LETTER FROM LENNY ORNAS AND CHRISTINE GORTON—LA/MS SECTION CHAIR AND LA VICE-CHAIR

Dear Section Members:

Planning for our Spring 2008 sectional meeting has begun. The meeting will be February 28-29, and March 1 on the campus of McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Our featured speaker for the conference will be MAA Secretary Martha Siegal of Towson University.

Remember to sign-up your students for the Student Integration Bee, to be held Thursday evening, and the Student Team competition on Friday morning. Students are also encouraged to participate in the Student Paper competition. Winners in each event will take home cash prizes!

We have a full day of activities planned for Friday including Section NExT events, a workshop, and several contributed paper sessions. Then we hope you will all join us Friday evening for a Louisiana seafood banquet. Further details about the conference will be posted to the website http://maa.mc.edu/meeting/index.php as they become available.

Finally we would like to thank the Louisiana-Mississippi section executive committee and the dedicated faculty from our department for their continued support!

Lenny Ornas and Christine Gorton
LETTER FROM THE SECTION GOVERNOR

Colleagues,

At the recent Mathfest in San Jose, I was reminded numerous times how glad I am to be associated with the LA/MS section of the MAA. We are an involved group: Michael Pearson serving so effectively with the national office; Judith Covington handling numerous chores related her position with NExT; Connie Campbell and Jenna Carpenter spending half a day each working on national committees; bumping into Charles Alexander in the elevator; meeting a new colleague from Rust College; Frank Serio being himself. I am honored at my good fortune to serve such an outstanding group as your representative on the Board of Governors.

Following the governor’s election in the Spring and the opening in April of the Carriage House annex at the national office in Washington, the recently elected board members met in DC at the beginning of June for a 2-day orientation. Having been an active member of the MAA for many years, I still had no idea of the breadth and depth of the association’s offerings and enjoyed an excellent program put together by the association staff and the national officers.

Financially, of a $10 million budget for 2007, almost $3 million in revenue comes from the journals and book sales. Endowments and investments stand around $7.5 million. The three buildings housing the headquarters in Washington are valued at over $9 million (including the Carriage House and other space generating income to the association.) Grants of over $6 million are currently administered by the national office.

With regard to professional activities of the association, the MAA operates the American Mathematics Competition administered to over 100,000 secondary students. Winners of these competitions proceed with the goal of being selected to represent the USA on the International Mathematical Olympiad. The association also is a significant publisher of mathematical content including the three major journals, Math Horizons, a broad assortment of books and book series, as well as a number of online resources revolving about MAA Online, MathDL and Math Gateway (which are merging into one comprehensive online resource).

The MAA also sponsors the two national meetings and provides various resources and support services to 30 other sections like ours. To make all of this work more effectively, the association is proceeding with implementing a strategic planning process focusing this year on Membership, Governance and Students. At the San Jose meeting, the board specifically discussed ways to increase membership and to better offer services to the current set of members. If you have any ideas or comments, please pass them along to me.

Finally, on behalf of the association I recently received a note thanking our section for sponsoring a national NExT fellow. Due to the good financial management of our section over the past several years, your executive committee voted to assist the national organization with this fine program and we are delighted to have Christine Cumming-Strunk as our first Louisiana/Mississippi Section Project NExT Fellow for the 2007-2008 year.

I’ll be attending the Joint Meeting in San Diego on January 5-9, 2008. Please let me know if you have any comments or suggestions for me to pass along to the national office or have any items for me to present to the board at our next meeting. If you are planning on attending the meeting, I’d love to meet you there. Certainly, if you are new to the section or just don’t know anybody, please let me know and perhaps we can assemble a group for lunch or dinner.

Let me know how I can serve you best. Please email me at travis@mc.edu or call me at 601-925-3817.

John Travis
LA/MS Section Governor
SECTION NExT

Are you a new faculty member within the first three years of beginning full-time employment with teaching responsibilities at the college or university level? Do you have any new faculty members in your department? New faculty need to be Louisiana-Mississippi MAA Section Next Fellows! Designed for new college and university faculty holding a masters or doctorate in the mathematical sciences, Section NExT (New Experiences in Teaching) is a two year professional development program that addresses the full range of faculty responsibilities including teaching, scholarly activities, and service. Each year at our Spring Section Meeting, Section NExT sponsors a program for fellows in which the needs and concerns of new faculty can be openly discussed with a regional network of mathematicians.

Among the topics featured in the program are:

- information on current trends and innovations in undergraduate education.
- how to establish collaboration and interaction between people from the many different kinds of institutions in our section, including private colleges, state universities, liberal arts colleges and community colleges.
- activities to encourage the participation of new faculty and their students in the programs of the LA/MS Section of the MAA.

In addition, the Section NExT Program matches participants with mentors from similar institutions.

The online application (see http://sandbox.mc.edu/~travis/maa/application.html) consists of a short personal statement and a letter of support from the department chair. Section NExT fellows will be required to attend the spring section meeting for each of the next two years. National NExT fellows are encouraged to participate in the Section NExT activities, as well!

Questions? Contact Jenna Carpenter (jenna@coes.latech.edu), Coordinator of the Section NExT Committee, or check out the Section website at: http://maa.mc.edu/next/

Deadline for receipt of applications for the 2007-2008 Section NExT Fellow selection is December 15, 2007.

PROJECT NExT SPOTLIGHT

In the Spring of 2007, the Executive Committee of the LA/MS Section decided to support a national NExT fellow with our funds. Our Project NExT fellow is Christine Cumming-Strunk, and rather than waiting until the section meeting in the spring for her to be introduced to the membership for the first time, a brief profile is included here.

Judith Covington and Christine Cumming-Strunk

Christine Cumming-Strunk – In Her Own Words

I am a new Project NExT fellow from the University of Louisiana at Monroe. I received my Ph.D. from Purdue University in August 2005. After graduation, my husband, Brent Strunk, and I moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, to accept positions together at Tulane University.

My husband (also a Project NExT fellow) and I are both from the Midwest. We were not ready for the weather or the culture of New Orleans. We were only in New Orleans for 10 days before Katrina hit. While Tulane remained closed, we spent the semester traveling to various schools, attending lectures, giving talks, and looking for new jobs. Tulane reopened in
the Spring of 2006, but we accepted temporary positions at Purdue University.

In July 2006, we moved to Monroe. Luckily, Brent is just down the hall. Currently, I am trying to tackle the challenges of being a second year professor.

When I am not teaching, I sing in the church choir. I love to go to movies, especially comedies. I attempt to teach my old cats (and husband) new tricks.

Outstanding Teaching Award

The Outstanding Teacher Award Committee seeks nominations for 2008. A completed application must accompany each nomination. A complete application consists of a nomination form, a narrative describing the nominee's extraordinary teaching success (limit 5 pages), evidence of the nominee's extraordinary teaching success (limit 3 pages), and up to five one page letters of recommendation two of which must come from the nominee's present or former students. For more details see http://maa.mc.edu/meeting/distinguished.html. Completed applications must be received no later than February 1, 2008. Please send applications to:

Dr. Galen Turner
P.O. Box 10348
Ruston, LA 71272
gturner@LaTech.edu

NEWS FROM AROUND THE SECTION

Delta State University

A 2007 summer institute for mathematics teachers of grades 5 through 8 was held on the Delta State University campus on June 1 through 29. Participants received 6 hours of graduate credit for MAT 532 Special Topics in Mathematics—Algebra/Geometry. The focus of the institute was algebra and geometry content for grades 5-8 with appropriate connections, assessments, teaching techniques, and manipulatives used in all sessions. Of the 12 teachers who participated, 11 taught in public schools. The grade levels taught ranged from fifth grade through pre-algebra with most teaching at least two level of mathematics. This institute was funded by a grant from Mississippi’s Institutions of Higher Learning through No Child Left Behind. It was led by Dr. Rose Strahan and Dr. Stella Wear.

Dr. Stella Wear retired from the Department of Mathematics at Delta State University after teaching here eleven years. She worked with the mathematics education students and supervised the student teachers.

Dr. Leslie Horton has been hired as an Assistant Professor of Mathematics. Leslie received her PhD from the University of Mississippi in May 2007, and her research area is graph theory. She will be working with the mathematics education students and will be supervising the student teachers.

Dr. Clifton Wingard has been promoted to Professor of Mathematics.

In February 2007, the Department of Mathematics hosted the Seventh Annual Mathematics Tournament. Over 140 high school students attended the tournament and competed on the written test and the team competition. The Department is looking forward to hosting the next tournament which will be on February 22, 2008.

(Submitted by Clifton Wingard)

Louisiana State University – Shreveport

Dr. Tibor Szarvas joins the LSUS Department of Mathematics as professor and chair. Dr. Szarvas is a native of Hungary with a doctorate from the University of South Carolina (1997) and comes to LSUS after heading the
mathematics department at San Diego Christian College for the last ten years.

Dr. Szarvas arrives in Shreveport with his three young sons and his wife, Dr. Anita Szombathelyi, who has a doctorate in secondary math education (also from USC) and is presently serving as an adjunct lecturer in the math department.

Congratulations go to Dr. Debbie Shepherd, who was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor in 2007. The LSUS Department of Mathematics deeply thanks Dr. Shepherd for also serving as department chair for the last two years. She is relieved in this duty by Dr. Szarvas (and is she ever relieved). Dr. Shepherd continues to administer the BORSF grant, "Enhancement of the Undergraduate Actuarial Science Concentration at LSUS" (now in its third year).

Mr. Keith Neu, who has been an instructor in the department for the last few years, has accepted a position at Angelina College in nearby Lufkin, TX. Keith is a graduate of LSUS and received a Masters degree in mathematics at the University of Kentucky. We wish him all the best.

LSUS receives $68,000 HP Technology Grant for Teaching. The grant allows for the fitting of a classroom with HP wireless Tablet PCs to enhance learning in engineering, math, science, or computer science. Tablet computers obtained through this grant will be used at LSUS in the design or redesign of courses in both math and physics. A new math class entitled "Wavelets, Mathematical Art, and Complex Numbers" is being taught by Dr. Paul Sisson (Professor of Mathematics and Dean of the LSUS College of Sciences) using tablet technology to integrate the guidance, creation, and display of student artwork. For more, see the press release: http://www.lsus.edu/pr/news_details.php?id=33.

Ms. Wanda Moseley, LSUS Instructor of Mathematics, has been elected the 2007 - 2008 State President for Kappa Kappa Iota, a national education organization.

(Submitted by Richard Mabry)

Louisiana Tech

Dr.s Raj Nassar and Dick Greechie, who both retired this spring, were awarded emeritus status.

Dr. Nassar also received the University Senate Chair Award for outstanding teaching. This is a yearly award that goes to one faculty member chosen from all faculty in the university.

Dr. Natalia Zotov was promoted to Professor.

Dr. Galen Turner was tenured and promoted to Associate Professor. Dr. Turner is also part of a team that was awarded significant funding for work with high school and early undergraduate students.

Two faculty members joined the department this year. Dr. Songming Hou, Ph.D. from the University of California, Santa Barbara, 2002, research specialty: numerical analysis. Dr. Dexter Cahoy, Ph.D. from Case Western Reserve University, 2007, research specialty: statistics.

Dr. Bernd Schroeder taught a summer course on Discrete Dynamical Systems in the Master's degree in Mathematics for Teachers program at the University of the Virgin Islands' St. Croix campus. He also completed the book "Mathematical Analysis - A Concise Introduction," which will be available from J. Wiley in November.

Katie Evans had a grant funded through the Louisiana Board of Regents Research Competitiveness Subprogram. The project started June 1, 2007 and runs through June 30, 2010. The project pertains to the design of robust, real-time controllers for physical systems described by partial differential equations. The goal is to use sensitivity analysis as a means to mathematically examine performance and robustness criteria in order to formulate an efficient assignment of the MinMax control design parameter.

Don Liu had a grant funded through the Board of Regents Support Fund Research and Development Program. This grant runs from 2007 through 2010. The title of his project is An
(Submitted by Bernd Schroeder, Katie Evans, and Don Liu)

McNeese State University

The Department of Mathematics, Computer Science, and Statistics at McNeese State University has said goodbye to three faculty members this year and welcomed seven new members into the department. The faculty members leaving were: Professor, Dr. John Young with forty years of service at McNeese State, Associate Professor, Dr. Pamela Langley with twenty-four years of service at MSU, and Assistant Professor, Dr. David Slay with five years of service at MSU.

While we are sad to see John, Pam, and David leave and wish them well, we are welcoming four new professors and three new instructors. First, Dr. Christine Gorton, who received her PhD from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, joined the department as a tenure track Assistant Professor of Mathematics after a year as a Visiting Professor. Dr. Alex Scorpan joined DMCS as an Assistant Professor of Mathematics. Dr. Scorpan earned his PhD at the University of California at Berkeley and held a postdoctoral position at the University of Florida and a faculty position at Roger Williams University before coming to McNeese. Dr. William Albrecht came to us as an Associate Professor of Computer Science. Dr. Albrecht received his PhD from the University of South Florida where he was on the faculty for many years. Finally, Dr. Vipin Menon became a member of our faculty this semester as an Assistant Professor of Computer Science after earning his PhD at Tulane University in New Orleans.

Joining our new professors are three new Instructors of Mathematics. Mr. James Jean comes to us with Masters Degrees from MSU and Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Mr. David Edwards comes to us with a Masters Degree from MSU after thirteen years in the aerospace industry at Lockheed Palo Alto Research Labs. Finally, Mr. Michael Muffuletto graduated from Mississippi State University (the other MSU) with a Masters Degree and is now an instructor and Lab Coordinator.  
(Submitted by Lenny Ornas)

Millsaps College

Connie Campbell was promoted to Full Professor.

Mississippi University for Women

MUW and MSMS collaborated on their 2007 Summer Institute for Teacher Excellence, funded through a U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL) grant under No Child Left Behind. The SITE 2007 institute was entitled Middle School Mathematics in Context. Eighteen teachers, grades 4 through 9, from northeast Mississippi school districts, participated in the June 2007 institute. The goal was to make mathematics instruction more student-centered, hands-on, and technology-oriented. The focus was on the new Mississippi Mathematics Framework, revised, which emphasizes activities, problem solving, and real-world applications. More information may be found at http://www.muw.edu/SITE/2007/.

Dr. Dhruba Adhikari joined the faculty after completing his Ph.D. at the University of South Florida. His dissertation is titled "Degree Theories and Nonlinear Operator Equations in Banach Spaces".

Dr. Dorothy Kerzel continues to serve as the Chair of the Department of Sciences and Mathematics.

Dr. Jane Wenstrom resigned her faculty position and moved to Washington D.C. with her family. Her husband, Dr. LeRoy Wenstrom, accepted a position with the National Security Agency.  
(Submitted by Dorothy Kerzel)
Nicholls State University

Dr. DesLey V. Plaisance has joined the department as an assistant professor. Dr. Plaisance comes to Nicholls after nineteen years as a mathematics instructor at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

Mr. Anit Aryal joined the department as an instructor this fall. Anit moved to Nicholls from South Louisiana Community College, where he worked as an instructor. He is originally from Kathmandu, Nepal, and received his master’s degree in mathematics from the University of Florida.

Nicholls State University offers an online Master of Science in mathematics. The courses are web-based and make use of various resources for online instruction. The program is a unique opportunity for anyone seeking a master’s degree in mathematics, in particular teachers who desire to become highly qualified, or individuals who would like to teach at the college or community college level. For teachers seeking professional development, the program is ideal since its core consists of both mathematics content and curriculum and instruction methods.

The department has implemented a new college algebra structure based on laboratory instruction and interactive software. Coordinators for Fall 2007 are Ms. Sherill Dupree and Mr. Doug Baney.

The department invites applications for four instructor positions to be filled for August 2008. Interested persons should view the position announcements on the Nicholls web site at http://www.nicholls.edu.
(Submitted by Scott Beslin)

Northwestern State University

Dr. Richard DeVault, Dr. Leigh Ann Myers, and Dr. Lisa Galminas have all been promoted to Professor of Mathematics as of the fall 2007 semester.

The NSU Department of Mathematics welcomes two new Instructors. Mr. Mark Thompson joins our mathematics faculty; he is also enrolled in the Ph.D. program at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Dr. Eric Fountain joins us as a new instructor teaching in our computer applications area.
(Submitted by Frank Serio)

Southeastern Louisiana University

Last spring, Dr. Kent Neuerburg received a Board of Regents grant to support his research.

The following faculty were hired as instructors:

Lindsay Waddell, master's degrees from LSU
Martin Hilbert, University of Iowa
Rachel Goodwin, University of Southern Mississippi
Janelle Lorenzen, University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa
Christine Terranova, University of Louisiana-Lafayette
Natalie Svyeshnikova, University of Missouri-Columbia

Southeastern is planning to implement a version of Roadmap to Redesign in our College Algebra course. This is an initiative from the National Center for Academic Transformation involving numerous universities across the country in a variety of disciplines. R2R in College Algebra courses generally involves students spending a great deal of time completing homework problems on a computer.
(Submitted by Randy Wills)

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

This year we have three new assistant professors. They are:
Daniel Davis. Daniel received a Ph.D. from Northwestern University. His research interests are in algebraic topology and homotopy theory.
Mihai Giurcanu. Mihai's Ph.D. is from the University of Florida. He is working in mathematical statistics and biostatistics.
Maciej Niebrzydowski. Maciej is a knot theorist with a Ph.D. from George Washington University.

We also have a new instructor, Brian Diaz. Brian received an M.S. from the University of New Orleans. He is happy to be back in Louisiana, after a post-Katrina sojourn in Atlanta.

Charlene Bernard, an instructor, retired at the conclusion of the Spring 2007 semester. Hongtao Yang resigned his position as assistant professor.

Azmy Ackleh was named to the Ray Authement Endowed Chair of Computational Mathematics. The second phase of his interdisciplinary project for undergraduate research in mathematical biology has NSF funding through 2009-2010. He is also co-PI on an NIH project for modeling alcohol consumption on college campuses. In addition, a research proposal by Ackleh, Keng Deng, and Nabendu Pal was recently funded for three years by the NSF.

Kalimuthu Krishnamoorthy is continuing as co-PI on a large pharmaceutical project sponsored by the NIH.

Arturo Magidin and Ping Ng have been awarded three-year grants from the Board of Regents Support Fund.

Vic Schneider and Lee Price directed two Math/Science Partnership projects for in-service K-12 teachers during the summer.

Five graduate students completed Ph.D.'s in May of 2007. Since then, two more have successfully defended their dissertations. In August we welcomed fourteen new graduate students into our program.

The undergraduate program is continuing to attract some excellent students. Claire Pettit, a math major, was named as the University's Outstanding Graduate at the spring commencement ceremonies.

The Department is once again holding its fall Lloyd Roeling Conference, after a two-year hiatus. This year's topic is algebra. About thirty speakers have been scheduled. Conference dates are September 28-30.

(Submitted by Roger Waggoner)

University of Mississippi

Dr. Hanxiang Peng was granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor. Dr. Mohammad Sepehrifar has joined the department as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Masayoshi Kaneda and Dr. Lars-Daniel Ohman are with us as Visiting Assistant Professors.

The Center for Mathematics and Science Education (CMSE) at the University of Mississippi, funded by the Robert M. Hearin Foundation, was established in February 2007. The CMSE promotes interaction among the STEM departments within the university, the School of Education, and the public school districts within Mississippi. It will provide support, training and resources for mathematics and science teachers in the public schools. In July the CMSE sponsored four Math Camps, two for upcoming juniors and seniors and two for upcoming 5th-8th graders. The center is currently providing fellowships for seven graduate students in Mathematics Education.

Eighty-eight high school students competed at the second Ole Miss High School Mathematics Tournament last October. The tournament includes both individual and team competitions. This year's tournament will take place on October 27, 2007.

(Submitted by Laura Sheppardson)

Mark your calendars!
LA/MS Section Meeting
February 28 – March 3, 2008
SPONSOR A PROJECT NExT FELLOW

Project NExT (New Experiences in Teaching) is looking for individuals, Departments, Universities, MAA Sections, Organizations, Businesses to sponsor a Fellow(s) for a year plus program that helps new and recent Ph.D.s in the mathematical sciences make the transition from graduate student to full-time faculty.

Sponsorship means:

- Professional development
- Recognition among recent Ph.D.s
- Opportunity to become active in the profession
- Job enhancement and support
- Electronic networking
- Collegiality
- Teacher enhancement

through New Experiences in Teaching

COST: $2500 per Fellow

Fellows attend workshops at three national meetings and network electronically with peers and mentors. Their institutions pay the travel costs; sponsorship pays the program costs.

For additional information on this opportunity, please contact:

Chris Stevens, Director, Project NExT Program, MAA
STEVENSC@SLU.EDU

Lisa Kolbe, Development Specialist, MAA
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