2014 Speaker Biographies
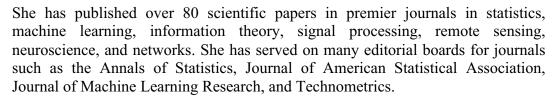
ALON AMIT is co-founder of Origami Logic, a marketing analytics company, and has previously worked at Facebook and Google. He earned a Ph.D. in mathematics from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel and is proud to be a frequent speaker at math circles around the San Francisco Bay Area. When not working, biking or spending time with his family, Alon is often answering mathematical (and other) questions on Quora.

BIN YU is Chancellor's Professor in the Departments of Statistics and of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the University of California at Berkeley. She held faculty positions at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Yale University and was a Member of Technical Staff at Bell Labs, Lucent. She was Chair of Department of Statistics from 2009 to 2012, and is a founding co-director of the Microsoft Lab on Statistics and Information Technology at Peking University, China.

She has published over 80 scientific papers in premier journals in statistics, machine learning, information theory, signal processing, remote sensing, neuroscience, and networks. She has served on many editorial boards for journals such as the Annals of Statistics, Journal of American Statistical Association, Journal of Machine Learning Research, and Technometrics.

She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She was a Guggenheim Fellow in 2006, an Invited Speaker of ICIAM in 2011, and the Tukey Memorial Lecturer of the Bernoulli Society in 2012. She is a Fellow of AAAS, IEEE, IMS, and ASA.

She is President of IMS (Institute of Mathematical Statistics) and serving on the Scientific Advisory Board of IPAM at UCLA and on the Governing Board of ICERM at Brown University. She was co-chair of the National Scientific Committee of SAMSI, and served on the Board of Mathematical Sciences and Applications (BMSA) of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.

CHRISTOS H. PAPADIMITRIOU is the C. Lester Hogan Professor of Computer Science at UC Berkeley. Before joining Berkeley in 1996 he taught at Harvard, MIT, NTU Athens Stanford, and UCSD. He has written five textbooks and many articles on algorithms and complexity, and their applications to optimization, databases, AI, economics, the Internet, and evolution. He holds a PhD from Princeton, and seven honorary doctorates. He is a member of the Academy of Sciences of the US, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the National Academy of Engineering, and a fellow of the ACM. He has also written the novels "Turing ," "Logicomix" (with Apostolos Doxiadis) and "Independence" (in Greek).

PHIL DARO is a mathematics educator who most recently co-directed the development of the Common Core State Standards for mathematics. He has also directed large-scale teacher professional development programs for the University of California including the California Mathematics Project and the American Mathematics Project. He is Site Director of the Strategic Education Research Partnership (SERP) at the San Francisco Unified School District. *Steering Committee, Math Work Group (chair), and District Engagement Committee*

ZVEZDELINA STANKOVA is a professor at Mills College in Oakland, CA, and a visiting professor at UC Berkeley. She was drawn to mathematics when, as a fifth grader, she joined the math circle at her school in Bulgaria and won the Regional Math Olympiad three months later.

She went on to compete on the Bulgarian National Team at the Balkan Mathematical Olympiad in Romania 1986 and at the International Mathematical Olympiads (IMO) in Cuba (1987) and Australia (1988), earning three silver medals. Dr. Stankova completed her undergraduate degree at Bryn Mawr College in 1992, and in 1997 she received her Ph.D. from Harvard University in the field of algebraic geometry. Meanwhile, she earned high school teaching credentials in Massachusetts and later in California.

As a postdoctoral fellow at the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) and UC Berkeley in 1997-1999, Zvezda co-founded the Bay Area Mathematical Olympiad (BAMO) and started the Berkeley Math Circle. Her pioneering work inspired dozens of new circles throughout the US and abroad. She trained the USA national IMO team for six years, including in 2001 when three of the six team members were from her circle, and USA tied with Russia for a second place overall in the world.

In 2004, the Mathematical Association of America awarded her the first Henry L. Alder Award for Distinguished Teaching by a Beginning College or University Mathematics Faculty Member. In 2009, she co-edited with Tom Rike the book A Decade of the Berkeley Math Circle – the American Experience, Volume I, which was among the 2009 top 10 bestsellers of the American Mathematical Society. In January 2011, at the joint AMS/MAA meetings in New Orleans, MAA awarded Zvezda the Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics. In 2012, she was listed in Princeton's Review "300 Best Professors."

Zvezda's most enduring passion remains working at the Berkeley Math Circle every year with about 350 pre-college students who are interested in mathematics and motivated to discover new mathematical wonders.