

New York, NY
March 2025

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

I am thrilled to share that, starting this summer, I will continue my academic journey as an assistant professor of statistics at the University of British Columbia. This is a tenure-track position, with responsibilities split between teaching and research.

It is a considerable honor to receive a professorship at UBC, and it is a position I approach with optimism, awe, and gravity. Optimism because for a decade, I have gotten immense joy out of doing research; I now move forward with the conviction that I have found my vocation, my craft and most importantly, my community. Awe because of the expectations that come with the position and the high bar my colleagues have set. And finally gravity, because of the role science and education (should) play in our society.

All these considerations are exacerbated by the particular field I will teach. Statistics, at its heart, concerns itself with learning from observations and reasoning under uncertainty. As such, it provides a foundation for all empirical sciences, for contemporary topics such as machine learning and artificial intelligence, and for the critical thinking students should develop while attending university.

This opportunity is the culmination of years of studying, working,... and pondering. I am grateful for the unwavering support I have received from my colleagues, friends, and family. I am also aware of the good fortune I had: I applied at a time when many universities took an interest in my line of work (computational statistics, probabilistic machine learning), and right before budget cuts and hiring freezes came into effect. Timing matters and it is often out of our control.

British Columbia feels like a far away place. After leaving France and living in the US North East for more than a decade, I will now move further West. I did not expect this outcome when I initiated my job search. Yet Vancouver seems like a natural fit: it offers all the benefits of a bustling city and great access to the outdoors. Yes, I fancy the idea of starting the morning reading papers at a café, then lecturing a class on Bayesian Statistics, and finally heading out to ski in the afternoon. I move to British Columbia with the vibrant feeling that I still have one big adventure in me.

I will miss the friends I made in New York: the Ballroom Dancing community, the people I play soccer with at McCarren Park, the other postdocs who never failed to distract me with their banter, the Hartford crew that always welcomed me whenever I needed to escape the city—and more. Being a New Yorker has been a privilege that I will carry with me. I am sad to leave, yes,—and I am happy to go.

Charles Margossian

p.s. If you know people who might be interested in pursuing a PhD in Statistics, please encourage them to apply to UBC over the next cycle. I am building a research group, and I believe we have a lot to learn from each other.