

Foreword from the President

Dear A²B²D members, dear students,

First of all, a big warm welcome to all new students enrolled in the Master of Statistics at Hasselt University and, of course, also a renewed welcome to all alumni and staff members.

We are already a few months into the new academic year, so I hope everybody managed to settle in and adjust to the Belgian way of life. My advice, study hard, but don't overdo it. Try to find some time to relax as well. Whether you do this together with A²B²D or by yourself that's up to you, but remember that A²B²D is still there to satisfy your extracurricular needs and to keep you informed of what's going on in I-Biostat.

In this newsletter you will find reports of past activities. First of all, we had the Introduction Day, which was organized in collaboration with the 'Toerisme school' in Hasselt and turned out to be an enjoyable welcome to our new students. Secondly, students and staff visited the yearly Jenever festival in Hasselt. For some of the 'A²B²D veterans' this is considered to be one of the highlights of the A²B²D calendar. Over the years we made quite a name as a group at the festival, leading to appearances in local and nationwide media. It is fair to say that also the local politicians know by now who we are, documented by the recurrence of some of them in the yearly pictures. In this issue, for instance, you can find a picture with the Mayor of Hasselt, who, when he sees us, almost automatically assumes position for the picture. You can read more about the adventures at the Jenever Festival in this newsletter.

If you missed the previous activities, don't despair, new activities will come up. In fact, for the next activity – bowling – you only have to wait for a couple more days. Allow me to challenge you all, students and staff alike, for a bowling contest. Be there on Tuesday, November 18th to defend your honour against the A²B²D board! Later this semester other activities will follow, including the Christmas market, an end-of-exams party, soccer games, etc.

If you have any suggestions for the board, other activities, etc., don't hesitate to contact us. Hope to see you at one of our activities!

Philippe Haldermans
Your President



Inside this issue:

<i>Did You Know?</i>	2
<i>Introduction Day</i>	3
<i>Jenever Feast</i>	4
<i>Out with the Old, In with the New</i>	5
<i>Activities</i>	6
<i>Membership</i>	7

Some Highlights:

- Which important local personalities did A²B²D get to rub elbows with at the Jenever Feast?

Page 4

- How many new A²B²D board members do we welcome this year?

Page 5



- ◆ That the Introduction Day for the new students was held last September 28 in order to introduce and familiarize them with the various aspects of student life? Read more about it in this issue.
- ◆ That A²B²D joined the activities in celebration of the Jenever Feast last October 18? We've included an article about the event, along with some pictures, in this issue.
- ◆ That there are quite a number of changes in the composition of the A²B²D board this year? See our feature about this to find out who is "in" and who is "out."
- ◆ That CenStat welcomes four new Ph.D. students to its roster this year? We wish Yovanna, Emanuel, Birhanu and Girma success in their academic endeavors, as well as an enjoyable stay at CenStat.
- ◆ That Goele, Suzy, Dirk, Harriet, Kristien and John, of CenStat successfully defended their respective doctoral theses last September? To all of them we extend our heartfelt congratulations and the best of luck in their future endeavours.
- ◆ That CenStat's Kaatje Bollaerts recently received, from the editors of *Statistical Modelling*, the runner-up prize for Best Student Paper at the most recent "International Workshop on Statistical Modelling" in Utrecht, Netherlands, last July? Good job, Kaat!
- ◆ That former A²B²D president Herbert Thijs became a proud father for the second time last October 30? Our warmest congratulations to Herbert and Machteld on the birth of their daughter, Floor.



Introduction Day

Maria Carolina Medina Gómez

I waited that Friday for so long, finally the opportunity to meet with my classmates and have a tour in the city. So that morning I arrived quite early and saw all my classmates, for the first time. Between juice, coffee and those delicious biscuits Belgians eat, we started the meeting with the A²B²D committee introducing themselves, smiling and wearing a nice CenStat T-shirt. They made us feel free to ask for help anytime about every kind of issue, which is comforting especially when you are so far away from home, perhaps with cultural shocks – in my personal case: I still run when crossing the streets and do not trust that cars will stop for a pedestrian.



Hasselt University - Entrance Building

After the tour at the university, we went directly to the Tourism School to have lunch ... finally real warm food and for free!!! I have to say it was pretty good, especially after I found out that it was made by students in the school – that was definitely a plus. The tourism students were really friendly and explained to us some standard conventions and attractions in Flanders.

Then we were off directly to Hasselt centrum, eventually I will not have to use the google search engine “How to get” every time I want to go out. We were walking around though it was so cold and it might have been a better idea if we ran. For my classmates, especially those who come from Africa, it was a relief when we went to Zeeman and they could buy gloves; meanwhile, I was jumping to cope the weather. We passed by the big stores, the city hall, some pubs and the train station – getting explanations for each place, some even got the opportunity to take passport pictures for all pertinent documents. When we passed by the famous disco Versuz, we got the best advice for saving money: “There is a special offer from Holiday Inn hotel, which includes entrance tickets to the disco, so you do not have to pay for the taxi to go back home”... well, who knows perhaps one day such information would be helpful.

Around four we went to a nice spot (Borrelhuis) to have some drinks, talk and get to know each other better. To the staff, my gratitude, not just for the day but for your support and good energy, I meet you constantly around the university and your kindness has not change. To my classmates, well, I cannot wait to meet you again in a context different from an academic one...with a bit of luck in the next A²B²D activity. See you guys!!!!

TOERISMESCHOOL



Police Logo.
HAZODI District.



This one is pretty
known...isn't it?



Logo of the post office
In Belgium.



One of the biggest
discos In Belgium. There
is promo on Tuesdays!!

Jenever Feast

John Kissa

Dear Colleagues,

I take this opportunity to thank A²B²D for the companionship they have showed us during our first weeks in Belgium and really hope that this will continue throughout. It can be a new world, new people, and new culture for some of the students, who may have come from far away but the A²B²D community has made a life of smiles on our faces and bridged the gap between studies and fun. The most recent event in which we participated as a big group from the UHasselt was the Jenever festival.

The Jenever Feast was one big event in Hasselt that made us learn how important history is in real life. Hasselt commemorates this day annually at the National Jenever Museum, in Hasselt, known for its multiple brands of Jenever that were manufactured from here many years ago. Being my first time, I was really happy to see this place and to take a scent of the various historical Jenevers that are kept at the museum. We were walking around the Jenever Museum: in the OXHOUSE was an introductory film giving an outline of 700 years of distilling in Europe and the Low countries. We viewed the MALT TOWER where the green malt was dried after germination. At the aroma table, we could compare the scents of herbs and various ingredients of Jenever. Comedians entertained us with very exciting and funny gestures with Dutch music. We were then all served with the new brand of Jenever.

We finally moved to the central area where Jenever was flowing from the fountain and everyone retired at their own time. But those who were willing to continue with the Jenever might have had an excess of it.

Overall this event was magnificent as we also got the time to meet, chat and have fun with many colleagues from within UHasselt.



The group with the mayor of Hasselt.



Our president after the Borrel manneke, he looks very happy, doesn't he???



The first drink, courtesy of A²B²D...



Jenever, not only for drinking, in the museum... for smelling too.



Cheers!!!

Out with the Old, In with the New

As we mentioned in the **Did You Know** section, there have been quite a number of changes in the composition of the A²B²D board. We bid goodbye to Niel, Dirk and Kris and say hello to 5 (yes, five!) new board members: Yovanna, Emanuele, Tayo, Arthur and Setia. To the outgoing members, we extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation for all their work over the past years, and to the incoming ones, welcome and good luck!



Outgoing: Niel, Kris and Dirk



Incoming: Setia, Arthur, Yovanna, Emanuele and Tayo

Position	2007-2008	2008-2009
President	Niel Hens	Philippe Haldermans
Vice President	Philippe Haldermans	An Creemers
Treasurer	Liesbeth Bruckers	Liesbeth Bruckers
Secretary	An Creemers	Nele Goeyvaerts Zhu Qi
Entertainer	Dirk Valkenburg	Emanuele del Fava
Scriptor	Tina Sotto	Tina Sotto Yovanna Castro
Sports Coordinator	Nele Goeyvaerts	Adetayo Kasim
Jack of All Trades	Zhu Qi	Arthur Gitome Setia Pramana
Webmaster	Kris Callaert	



Continuing: Tina, Nele, Philippe, An and Aileen

Key: **Out** / **In** / Continuing

Activities

Bowling

Come join us for a fun evening of bowling at Health City (campus Diepenbeek) on **November 18** (Tuesday). We will meet at the **front steps of the university at 17.15h**. The first game is sponsored by A²B²D! For those who are not familiar with the sport of bowling, please check out the following link:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowling>

End of Exams Party

On January 30, we will celebrate the end of exams (semester) with an "End of Exams" Party. Details for this activity have yet to be worked out, but meanwhile, please keep this date free. We will be sending you an email about this once everything has been finalized.

More Activities...

- ♦ **Nov 22:** Speculaas (sweet spiced biscuit, speciality of Hasselt) Feast in Molenpoortplein, Hasselt

www.hasseltfeestspectulaas.be

- ♦ **Until March 31:** Exhibition "The Terracotta Army of Xi'an" in Minorite Church, Maaseik

www.museamaaseik.be/Xian/

Christmas Market in Maastricht

During the winter season, Maastricht becomes the site of numerous festive events and the centre of the city is transformed into a giant Christmas shopping village, with brightly lit streets and overflowing displays. On **December 18** (Thursday), we shall go to see this spectacle in Maastricht. We meet **at 16.50h at the bus stop in UHasselt**. Please bring around €5 for bus fare.

Soccer Games

As part of the A²B²D sporting activities, it has become a tradition that students from the 3 programs take time off on Friday afternoons for a football match. This weekly event takes place **every Friday** from **17-19h at Fitlink** sports centre. You can expect an interesting and particularly relaxing atmosphere. And for free, you become physically fit. If you are interested in participating in this activity, please feel free to contact Samuel Iddi

samuel.iddi@student.uhasselt.be

who is currently responsible for arranging the games. Hope to see you there!



NEXT ACTIVITY

Bowling

November 18

17.15h

University entrance

COMING SOON

- **Christmas Market**

December 18



- **End of Exams Party**

January 30



EVERY FRIDAY

Soccer Games

17-19h

Fitlink



A²B²D

*Alumni Applied, Biostatistics
and Bioinformatics Diepenbeek*

Univeriteit Hasselt
Agoralaan 1
Diepenbeek 3590

E-mail: abd@uhasselt.be

Web:

[http://www.censtat.uhasselt.be/
student/alumni/default.asp](http://www.censtat.uhasselt.be/student/alumni/default.asp)



A little bit of history...

Imagine having to move to a new city in a foreign country. Imagine having to adapt to a completely different lifestyle: strange temperatures, strange environment, strange people, strange food... This is one of the reasons why on June 28th, 1991, a group of enthusiastic biostatisticians, decided to found Alumni Biostatistics Diepenbeek (ABD) with Kristel Luijters as the first president. Later she was followed by, respectively, Jacqueline Smits ('93-'95), Els Gaens ('95-'97), Helena Geys ('97-'99), Ivy Jansen ('99-'02), Saskia Litière ('02-'04), Herbert Thijs ('04-'06), Niel Hens ('06-'08), and now Philippe Haldermans ('08-). In September 1999, when the new program, Master of Science in Applied Statistics, started, ABD became A²BD. In 2007, with the start of the Master of Science in Bioinformatics, A²BD changed its name once again to A²B²D.

With a group of energetic board members, we try to facilitate living in a completely different environment, which, for sure, is what Belgium is to a lot of our foreign students. We also try to maintain contact with the students who have graduated, as well as with the current students and their instructors. All are kept up-to-date through regular issues of the A²B²D newsletter, with announcements about social activities, statistical meetings and also personal milestones.



Membership

For the benefit of our new students, we thought we would explain a little bit about our membership policies. Firstly, membership to A²B²D is free. All registered students of the 3 Master of Statistics programs (Applied Statistics, Biostatistics and Bioinformatics) are automatically members of A²B²D. As such, you are on our current mailing list and you will receive information about our activities and our newsletter via your UHasselt student account. Upon graduation, however, your student account will be terminated, but if you still wish to be on our mailing list, all you have to do is to register and provide us with another email account. You may do this by sending an e-mail to Aileen (qi.zhu@uhasselt.be) and she will include your e-mail address in our mailing list.