

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

MATHLETTER

SPRING 2006

Chairs Corner by C.S. Chen

I never imagined, after nearly a quarter of a century, I would return to The University of Southern Mississippi to become the chair of this department. Perhaps it was my destiny to return and serve this department. I attended The University of Southern Mississippi as an international graduate student in spring 1981 when Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as the president of the United States. After I completed my masters degree from this department, I went to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette to pursue a Ph.D. Subsequently, during the past seventeen years, I worked my way from assistant professor to full professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Over the past two decades, the city of Hattiesburg has grown at least twice as large, yet the size of the department has not kept pace. Upon my arrival, Dr. Betounes retired, and a new assistant professor failed to join us because of immigration problems. Dr. Pye, my predecessor, is the only professor whom I knew while I was a graduate student. This downsizing greatly puzzles me. Obviously, to recover our faculty positions and to hire qualified faculty members are urgent matters. We are grateful that Dr. Gandy, our dean, will allow us to hire up to three new people for fall 2006. Giving us permission to hire three people is unusual, especially after Katrina. Hence, we have reason to believe that the upper administration is cognizant of the needs of this department. Meanwhile, we will continue to ful-

fill our teaching obligation to our students and strive to increase our research productivity.

The department needs to invest its limited resources wisely. Junior faculty members will have the highest priority to receive support from the department so that they can establish their research programs. We are committed to strengthen our programs in computational mathematics and mathematics education, two main focuses in our department. Recruiting qualified graduate students is urgent. To help with this, we will have a 10 percent increase in funding for graduate assistantships the next year.

I thank Dr. Pye for providing his expertise in helping me take care of the many sticky issues during this transition period. I am appreciative that he has agreed to be the coordinator of undergraduate study and will continue to play a key role in the growth of the department

Presidents List

Summer 2004: Ernest Argiro, Andrew Huey, Mamoru Uehira.

Fall 2004: Nicholas Beale, Katherine Ezell, Amy Goza, Andrew Huey, Angela Johnson, James Jones, Amy Lee, Sarah Neal, Bethany Newman, Nhiem Nguyen, Theresa Plumberg, Kathryn Robinson, Mamoru Uehira, Erin Westmoreland.

Spring 2005: Amy Goza, Andrew Huey, James Jones, Sarah Neal, Bethany Newman, Kathryn Robinson, Deidre Rose, Ashley Smith, Erin Westmoreland.

Deans List

Summer 2004: Robert Bouis III, Jessica Burt, Joo Young Hong.

Fall 2004: Jason Ball, Robert Bouis, Nicholas Brewer, Courtney Bright, Jessica Conen, Racheal Cooley, Deana Crane, Helen Hunter, Lenton McLendon, Jonathan ORourke, Katie Randolph, Shana Simmons, David Swanson, Beth Tapp.

Spring 2005: Courtney Bright, Gretchen Gifford, Helen Hunter, Lea Locke, Welman Pippin, Katie Randolph, Nora Rapetti, David Swanson, Shawanda Toups, John Williams.

Scholarships

The scholarship committee has made its recommendations for departmental scholarship awards for academic year 2005-2006. Brief biographies of the recipients follow.

Wright W. Cross Endowment

Chaz Ladner (\$500) is presently a sophomore at Pearl River Community College and has a 3.67 GPA. In the coming fall he will enter the mathematics/licensure program at Southern Miss. Chaz has received numerous honors; among these are the American Legion Award and USAA All-American Scholar Award.

Lenton McLendon (\$500) is a junior mathematics major with a 3.57 GPA. He is beginning an undergraduate research project under the direction of Professor Joseph Kolibal.

Jeffrey Varnado (\$1,700) is a junior and has a double major in mathematics and international studies. Jeffrey has a 3.12 GPA, is a Deans List student, and is doing undergraduate research under the direction of Professor Sungwook Lee. Mr. Varnados paper on his research in differential geometry was the

winning paper in the student paper competition at this years Louisiana/Mississippi Section Meeting of the Mathematical Association of America.

Erin Westmoreland (\$500) is a junior mathematics major at Southern Miss with a 4.00 GPA. She is a Presidents List student. She received the Letter J Award while attending Jones County Junior College.

Fred and Nadyne Drews Endowment

Erin Westmoreland (\$1,100).

Virginia Felder Endowment

Erin Westmoreland (\$2,200).

Alton C. Grimes Endowment

Chaz Ladner (\$450).

NASA Space Grant

Chaz Ladner (\$500).

Jeffrey Varnado (\$500).

Department Hosts Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Louisiana/Mississippi Section of the Mathematical Association of America met during March 3-5 at the Grand Casino Gulfport. Wally Pye was the section chair, so Southern Miss served as host. Over 300 people attended the meeting that focused primarily on issues in collegiate mathematics. Barry Piazza organized the Student Paper Competition in which eleven students made presentations and in which Southern Miss Jeffrey Varnado (Constant Mean Curvature Space-like Surfaces of Revolution Minkowski 3-Space) took first place. Bill Hornor was responsible for contributed papers in which 22 faculty members gave talks, among these were Southern Miss Edith Adan-Bante (Conjugacy Classes and Finite p-Groups) and Sungwook Lee (Surfaces of Constant Mean Curvature One in Hyperbolic 3-Space $H^3(-1)$ and Hyperbolic Mini-twistor Space Z). Joseph Kolibal moderated the Mathematics Careers Panel. Panelists

were Kim Drews (B.S., 1993; M.S., 1995), John Graves (B.S., 1982; M.S., 1984), and Ken Johnston (B.S., 1975). Kim is finishing a bioinformatics postdoc at Texas A&M and will start her new job at the Biostatistics Center of the George Washington University in Rockville, Maryland, where she will be co-principal investigator on a diabetes prevention clinical trial. John is a manager at Raytheon located in Richardson, Texas. Raytheon is the fourth-largest defense contractor. Ken is a Fellow of the Actuarial Society and is located in Jackson, Mississippi with Southern Farm Bureau. Susan Howell was a panelist on The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly Panel. She provided timely information and quick tips for MyMathLab (software for online homework). The department has now integrated online homework in several introductory courses.

Faculty Comings and Goings

David Betounes retired suddenly in May 2005. His career at Southern Miss spanned 28 years. David was trained as a functional analyst, but he changed his research emphasis to mathematical physics. He was instrumental in getting both equipment and curriculum grants that

led to the departments first computational labs and computational courses. David plans to continue authoring electronic calculus texts, hopes to teach part time at Arizona State in the near future, and, ultimately, fully retire with wife, Mylan Redfern (chair at Valdosta State in Georgia), to someplace in the Southwest.

Haiyan Tian has joined the department in a visiting assistant professor position, starting this January 2006. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette under Dr. C.Y. Chan, who was also C.S. Chens advisor. Haiyan is teaching two sections of Calculus I. She will be researching meshless methods with C.S.

Faculty at USM Gulf Coast were hit hard by Hurricane Katrina. Edith Adan-Bante, John Harris, Julie Cwikla, and Marlene Naquin all lost their homes. Only Nell Bishops home is still intact. Homeless faculty are either living in a dorm at USMs Gulf Coast Research Faculty in Ocean Springs, staying with family or friends, or in a FEMA trailer. Coast classes are now being offered at Gulf Coast Student Service Center in Gulfport. The decision to rebuild the Coast campus is yet to be made. The editor "votes to rebuild it in its old location in Long Beach.