

New Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Di Gao

Department of Mathematics & Statistics



Kyra Rost

College of Science & Engineering
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Sam Houston State University

Dr. Di Gao acquired his Bachelors of Economics degree from Tianjin University of Finance and Economics, located in Tianjin, China. He earned his Master's degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia and his PhD at North Dakota State University, both in Statistics. Dr. Gao is an Assistant Professor teaching Biomedical Statistics, Intro to Statistics, and Linear Regression. He became interested in Statistics after reading a textbook on Bayesian inference, based on Thomas Bayes' theorem.

Dr. Gao chose to teach at Sam Houston because he believes that SHSU is a good model university, and the enrollment rate is constantly increasing. Dr. Gao also loves sports, and Sam Houston has a division 1 football team who "seems to always, at least, be in the semifinals". Which satisfies his research interest in sports data. His research interests are Bayesian lasso, Dimension reduction, Biostatistics, Quality control, and Sports data science; including making models and predictions on sport video games, such as NCAA March Madness. Dr. Gao encourages students and/or faculty to come by and get involved in research, whether it's with his research or an individual's own research ideas. He even encourages others to come by simply for a conversation; he is always available to converse with students and faculty. He expressed vividly that he genuinely enjoys the campus and appreciates the opportunity of getting to teach at Sam Houston State University.

Interesting facts

What is the biggest difference between China and the United States?

“In China, it’s super busy all of the time, but it is not like that here. I have time to do things, do research, teach and relax. About a culture shock, I really did not experience one; it’s pretty diverse in Beijing, China as it is here.”

Where is the best place you have ever been?

“I enjoy going traveling around the states, but my favorite would be going to Yellowstone Park, I’ve been there 5 times. I enjoy going camping and taking a boat out on the lake, when the water has risen.”

What did you do in college? Organizations? Clubs?

“In my undergraduate studies, I was heavily involved in table tennis, and I went to all the student org events that I could go to. I was an active guy. In my master’s degree I was a part of the National College Games of Table Tennis. We made it to the final round in a competition in 2013. I was also the President of my college’s table tennis team, and I made the news for competing in a local competition. (<https://mizzoumag.missouri.edu/2013/11/table-tennis-all-stars/>) When I was getting my PhD, I was an RA and a Teaching Assistant on campus. I also did research on testing drugs for cancer cells, by using statistical models for data analysis.”

What do you do in your free time? Any hobbies?

“I still play table tennis and I am part of a nonprofit organization for table tennis. I sometimes play with our graduate students here on campus. If I have time, I go to the Houston International Table Tennis Academy and compete in a league there. I believe that they actually train Olympic competitors there too.”