June 11, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO:        Dr. Karen L. Butler-Purry
            Associate Provost for Graduate & Professional Studies

FROM:      Mark Zoran
            Associate Dean, College of Science

SUBJECT:   Dual Degree in Statistics with Renmin University of China

I have attached a Memorandum of Agreement for a dual degree between the Department of Statistics in the College of Science of Texas A&M University and the Institute of Statistics and Big Data of Renmin University of China. The dual degree will be built upon the existing Doctor of Philosophy degree in Statistics offered by Texas A&M University, and the existing Doctor of Philosophy degree in Statistics offered by Renmin University of China. This dual degree program will serve to further the educational and research collaborative relationships between these two academic units. The attached Memorandum of Agreement between the two universities was prepared in accordance with the Agreements Involving Joint And Dual Academic Awards Policy and Procedures, issued by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Please note that this program involves delivery of existing PhD in Statistics without modification of the curriculum.

I would request that this proposal be included on the agenda for the July 2015 meeting of the GC.

Please let me know if you have any questions.
Justification for Memorandum of Agreement
Doctor of Philosophy in Statistics Dual Degree Program

Institute of Statistics and Big Data
Renmin University of China

And

Department of Statistics
College of Science
Texas A&M University

Background:

Renmin University of China has the largest and one of the top statistics program in China and is the leader in the field of applied statistics. It has extensive collaborations with the Ministry of Education and the National Bureau of Statistics of China. It currently has 30 faculty and will recruit 20 more from North America in the next few years. The Statistics Department of Texas A&M University is one of the leading statistics departments in the US. Its faculty members have won international recognition for their contributions to many parts of statistical science. The high quality of its graduate program has earned it top rankings consistently in the past years. In recognition of the complementary research and educational strengths of each university, it is evident that increasing their educational and research collaborations would be to the mutual benefit of both institutions.

Area of Cooperation:

Department of Statistics of Texas A&M University and Institute of Statistics and Big Data of Renmin University of China propose to offer a dual degree that will serve to further their educational and research collaborative relationships in areas such as externally funded research and joint publications. The dual degree will be built upon the existing Doctor of Philosophy degree in Statistics offered by Texas A&M University, and the existing Doctor of Philosophy degree in Statistics offered by Renmin University of China. The program will be launched once the academic elements necessary to create it have been formulated and agreed to by appropriate faculty and administrators at both institutions. The Memorandum of Agreement was prepared in accordance with the Agreements Involving Joint And Dual Academic Awards Policy and Procedures, issued by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).
MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
For Dual Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Statistics

Between

INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS AND BIG DATA
RENMIN UNIVERSITY OF CHINA
Beijing
People’s Republic of China

And

DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
College Station, Texas
United States of America

This Memorandum of Agreement between Renmin University of China and Texas A&M University applies only to the Institute of Statistics and Big Data at Renmin University of China and the Department of Statistics in the College of Science at Texas A&M University.

Whereas the above named institutions are joined in an agreement of mutual cooperation, and the above named academic units recognize that an agreement of cooperation would be of mutual benefit and would serve to implement a dual degree program leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Statistics at Texas A&M University and Doctor of Philosophy in Statistics at Renmin University of China.

Academic Program Description
Texas A&M University (TAMU) and Renmin University of China (RUC) will offer a dual degree under the terms set out below to further their educational and research collaborative relationships. This degree will consist of the existing Doctor of Philosophy degree in Statistics offered by Texas A&M University, and the existing Doctor of Philosophy degree in Statistics offered by Renmin University of China. The program will be launched once approval of the dual degree by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) has been obtained.

I. Admission and Recruitment

A. Admission Requirements:

The normal requirement for admission to graduate studies at both Texas A&M University and Renmin University of China is a scholastic record that, over a master’s degree program or a four-year undergraduate degree program, gives evidence of the applicant’s
ability to do successful Ph. D. level graduate work. Successful applicants for the dual degree program will meet the following minimum admission requirements:

a) If entering with a bachelor’s degree as the highest earned degree, candidates must have a GPA of 3.00 (equivalent to B) or higher in the last 60 hours of undergraduate work with a minimum overall GPA of 3.0.

b) If entering with a master’s degree as the highest earned degree, candidates must have a GPA of 3.25 or higher on the master’s degree program.

c) TOEFL score (a minimum of 80 on TOEFL iBT (550 paper-based)), GRE or GMAT scores, a statement of professional goals, and 3 recommendation letters.

B. Recruitment and Admission Process:

Recruitment and admission to the dual degree program will be a multi-stage process administered and coordinated by a Program Advisory Board that comprises four members, two designated by RUC and two designated by TAMU. At the first stage, each institution implements its own pre-selection of dual degree candidates from students within its graduate program and submits nominations to the Program Advisory Board. At the second stage, each nominated dual degree candidate must gain approval for admission from the Program Advisory Board and satisfy all admission requirements as outlined in the above section I.A.

C. Committees:

In order to satisfy the degree requirements at both RUC and TAMU, each dual degree student will have two programmatic committees, one mandated by degree requirements at RUC and one mandated by degree requirements at TAMU as described below.

a) The TAMU Dissertation Advisory Committee is comprised of a chairperson who is a member of the TAMU graduate faculty, a co-chair on the faculty at RUC and at least three other members of the TAMU graduate faculty, one of whom must be external to the degree program. Faculty members from RUC must be approved as members of the graduate faculty at TAMU at the appropriate level before they can serve as a co-chair. Application for election to the graduate faculty at TAMU is covered in the Texas A&M University rules as described on the website http://ogaps.tamu.edu.

b) The RUC Ph.D Advisory Committee is comprised of a major advisor, with a permanent academic faculty-level appointment on RUC faculty, a co-advisor on the Graduate Faculty at TAMU, and at least three other members of the RUC faculty, one of whom must be external to the degree program.

c) The Program Advisory Board consists of two representatives from each institution. Membership of the Program Advisory Board will be qualified faculty members who are appointed by the Dean of the College of Science at TAMU and the Dean of the Graduate School at RUC. The program will be reviewed annually including, but not limited to, the assessment and monitoring of the courses and components offered by the two institutions, their educational outcomes, the content and teaching methodologies of the courses, and the
qualifications of teaching faculty. Any modifications to the program must be approved by both institutions and the Program Advisory Board.

D. Student Financial Support

Each RUC-TAMU dual degree Ph.D. student will be considered for the standard financial support from both institutions on a competitive basis. Students shall pay the regular tuition and fees of the institution where they are in residence.

II. Program Requirements

A. Curricular design of the program:

Students will satisfy the requirements leading to the Ph.D. Degree in Statistics at Texas A&M University and the Ph.D. degree in Statistics at Renmin University of China. Each degree is awarded separately upon fulfilling the required coursework. As described below, each degree program consists of three central requirements: 1. core coursework; 2. qualifying and preliminary examinations; and 3. research and dissertation.

B. Requirements for the Ph.D. in Statistics at TAMU:

a) Each dual degree student must satisfy degree requirements for the Ph.D. at TAMU as detailed in the TAMU Graduate Catalog in effect at the time of admission and outlined below.

b) Each student must pass the TAMU Ph.D. Written Qualifying Examinations in Statistics according to the normal schedule determined by TAMU Department of Statistics.

c) Each student must pass an oral Preliminary Examination administered by the TAMU Dissertation Advisory Committee after completion of required coursework.

B.1) Coursework Requirements

a) Successful completion of core coursework for the Ph.D. in Statistics at TAMU.

b) Coursework taken at RUC for the dual degree program will be eligible for transfer credit at TAMU subject to satisfactory review and recommendation by the student’s advisory committee at TAMU and approval by the Office of Graduate and Professional Programs at TAMU. The Director of Graduate Studies in Statistics at TAMU will review the syllabi of all courses submitted for transfer credit from RUC to ensure that they meet the requirements for both TAMU and SACSCOC.

c) While in residence at RUC, dual degree students will be enrolled in an appropriate Study Abroad course section in order to satisfy the “continuous enrollment” requirement of TAMU. Each dual degree student must spend at least one year enrolled full-time in residence, and complete at least 33% of the required hours at TAMU in College Station, TX.

B.2) Dissertation Requirements

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a) Each student will have a TAMU Dissertation Advisory Committee.

b) To enter into Candidacy for the Ph.D., each student must submit a written Dissertation Proposal approved by the TAMU Dissertation Advisory Committee after successful completion of the Written Qualifying Examination and the oral Preliminary Examination as stipulated above.

c) After completion and approval of the Ph.D. dissertation, each student will defend the dissertation through an Oral Final Examination administered by the student’s TAMU Dissertation Advisory Committee.

d) After a successful dissertation defense under B.2)c), the student will be awarded the degree from TAMU.

C. Requirements for the Ph.D. in Statistics at RUC:

a) Each dual degree student must satisfy degree requirements for the Ph.D. at RUC as detailed in the RUC Statistics Program Guide and outlined below.

b) Each student must pass the RUC Ph.D. Written Qualifying Examinations in Statistics according to the normal schedule determined by Institute of Statistics and Big Data.

c) Each student must pass an oral Preliminary Examination administered by the RUC Dissertation Advisory Committee after completion of required coursework

C.1) Coursework Requirements

a) Successful completion of core coursework for the Ph.D. in the Statistics program at RUC.

b) Coursework taken at TAMU will be eligible for transfer credit at RUC subject to RUC rules.

c) Each dual degree student must spend at least one year enrolled full-time in residence, and complete at least 33% of the required hours at RUC.

C.2) Dissertation Requirements

a) Each student will have a RUC Ph.D. Advisory Committee.

b) After completion and approval of the Ph.D. dissertation, each student will defend the dissertation through a Final Examination administered by the Graduate Committee at Institute of Statistics and Big Data.

c) After a successful dissertation defense under C.2)b), the student will be awarded the degree from RUC.

d) TAMU degree must be awarded prior to the RUC degree.

III. Academic Standing

a) To be eligible to take the oral dissertation defense and final oral dissertation defense examination at each institution, a GPA of 3.00 must be met at both TAMU and RUC.

b) Verification process for program completion: At RUC, the student’s Ph.D. Advisory Committee Chair and Graduate Committee at Institute of Statistics and Big Data shall verify the successful completion of the academic program. At TAMU, the student’s
Advisory Committee and the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies shall verify successful completion of the academic program.

c) Program time limits: All degree requirements must be completed within a period of six consecutive years from the date of beginning.

IV. Program Assessment

a) Program assessment will be undertaken annually by the Program Advisory Board in terms of progress towards the degree being made by students.
b) TAMU will ensure that all arrangements relating to the dual degree program comply with the requirements of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, as indicated in the SACSCOC document “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policies and Procedures.”
c) RUC will ensure that all arrangements relating to the dual degree program comply with the requirements of the Ministry of Education, People’s Republic of China.

V. Responsibility Sharing

a) No special funds have been allocated for this program, and courses will be taught by faculty in College Station as part of their regular teaching load. Financial responsibility for administrative costs associated with the program will be shared by both institutions and absorbed in their existing budgets.
b) Any modifications to the program must be approved by both institutions and the Program Advisory Board. Meetings of the Program Advisory Board will be held annually during the interview process for new students, or additionally as needed.
c) All activities conducted under this Memorandum of Agreement will be in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations of TAMU and RUC, and all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations.

VI. Designation of Coordinators

Each institution designates the following officials to serve as Coordinators under this Memorandum of Agreement. The individuals designated as Coordinators may be revised by either institution by providing written notice to the current Coordinators.

**Texas A&M University**

http://www.tamu.edu/
Dr. Jianhua Huang
jianhua@stat.tamu.edu
Mailing Address:
Director of Graduate Studies and Professor
Department of Statistics

**Renmin University of China**

http://www.ruc.edu.cn/en
Dr. Chunrong Ai
chunrongai@ruc.edu.cn
Mailing Address:
Dean and Professor
Institute of Statistics and Big Data
Renmin University of China
VII. Term

a) This Memorandum of Agreement will become effective the latter of: (a) six months following TAMU’s required notification to SACSCOC or (b) when TAMU receives a formal, written acceptance of this notification and agreement from SACSCOC. The agreement will have a duration of five years.
b) This Memorandum of Agreement may be terminated by either party by providing 180 days written notice to the participating parties.
c) Students participating in the program at the end of the five year term or if the Memorandum of Agreement is terminated under section VII.b) will be allowed to complete the dual degree program under the terms set out in this Agreement.

VIII. General

a) Expenses incurred by each institution under this Memorandum of Agreement will be the sole responsibility of the appropriate department of the institution and all activities will be dependent upon budgetary appropriations of the parties.
b) Each institution agrees to comply with the host country’s immigration guidelines in support of exchanges of international students and/or faculty.

Disclaimer Statement:

Texas A&M University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award Doctor of Philosophy degrees. Renmin University of China is not accredited by SACS Commission on Colleges and the accreditation of Texas A&M University does not extend to or include Renmin University of China or its students. Further, although Texas A&M University agrees to accept certain course work from Renmin University of China to be applied toward an award from Texas A&M University, that course work may not be accepted by other colleges and universities, even if it appears on a transcript from Texas A&M University. The decision to accept course work in transfer from any institution is made by the institution considering the acceptance of credits or course work.

The above disclaimer statement must be included in any materials describing the relationship of the parties. Texas A&M University has the right to review, approve, and monitor RUC’s statements of relationship to ensure conformity with the disclaimer.

The parties have executed this Memorandum of Agreement on the date and year last specified below:
Texas A&M University

Michael K. Young
President

Date

Dr. Karan L. Watson
Provost and Executive Vice President

Date

Dr. H. Joseph Newton
Dean
College of Science

Date 6-12-15

Renmin University of China

|Dr. Yulu Chen
President

Date

Dr. Limin Wang
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate School

Date