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Cupples Award Presented to Jiann-Ping Hsu/Karl E. Peace Professor

June 24, 2016

Professor of Biostatistics and Epidemiology L. Adrienne Cupples presented the 2016 L. Adrienne Cupples Award for Excellence in Teaching, Research, and Service in Biostatistics on April 7.

The award was given to Mark van der Laan, Jiann-Ping Hsu/Karl E. Peace Professor in Biostatistics and Statistics at the University of California, Berkeley.

The award includes a $1,000 honorarium and all expenses to attend the award ceremony and deliver a lecture at the School of Public Health.

Van der Laan gave a lecture on targeted learning with applications to precision medicine, challenging his colleagues to do better than the George Box adage, “all models are wrong, but some are useful.”

After completing a doctorate in mathematics from the Utrecht University in the Netherlands in 1993, van der Laan joined the Department of Biostatistics at the University of California, Berkeley. Van der Laan is well-known for his work in loss-based super learning in semiparametric models, and the related targeted maximum likelihood estimation approach that his group developed. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2004 Mortimer Spiegelman Award and the 2005 COPSS Presidential Award.

What caught the attention of the Cupples Award selection committee was his nomination letter by a former student, praising his selfless dedication to mentoring the next generation of biostatisticians. “Simply put, Mark’s mentoring is unmatched,” the student wrote. “He has the highest expectations for students and pushes them beyond their self-perceived limits.”

The annual Cupples Award recognizes a biostatistician whose academic achievements reflect the contributions to biostatistics exemplified by L. Adrienne Cupples, the award’s first recipient.

Cupples came to SPH in 1981 and went on to serve as the founding chair of the Department of Biostatistics and co-executive director of the Graduate Program in Biostatistics. During her time at SPH, she has advanced the field of biostatistics through extensive publications in major journals and book chapters on collaborative and methodological research, development and effective teaching of a wide range of biostatistics courses, and mentorship of numerous graduate students and faculty.

Pictured: Mark van der Laan and L. Adrienne Cupples