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# Committee of Presidents of Statistical Societies

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## **Roderick J. Little**

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School of Public Health  
University of Michigan  
and  
Associate Director for Research & Methodology and Chief Scientist  
U.S. Census Bureau



**Roderick J. Little to Deliver the 2012 COPSS Fisher Lecture at  
the JSM in San Diego**

**Wednesday, 4:00pm, August 1, 2012**

***In Praise of Simplicity, Not Mathematistry! Ten Simple,  
Powerful Ideas for the Statistical Scientist***

The 2011 Committee of Presidents of Statistical Societies (COPSS) Fisher Lectureship Committee has named Roderick J. Little of the University of Michigan the U.S. Census Bureau, to deliver the Fisher Lecture at the Joint Statistics Meetings in San Diego. The committee recognizes Dr. Little *"For outstanding statistical research in the modeling and evaluation of missing data, sample survey and causal inference; for the clear and comprehensive application of these and other methodologies in science and public policy arenas; and for diverse and effective professional and academic leadership contributions."*

Dr. Little will deliver his talk on *"In Praise of Simplicity, Not Mathematistry! Ten Simple, Powerful Ideas for the Statistical Scientist."*

### **Abstract**

R.A. Fisher was by all accounts a first-rate mathematician. However, he saw himself primarily as a scientist, and he railed against what George Box, in his Fisher lecture, called "mathematistry". Mathematics is, of course, an indispensable foundation of statistics. But I think our subject is not well served by being treated as a branch of mathematics, impenetrable to collaborators and fellow statisticians with limited mathematical resources. At the altar of simplicity, I offer ten simple and powerful ideas that have shaped my research and practice of statistics. I include examples in the areas of statistical modeling, missing data, causal inference, and survey sampling.