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Dear Professor Fan,

First allow me to congratulate you on your appointment as the founding director of the Center for Statistical Research in the Academy of Mathematics and System Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences. May I also congratulate you and your colleagues on the establishment of a significant milestone in the development of statistics in China. It is indeed timely as statistics has become an increasingly important discipline in the light of the need to design experiments arising from complex scientific problems and to analyze huge data sets that are constantly generated or observed.

Through the extraction of meaningful scientific information from data, statistics has played an important role in contributing to the advances of many branches of human knowledge, particularly in such fields as the physical sciences, biological sciences, social and economic sciences, geological and environmental sciences, engineering science and information technology. Today the challenges and opportunities for statistics are greater than ever before as more new multidisciplinary areas emerge, partly through the advances and development of computers. Statistics can stimulate research in these multidisciplinary areas, help solve difficult problems and, in the process, produce new valuable methods which, in turn, will enhance and enlarge the scope of statistical applications.

I believe that the Center should be able to provide a focal point for high-impact statistical research in China. It should also help serve as a meeting place for statisticians, both from China and overseas, to interact and cross-fertilize ideas, thereby opening up opportunities for scientific creativity. In view of the importance of statistics both as a discipline in its own right and as a tool to other disciplines, the need to train new generations of statisticians becomes imperative for a modern society. The Center could be an ideal place for fostering statistical thinking and for training young and promising statisticians.

I have high hopes for the Center. I am confident that in time the Center will not only help build strengths in science and technology in China, but also contribute to statistical research in a significant way in the international arena. My best wishes for its success.

Yours sincerely,

Louis H. Y. Chen

President

Institute of Mathematical Statistics