight the diversity of disciplines that inform survey practice. The speaker receives an honorarium of $1000. Travel expenses are paid for the speaker and discussants.

The WSS, Summit Consulting LLC, Westat, and USDA NASS provided support for the 33rd lecture.

About Dr. Partha Lahiri

Dr. Partha Lahiri is a Professor of the Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM) and the Department of Mathematics at the University of Maryland College Park (UMD). He served as the JPSM Director from January 2021 through June 2025. Prior to joining UMD, Dr. Lahiri was the Milton Mohr Professor of Statistics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. Lahiri is serving as the President of the International Association of Survey Statisticians during 2025–2027. His research interests include survey statistics, Bayesian statistics, statistical data integration, and small-area estimation. He has published over 85 papers in peer-reviewed journals, delivered 20 plenary/keynote presentations and over 90 invited talks in professional meetings worldwide. He has served on several advisory committees, including the U.S. Census Bureau Advisory Committee of Professional Associations (chair in 2006) and a U.S. National Academy of Sciences panel, and served as consultant/advisor for international organizations such as the United Nations Statistics Division and the World Bank. Dr. Lahiri is a Fellow of the American Statistical Association and the Institute of Mathematical Statistics and an elected member of the International Statistical Institute. He received

the 2021 SAE Award at the 63rd World Statistics Congress Satellite Meeting on Small Area Estimation in recognition of his lifetime contributions to small area estimation research. More recently, Dr. Lahiri was awarded the Neyman Medal at a joint session of the 3rd Congress of Polish Statistics and the 2022 Conference of the International Association of Official Statistics held in Krakow, Poland, for outstanding contributions to the development of statistical sciences.

Summary of the lecture

The demand for statistics on diverse topics - including socio-economic conditions, agriculture, health, and transportation - is on the rise, while governments and survey organizations have strived to address the increasing costs of conducting high-quality surveys. Along with technological advancements, the increasing accessibility of various data sources, including administrative records, geospatial data, social media data, and AI-generated data, presents researchers with new opportunities to produce improved estimates. In addition, this allows for the investigation of complex problems that would be challenging using only a single data source. Recently there has been a significant surge in statistical methodological research for diverse applications that is focused on combining information from multiple data sources.

Dr. Lahiri began by discussing the scope of statistical modeling for harnessing information from multiple data sources to produce precise estimates at a granular level, conduct multivariate analysis when a single data source lacks all relevant variables, reduce nonsampling errors in probability samples, mitigate self-selection biases in nonprobability samples, and address other emerging challenges. He then focused on recent statistical methodological developments for combining information from multiple data sources in the context of small area estimation for poverty mapping—a topic of significant interest to various national statistical offices and international agencies.

For more information on the Morris Hansen Lecture, please visit: https://washstat.org/hansen/#PROGRAMS

Dr. Benmei Lu,

WSS President, 2025-2026

Other News

All back issues of *The Survey Statistician* on the IASS website

Until May 2026, *The Survey Statistician* issues from 2000 onwards were available in PDF format on the IASS website.We have now been able to post all back issues of *The Survey Statistician* onto the IASS website. They are available from the very first issue in 1978. Prior to *The Survey Statistician*, there were 8 issues of an IASS smaller news bulletin. Issue #8 of that bulletin constituted a “dress rehearsal” and thus was called issue #0 of *The Survey Statistician*. This issue is also included. We would like to thank **Eric Rancourt** (former editor of *The Survey Statistician*) from Statistics Canada who made this possible and who has graciously used his collection to provide scanned issues to the IASS thanks to Statistics Canada. His few missing issues were completed by the help of Gordon Brackstone’s collection as well as a couple of issues from Statistics Canada’s library. We would also like to thank Benoit Rehayem and Zumreta Demirovic from Statistics Canada for scanning the documents and making them available to the IASS. Final thanks go to Ujjayini Das for mounting all these documents onto the IASS website. If you are interested in some statistics about and history of *The Survey Statistician*, please see Eric Rancourt’s article in the July 2023 issue #88.

Modernizing Establishment Statistics: Insights from EESW25

The *European Network for Better Establishment Statistics (ENBES)* is dedicated to improving cooperation on methodology, theory and applications within European establishment statistics. Establishment statistics is statistics about - and for - businesses and other forms of corporate units.

The ninth *European Establishment Statistics Workshop (EESW25)*, organized by ENBES and sponsored by IASS, was held in Rome from 5–7 November 2025, hosted by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat). Under the theme *Innovations in Establishment Statistics with Special Attention to Data Collection*, the workshop brought together experts from National Statistical Institutes (NSI), academia, and international organizations to discuss innovations in establishment statistics, with a focus on data collection, integration, and modernization.

A first set of contributions addressed nonresponse, response burden, and data integration. Evidence confirmed that longer questionnaires increase perceived burden without substantial gains in output quality. Several papers demonstrated the value of integrating survey and administrative data, including large-scale data linkages and the use of fiscal sources. A key message was the need to move from NSI-centered to business-centered data collection, with processes and instruments aligned to business practices.

Administrative data and new collection methods were widely discussed. Tax data and e-invoicing systems were shown to improve timeliness and reduce burden, although issues related to definitions and availability persist. Innovative collection modes, such as live video interviews, reported positive effects on data quality and respondent engagement. The use of paradata provided insights into respondent behaviour and supported the development of more adaptive survey designs.

Innovation and automation were central themes throughout the workshop. Several contributions presented applications of machine learning and large language models for classification tasks, highlighting both their potential and the need for transparency and robustness. Adaptive approaches, such as Active Collection Management, showed improvements in response rates and cost-efficiency. Other works focused on editing and estimation, including automated systems for outlier treatment and improved robustness of estimates.

The final sessions focused on digital transformation and redesign. Contributions explored the integration of survey and web data, semantic interoperability, and machine-to-machine data transmission. Respondent-centered redesigns, such as modular questionnaires and improved web interfaces, demonstrated clear gains in data quality and usability.

Overall, three main directions emerged: a shift toward business-centered data collection; stronger integration of administrative, fiscal, and survey data; and increased use of technological innovation, including paradata, machine learning, and automated data transmission.

ENBES gratefully acknowledges Istat for hosting the workshop, as well as the support of ESRA, IASS, ONS, the Statistical Society of Slovenia, and Statistics Netherlands.

For more information about ENBES's activities, visit https://sites.google.com/enbes.org/home/home

Pasquale Papa,

Member of the ENBES Steering Committee

News from SAE 2026

The *Small Area Estimation, Survey and Data Science Conference 2026* (SAE 2026) was held at the University of Bucharest, Romania, from 15 to 19 June 2026. The conference brought together researchers, practitioners and experts from official statistics, academia and international organisations, providing an important forum for discussing recent methodological developments and applied challenges in small area estimation, survey statistics and data science.

SAE 2026 achieved truly global representation, bringing together 82 participants from 23 countries across 6 continents. The conference featured a comprehensive scientific program, comprised of 3 keynote lectures, 16 invited sessions, 6 contributed sessions, and 2 short courses, culminating in a total of 66 scientific presentations.

SAE 2026 participants, Bucharest, Romania

The programme was highly relevant for the survey statistics community, as it addressed key issues related to survey design, estimation, integration of data sources, model-based methods, uncertainty assessment and the production of reliable indicators for small domains and specific population groups. The contributions presented at the conference were collected in the Book of Abstracts, which documented the diversity of topics, methods, and applications discussed during the event. Additionally, the volume included a special write-up detailing the history of the SAE conference series.

The conference highlighted the growing importance of small area estimation within modern survey statistics. In a context where national statistical institutes and other data producers are increasingly required to provide timely, precise and geographically detailed information, survey statisticians face the challenge of making the best possible use of survey data, administrative records, geospatial information and other auxiliary sources. The sessions and discussions at SAE 2026 showed how small area estimation methods can contribute directly to improving the quality, relevance and policy usefulness of official statistics.

In particular, the keynote presentations addressed several important directions in contemporary SAE research and practice for the professionals interested in combining information to make reliable inference at subnational levels. Isabel Molina (talk `*Conciliation: the Key to Success in Small Area Estimation*') emphasized the growing importance of reconciling design-based and model-based approaches, arguing that their conciliation enables statisticians to effectively borrow strength across areas, integrate multiple data sources, and improve estimation for area means as well as more complex indicators such as poverty and inequality measures. Gauri Datta (talk `*A Bayesian Framework for Multi-Goals Small Area Inference: Estimation, Ranking and Benchmarking*') extended the discussion through a Bayesian framework that addressed multiple inferential goals simultaneously, including estimation, ranking, and benchmarking of small areas, while providing meaningful uncertainty quantification and incorporating benchmark constraints directly into the posterior distribution. His work demonstrates how Bayesian methods can support more accurate and stable decision-making for policy and resource allocation. Complementing these methodological advances, Cristina-Rodica Boboc (talk `*Measuring Skill Mismatch in the Romanian Labour Market: Are Small Area Estimation Methods a Solution*?') presented a practical application focused on skill mismatch in the Romanian labor market, where national statistics reveal persistent disparities between workers' qualifications and job requirements but fail to provide sufficiently detailed local insights. Her keynote explored whether SAE methods can overcome data limitations and generate reliable county-level estimates to better inform regional labor market policies. Together, these presentations illustrated how innovative SAE methodologies can both advance statistical theory and address pressing socioeconomic challenges through improved local-level evidence.

In addition to the scientific sessions, SAE 2026 included two short courses delivered by internationally recognised experts. The first one, entitled `*Entity Resolution*' was given on 15th of June by Ted Enamorado from Washington University in St. Louis, USA. The second one, entitled `*Bayesian Small Area Estimation*', with an emphasis on low- and middle-income countries was given on 19th of June by Jon Wakefield from the University of Washington, Seattle, USA. These courses offered participants the opportunity to deepen their knowledge on entity resolution and on small area estimation methods in demographic and health survey contexts. By combining theoretical foundations with practical applications, the training activities contributed to capacity building among survey statisticians and strengthened the link between research, official statistics and applied survey methodology.

The conference also featured the SAE Award ceremony, which celebrated outstanding contributions to the field and recognised Professor **Isabel Molina** (Complutense University of Madrid, Spain) as

the recipient of the **SAE 2026 Award**, further highlighting the strength and impact of the small area estimation community.

Professor Isabel Molina received the SAE 2026 Award from Partha Lahiri, the president of the IASS. Jon Rao is standing nearby. Congratulations, Professor Molina!

Beyond the scientific programme, SAE 2026 also offered several opportunities for informal exchange, networking, and cultural discovery. Participants had the opportunity to meet during informal dinners, the official conference dinner, the visit to the Palace of Parliament, and the walk through the Bucharest Botanical Garden. These social events created a warm and collegial atmosphere, allowing researchers, practitioners, and representatives of national statistical offices and international organisations to continue discussions beyond the conference sessions, strengthen professional connections, and experience Bucharest as a meeting place for the international SAE community.

SAE 2026 participants during dinner, Bucharest, Romania

As SAE 2026 comes to a close, we extend our sincere gratitude to the organizing committee, scientific committee volunteers, and all contributors whose dedication and hard work made this conference a tremendous success. We also gratefully acknowledge the support of all sponsors, cosponsors, institutional partners, and local organisers who contributed to the organisation and visibility of SAE 2026: the Faculty of Administration and Business of the University of Bucharest, which served as the local organiser and host institution of the conference, the International Association of Survey Statisticians (IASS), the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS), the Federation of European National Statistical Societies (FENStatS), the Institute of National Economy of the Romanian Academy, and the Romanian National Institute of Statistics. Most importantly, we thank the international statistical community for its continued commitment to advancing methodology and its applications to real-world challenges. The vibrant exchange of knowledge at SAE 2026 demonstrates the strength and relevance of our field. We look forward to building on these connections and achievements in the year ahead and warmly welcome researchers, practitioners, students, and policymakers to join us at **SAE 2027** during 21-25 June 2027 in Hue, Vietnam for another exciting opportunity to learn, collaborate, and shape the future of small area estimation together. Safe travels, and we look forward to seeing you next year.

Ana Maria Ciuhu, co-chair of Local Organizing Committee

Andreea Erciulescu and **Domingo Morales Gonzalez,** co-chairs of Program Committee

Marius Stefan, member of Program Committee