Comparative effectiveness research has been at the top of the US national healthcare agenda for some time, as healthcare costs have been escalating without commensurate benefits in survival or patient well-being. It is now well recognized that ensuring healthcare care quality while controlling costs relies on the ability to accurately and efficiently compare competing therapies. In particular, the relative survival and cost advantages between coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) and percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) have been debated without resolution for decades. In 2009, the Society of Thoracic Surgeons and the American College of Cardiology joined forces in an unusual collaboration to link their ongoing data registries with the government Medicare claims database to explore these questions. Supported by funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the project became very high profile within the cardiovascular community and stimulated significant debate. As the analysis center for the grant, the Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI) was responsible for developing the comparative effectiveness methods and performing sensitivity analyses. The process of responding to the scientific issues while side-stepping the political ones was enlightening.

Biography:
Dr. DeLong is Professor and Chair, Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics, Duke University Medical Center and Co-Director of the Cardiovascular Outcomes Research group in the Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI). Her interests are in the field of comparative effectiveness with regard to cardiovascular outcomes and quality-of-care, with emphasis on risk adjustment methodology, assessment of risk prediction models, and provider profiling. With more than 20 years of biostatistics, clinical research, and bioinformatics experience, her responsibilities have included administrative and data analytic functions, as well as statistical methods development. She has also taught several Biostatistics courses in the Medical School, and has led the department to establish a Masters in Biostatistics degree. Approval to offer a PhD degree is expected in the fall of 2013.