

Florida Section Newsletter

The Mathematical Association of America

May 2022

Volume 43, Issue 2

~ The Annual Meetings ~

The 55th Joint Annual Meetings of the Florida Section of the Mathematical Association of America MAA-FL and the Florida Two-Year College Mathematics Association FTYCMA was entirely a virtual conference and took place on February 18-19, 2022. The event was attended by 181 participants, including ? undergraduate and graduate students. New this year were two undergraduate student awards: for best presentation and for best poster. As in previous editions, there were a student integration contest, a problem-solving contest, and a Kahoot! challenge.

The event was hosted by the FL MAA Executive Committee: Section Representative – Monika Kiss, Saint Leo University, President – Anthony Okafor, University of West Florida, Past President – Milé Krajčevski, University of South Florida, Vice-President for Programs – Jacob Aguilar, Saint Leo University, Vice-President for Site Selection – Sean Murphy, Eckerd College, Secretary-Treasurer – Sidra Van De Car, Valencia College, Newsletter Editor – Daniela Genova, University of North Florida, Coordinator of Student Activities – Kevin Murphy, Saint Leo University, Webmaster – C. Altay Özgener, State College of Florida, President-Elect Lubomir Markov, Barry University, VP for Programs-elect – Ryan Kasha, Valencia College, and VP for Site Selection – elect – Keshav Acharya, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and FTYCMA President – Joni Pirnot, State College of Florida.

~ Plenary Speakers ~

~ Faculty Awards ~

Dr. Jacci White from Saint Leo University receives the prestigious MAA National Meritorious Service Award



The National Meritorious Service award was established by the MAA Board of Governors in 1983 and is given once every five years to one recipient in each section. It is awarded in recognition of extraordinary service to the MAA and the Section. This year is one of these “once in five years events” for the Florida Section of the MAA. We are happy to share that this prestigious award goes to Dr. Jacci White from Saint Leo

University. Jacci White joins the ranks of previous recipients of the National Meritorious Service Award from the Florida Section: Scott Hochwald 2017 (UNF), David Kerr 2012 (Eckerd College), Marylin Repsher 2007 (Jacksonville Univ.), Frederic Zerla 2002 (USF), Ernest Ross 1997 (St. Petersburg Junior College), Robert Gilmer (FSU) 1992, and Frank Cleaver (USF) 1987.

After careful consideration, the Awards Committee of the Florida Section of the Mathematical Association of America nominated Professor Jacci White from Saint Leo University for the 2022 Meritorious Service Award in October 2021 and the National MAA approved it later that fall. The award will be officially presented to Jacci White during MathFest in Philadelphia this summer on August 2-3 and we obtained a special permission from the MAA to share the news on our website and recognize Dr. White during our 55th Joint Annual Meeting of FL-MAA and FTYCMA, which took place virtually on February 18-19, 2022.

Jacquelyn White, Ed.D., is Professor of Mathematics and Director of the Honors Program at Saint Leo University, Florida. Dr. White is known for her dedicated teaching, providing student-centered education, and implementation of innovative teaching techniques. At FL-MAA meetings, she can be often found surrounded by students who give presentations, participating in student competitions, and giving talks. For her distinguished teaching, Dr. White was awarded the 2007 MAA Florida Section Teaching Award.

Jacci White has been a driving force in the Florida Section of the MAA for the past two decades. As a long-time officer of the Section, she served twice as the Section's Vice-President for Programs in 2002-2003 and 2012-2013, VP Programs-Elect in 2001-2002 and 2011-2012, Vice-President for Site Selection in 2010-2011, VP for Site Selection-Elect in 2009-2010; as President-Elect, President, and Past President in 2005-2008; and as the Section's Governor in 2013-2016. She was elected by the Executive Committee of the FL-MAA multiple times to serve on the Section's Nominating and Awards Committees. Along with her St. Leo colleagues, Professor White hosted the 2016 Joint Annual Meetings of FL-MAA and FTYCMA. In addition, she is one of the main coordinators of the Suncoast Region of the FL-MAA, organizing and hosting numerous annual Suncoast MAA meetings. For her distinguished service to the Florida Section of the MAA, Dr. White received the 2015 MAA Florida Section Distinguished Service Award.

Congratulations, Jacci, on the receipt of the 2022 MAA National Meritorious Service Award for the Florida Section! With enormous gratitude we thank you for your thoughtful, impactful, and dedicated service to our section!

Debbie Garrison from Valencia College receives the 2022 FL-MAA Distinguished Teaching Award

The Distinguished Teaching Award of the Florida Section of the Mathematical Association of America is awarded every year to one faculty member from a State of Florida college or university who has demonstrated continuous commitment to the teaching of collegiate mathematics through dedication and innovation and is an outstanding teacher and educator.

After careful consideration, the Awards Committee of the Florida Section of the MAA selected Professor-Emerita Debbie Garrison from Valencia College for the 2022 Florida Section Distinguished Teaching Award. Through her innovative teaching techniques and enormous concern for her students, Professor Garrison has been a leader in exemplifying the best in our teaching profession.

Debbie Garrison received her B.S. in Mathematics from Bucknell University and MBA from the University of Central Florida. She began her teaching career at Valencia College in 1982, retiring in 2015. During those years, she always strived to make sure students had the tools to be successful. She helped design activities using statistics manipulatives, held an endowed chair position to provide students with tablets, used and taught others to use graphing calculators in a way to promote understanding and was also one of the first to use student tutors in the classroom. Her former students remember her fondly for her use of real data and fun activities

in the classroom, such as having her students measure whether double stuffed Oreos are really double the stuff.

Professor Garrison has been active at the local, state, and national level in both mathematics and statistics organizations. She served as the Florida Section of the MAA Vice-President for Site Selection in 2000-2001 and Vice President for Site Selection-Elect in 1999-2000. She has faithfully attended the FL-MAA/FTYCMA conferences for many years and used to hold seminars for her Valencia faculty colleagues on the teaching innovations and results she would obtain. There is hardly a teacher from the Florida Section who has not learned from Debbie. She often gave talks in FL-MAA/FTYCMA meetings and held workshops. She always passionately shared her classroom innovations with colleagues and made sure we all knew what worked and what didn't. Her decades of research and teaching innovations have helped and are appreciated by many. Debbie is a true leader in the teaching of mathematics and statistics at the collegiate level.

Debbie has also spent years volunteering with church, habitat for humanity, the Fuller Center for Housing of Central Florida, and iDignity. After retiring, Debbie continues to teach and tutor students. Currently, she is helping to sponsor a Collegiate Club for future teachers at the University of Central Florida, where retired and current teachers can provide mentoring to those in the beginning of their teaching careers.

Congratulations, Debbie, on your well-deserved award! Thank you, for your decades of service to the teaching profession! We are all fortunate to have learned and keep learning from you!

Penny Morris from Polk State College receives the 2022 FL-MAA Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award of the Florida Section of the MAA is awarded each year to a Florida educator who has served the Section with distinction in various capacities, has made long-term contributions to organizing yearly FL-MAA meetings, and has engaged students, colleagues, and community in participating in the Florida Section of the MAA.

After careful consideration, the Awards Committee of the FL-MAA selected Professor Penny Morris from Polk State College for the 2022 FL-MAA Distinguished Service Award. Professor Morris has served the Florida Section for over two decades with great honor and dedication.

Penny Morris has been a mathematics educator for 24 years. She earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan and a Master of Arts in Teaching from the University of West Florida. Penny Morris served on the faculty of several schools and colleges in Florida, including Northwest Florida State College. In 1998, she joined Polk State College, where she is currently Professor of

Mathematics. According to her colleagues at Polk, “Penny is always cheerful and seems to have infinite amounts of time and energy, even though she teaches the maximum number of classes and takes on many other roles besides teaching.” In addition to being a very engaging teacher, Professor Morris loves working with her students in the Phi-Theta-Kappa Honor Society, where she has been a faculty Advisor since 2000. She also likes travelling abroad with Polk State College students. Her students appreciate her determination to help them succeed. For her outstanding teaching, Professor Morris received the 2019 Florida Section Distinguished Teaching Award.

Professor Morris has served the Florida Section in various leadership roles, undertaking numerous responsibilities with remarkable dedication: Vice-President-Elect and Vice-President for Site Selection in 2012-2014; President-Elect, President, and Past President 2017-2020; Chair of the Nominating Committee 2019-2020. She was the Local Organizing Chair for our Joint FL-MAA & FTYCMA Meetings held at Polk State College three times, the last one in 2019! Her hospitality and attention to detail always ensured successful and well-organized conferences. Professor Morris is a dedicated participant in all levels of MAA meetings: regional, state, and national. She attended most Suncoast and Florida Section meetings in the last two decades and often gave talks. She has volunteered, once again, to host the 2023 Suncoast FL-MAA meeting.

Penny is also a very active member in our partner organization FTYCMA, and its national counterpart AMATYC. For her outstanding service to them, she received the 2019 FTYCMA Outstanding Service Award in Mathematics and a 2018 AMATYC Award for Dedicated Service for being the Local Events Coordinator for the 2018 AMATYC Convention. As the 2012-2014 President of FTYCMA (2010-2012 President-Elect and 2014-2016 Past President), she published the FTYCMA Newsletter and always collaborated with the Executive Committee of the FL-MAA to provide the necessary bridge between the two organizations in planning the joint meetings.

Congratulations on your well-deserved award, Penny! We are extremely grateful for your decades of service to the Florida Section of the MAA and are very lucky to have you on our team!

~ Student Awards ~

Albert Hancock from the University of North Florida wins Best Student Presentation Award 2022

The Student Awards Committee of the Florida Section of the MAA awarded the Best Student Presentation Award to Albert Hancock from the University of North Florida for presenting

Generating Functions and the Catalan Numbers at the 55th Annual Joint Meetings of FL-MAA & FTYCMA, held via Zoom on February 18-19, 2022.

The *Best Student Presentation Award* is awarded each year to an undergraduate student (or students) who has (have) given the best oral presentation at the Joint FL-MAA & FTYCMA Meetings. Each recipient receives a \$100 Amazon gift certificate. Students are judged on content and content delivery, accuracy, slides, enthusiasm about their topic, and their ability to engage the audience and answer questions.

For more information on Students Awards contact the Student Awards Committee Chair: Dr. Joni Pirnot, State College of Florida at pirnotj@scf.edu.

Isaac Blackburn and Kath Fillman from Eckerd College receive the Best Student Poster Presentation Award 2022

The Student Awards Committee of the Florida Section of the MAA awarded the Best Student Poster Presentation Award to Isaac Blackburn and Kath Fillman from Eckerd College for presenting a poster titled *Mathematically Modeling the Role of Healthcare Workers in the Environmental Transmission of C. difficile* at the 55th Annual Joint Meetings of FL-MAA & FTYCMA, held via Zoom on February 18-19, 2022.

The *Best Student Poster Presentation Award* is awarded each year to an undergraduate student (or students) who has (have) presented the best poster at the Joint FL-MAA & FTYCMA Meetings. Each recipient receives a \$100 Amazon gift card. Students are judged on content and accuracy, effective and engaging layout, and their accompanying short oral presentation or video recording.

For more information on Students Awards contact the Student Awards Committee Chair: Dr. Joni Pirnot, State College of Florida at pirnotj@scf.edu.

Ryan Farrell and Logan Hargrove Win First Place at the Student Integration Contest 2022

Ryan Farrell and Logan Hargrove from the University of North Florida both win First Place at the *Student Integration Contest* at the 55th Joint Annual Meetings of the FL-MAA & FTYCMA held via Zoom on February 18-19, 2022. Each recipient received a \$75 Amazon gift card, an Award Certificate, and was recognized at the Award Ceremony at the closing of the conference. Congratulations to Ryan and Logan for their high achievement!

The *Student Integration Contest* is a 50-minute competition aimed at testing student integration skills and features integration problems requiring a variety of calculus techniques. Calculators and notes are not allowed. Undergraduate students of any background are welcome to participate. Students with the top three scores receive Amazon gift cards of \$75, \$50, and \$25 respectively and an award certificate, in addition to being recognized for their achievement.

For more information on Student Awards contact the Coordinator of Student Activities: Dr. Jacob Aguilar, Saint Leo University at jacob.aguilar@saintleo.edu.

UNF Students Win First and Second Place at the Student Problem Solving Contest 2022

University of North Florida students Ryan Farrell and Logan Hargrove win First and Second Place, respectively, at the *Student Problem Solving Contest* at the 55th Joint Annual Meetings of the FL-MAA & FTYCMA held via Zoom on February 18-19, 2022. The recipients received a \$75 and a \$50 Amazon gift card respectively, an Award Certificate, and were recognized at the Award Ceremony at the closing of the conference. Congratulations to Ryan and Logan for their high achievement!

The *Student Problem Solving Contest* is a 50-minute competition aimed at testing student reasoning skills that features a variety of fun problems spanning the gamut of the field of mathematics. Calculators and notes are not allowed. Undergraduate students of any background are welcome to participate. Students with the top three scores receive Amazon gift cards of \$75, \$50, and \$25 respectively and an award certificate, in addition to being recognized for their achievement.

For more information on Student Awards contact the Coordinator of Student Activities: Dr. Jacob Aguilar, Saint Leo University at jacob.aguilar@saintleo.edu.

UNF Students Win First, Second, and Third Place at the Student Kahoot! Challenge 2022

University of North Florida students Logan Hargrove, Dylan Strickley, and Ryan Farrell win First, Second, and Third Place, respectively, at the *Student Kahoot! Challenge* at the 55th Joint Annual Meetings of the FL-MAA & FTYCMA held via Zoom on February 18-19, 2022. Each recipient received an Award Certificate, and was recognized at the Award Ceremony at the closing of the conference. Congratulations to Logan, Dylan, and Ryan! We hope that all participants had plenty of fun and hope some of them will return to play again next year!

The *Student Kahoot! Challenge* is a fun activity that combines mathematics and video games. Students race against others and the clock to try and quickly and accurately solve some quirky and entertaining mathematical puzzles. Undergraduate students of any background are welcome to participate. Students with the top three scores receive an award certificate, in addition to being recognized for their achievement.

For more information on Student Awards contact the Coordinator of Student Activities: Dr. Jacob Aguilar, Saint Leo University at jacob.aguilar@saintleo.edu.