LETTER FROM RANDY WILLS—LA/MS SECTION CHAIR

Dear Section Members:

Greetings from your section chair. I hope that the semester has started out well. Plans for the 2010 section meeting are well under way.

The meeting will be held March 4-6, 2010 at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond Louisiana. Make plans early to attend this meeting. The executive committee is already hard at work making plans. Some highlights of the meeting will be Dr. Joseph Gallian giving the keynote address. We are also pleased to announce that Section NExT will continue this year, and I want to encourage new faculty to apply for this excellent program. See website for details and relevant dates.

A highlight of the meeting is always the activities for the students. We will have the sixth annual Integration Bee on Thursday night. Please encourage your students to enter what has become a favorite both for students and faculty. The annual student team competition will be held on Friday morning with a lunch for students and their faculty sponsors. This year Dr. Paul Shick will speak about the shape of the universe. Finally, the student paper competition will be held on Friday afternoon. Undergraduates and Graduate students are encouraged to enter. See the website for details and deadlines for all student activities.

Finally I want to encourage anyone who is interested in serving on a committee for the section to please contact Dr. Randy Wills at rwills@selu.edu.

Randy Wills
LETTER FROM THE SECTION GOVERNOR

Colleagues,

Whew! Three years doesn’t seem as long as it used to. Or maybe it seems longer. When I was honored to be chosen to serve as your representative on the MAA Board of Governors about three years ago, little did I know how deep the rabbit hole would take me. The red pill (aka “The Matrix”) has indeed taken me inside a vibrant, forward-thinking organization and led me on an exhausting but thoroughly rewarding path.

Currently, that path has led me to become involved in a couple of new strategic planning committees. The first is the Working Group on Periodicals and Communications. Over the past year or so, this group has been actively considering how to best position the association in an ever evolving publication environment. You may have noticed with your recent dues renewal the option for online-only membership is now offered as an option. Our group has been considering ways to best deliver online journals as well as how to improve the entire range of MAA offerings to its membership. A second thing I am involved with is an ad-hoc Task Force on E-Communities which is focusing on the creation of platforms and environments for the various MAA constituencies. Think sections, SIGMAAS, NExT, etc. having the ability to post notes and announcements, have threaded discussions and the like. If you have any opinions on any of these items, I would be delighted for you to share them with me.

Elections for my successor will take place during the Spring of 2010. A committee selected by your executive committee is currently working through your nominees and (thankfully) will have a difficult task narrowing the field to provide you with the final slate. It is a pleasure to have so many folks within the Louisiana/Mississippi section of the MAA from which to choose. I am grateful to each of you for what you contribute to our work in moving the profession forward.

For those of you planning to travel to San Francisco, I’ll look forward to seeing you at the Joint Meetings. Once again, let’s look for a time to enjoy a casual dinner together. We’ll look for something relatively inexpensive this time. It is San Francisco so whatever it is should be good. If you have any suggestions regarding a specific restaurant within walking distance from the conference center or if you have any requests regarding specific cuisine, please contact me at travis@mc.edu.

The executive committee met a few weeks ago in Clinton and it appears Randy Wills and his crew are putting together an outstanding meeting to be held in Hammond next spring. One part that I am especially happy to support is the inauguration of the LA/MS section’s Anderson Lectureship with Ezra “Bud” Brown as our initial Anderson Lecturer. Bud was a LSU graduate and knew R.D. Anderson and should provide an entertaining lecture while providing some perspective on Dr. Anderson.

I encourage you to make plans to attend Bud’s talk at the Friday evening banquet. Plans are for a small portion of the Banquet ticket prices to be used to support the Anderson endowment. Our goal is to have sufficient funds in the Anderson Endowment to fully support a nationally recognized speaker each year for an invited talk at our annual meeting. If you would also like to personally contribute toward this cause or know of additional ways to raise funds toward this cause, please contact me.

Let me know how I can assist you in any way. I remain honored to serve you.

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 2009-2010 Section NExT Fellow selection is December 15, 2009.

Outstanding Teaching Award

The Outstanding Teacher Award Committee seeks nominations for 2009. 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 6, 2010. Please send applications to:

Dr. Vic Schneider
Department of Mathematics
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
P. O. Box 41010
Lafayette, LA 70504-1010

vps3252@louisiana.edu
(337) 482-6702

MAA COMMITTEES

The Mathematical Association of America has numerous committees which deal with a variety of issues at the national level. The committees can be found at http://www.maa.org/committees. If you are interested in serving on a committee of the MAA, contact John Travis at travis@mc.edu and let him know specifically which committee interests you.
Delta State University

Dr. Rose Strahan retired on June 30, 2009. She had been at Delta State for forty-one years, and she served as chair of the Department of Mathematics since 1979. Dr. Clifton Wingard is serving as the interim department chair.

A summer mathematics institute for middle grade teachers was held June 1 – 26, 2009 on the campus of Delta State University. The program was funded by a grant under the No Child Left Behind Act administered by the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. Participants received 6 hours of graduate credit for MAT 532 Special Topics in Mathematics—Integrating Number Sense, Algebra and Geometry. The focus of the institute was algebra and geometry content for grades 4-8 with appropriate connections, assessments, teaching techniques, and manipulatives used in all sessions. The thirteen teachers who participated taught in public schools in the Mississippi Delta. The grade levels ranged from 4th to 12th. In addition to elementary, 7th and 8th grade math, the subjects represented were Pre-algebra, Trigonometry, Precalculus, and Calculus as well as various inclusion, special education and laboratory classes. The institute was led by Dr. Leslie Horton.

In February 2009, the Department of Mathematics hosted the Eighth Annual Mathematics Tournament. The Department is looking forward to hosting the next tournament which will be on February 26, 2010.

(Submitted by Clifton Wingard)

Louisiana State University – Shreveport

LaPrep Professorship gets super-sized: The Board of Regents awarded matching funds in the amount of $80,000 to enhance the AEP/SWEPCO LaPREP Professorship to the AEP/SWEPCO LaPREP Super Professorship held by Dr. Carlos Spaht.

New professorship boosts research in math and physics: The Miriam M. Sklar Endowed Professorship for Theoretical Math and Physics is newly established at the $100,000 level with the initial investment of $60,000 from the Sklar family and $40,000 in matching funds from the Board of Regents. The recipient is Dr. Richard Mabry, professor of mathematics.

Wanda Huhn was elected as Kappa Kappa Iota National Recording Secretary and Kappa Kappa Iota Eta State (La.) Treasurer. (Kappa Kappa Iota is an educational organization.)


For more details, visit the department’s webpage at http://www.lsus.edu/sc/math/

(Submitted by Richard Mabry)

McNeese State University

Dr. Lenny Ornas and Dr. William Albrecht received tenure.

We have fourteen teachers taking graduate level classes to be qualified to teach dual enrollment courses. The grant that funds this program will run through the summer of 2010.

(Submitted by Karen Beauxis)

Mississippi College

Daniel Watson joined the faculty as an instructor in the Mathematics Department.
Daniel is a graduate of Mississippi College, and he received his MS degree from Wake Forrest.

(Submitted by John Travis)

**Mississippi State University**

**Bruce Ebanks** was named the Outstanding Honors Faculty Member at MSU for 2008-2009. Four new faculty members have joined the department: Assistant Professors of Statistics **Justin Shows** and **Huiping Xu**, Assistant Professor of Mathematics **Shantia Yarahmadian**, and Lecturer **Julie Nation**.

(Submitted by Bruce Ebanks)

**Nichols State University**

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 pedagogy-type courses. For more information contact **Dr. Scott Beslin** at 985.448.4381.

The Department of Mathematics and Computer Science provides professional development for K-12 teachers in an effort to increase teacher knowledge, improve student achievement, and prepare students for college mathematics. Most recently, **Dr. DesLey Plaisance** and **Mrs. Laurie Boudreaux** provided professional development for 6th-12th grade teachers in algebra through a LaSIP mathematics professional development project title Project GATE (Guiding Algebraic Thinking and Exploration).

(Submitted by Scott Beslin)

**Southeastern Louisiana University**

**Dr. Alan Cannon** and **Dr. Lucy Kabza** were both promoted to the rank of full professor in 2009.

The mathematics department is now teaching all transitional and college algebra courses using state of the art technology both inside and outside the classroom. Sympodia are used in the classroom and students do all homework and tests on the computer. Early indications show that the new course delivery methods are increasing both retention and passing rates.

(Submitted by Randy Wills)

**University of Louisiana at Lafayette**

The Mathematics Department has three new full-time faculty members this year.

Assistant Professor **Paul Salceanu**: Paul taught high school for a few years in his native Rumania. He recently completed his Ph.D. at Arizona State University under the direction of Hal Smith. His current research focuses on persistence theory for dynamical systems, as it applies to the study of mathematical models in population biology and epidemiology.

Assistant Professor **Stanca Ciupe**: Stanca is also a native of Rumania (Transylvania, specifically). She received her Ph.D. from the University of Michigan as a student of Patrick Nelson, and comes to UL Lafayette after postdoctoral appointments at the Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Duke University Medical Center. Her main research interest is in systems of delay differential equations and their applications to the understanding of the mechanisms regulating the immune system reaction against viral diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis B infections.

**Instructor Mary Lou Jumonville**: We hope that Mary Lou has finally figured out what she wants to do with her life. She taught for a number of years in public high schools. After a brief stint on the UL Lafayette faculty, she became a LaSIP site coordinator. From that position she
moved to the Episcopal School of Acadiana, where she won national recognition for her teaching of middle school mathematics, AP Calculus, and virtually everything in between.

The Department also has a new Adjunct Professor, Ray P. Authement. Ray received his Ph.D. from LSU in 1956, under the direction of Luther Wade. He joined our faculty after one-year stays at McNeese St. and the University of North Carolina. He moved to the position of Academic Vice President in 1966, and in the spring of 2008 he retired after serving as the President of UL Lafayette for thirty-four years. He is thoroughly enjoying his return to the classroom, teaching Elementary Linear Algebra. He and his calculator seem to have a rather uneasy truce, but he definitely prefers chalk to dry-erase markers.

Arturo Magidin has received tenure-approval and promotion to Associate Professor.

Christina Eubanks-Turner, Pat Jones, and Cat McKay have formed a math-circle primarily for middle-school teachers. The initial meeting in September had attendees from as far away as the New Orleans area. It was a rousing success.

Victor Schneider has begun his eleventh year as a member of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence. Vic is one of the two higher education faculty members, statewide, who are members of the Commission. He is also one of the two remaining members who were appointed to the original Commission in 1999.

Azmy Ackleh and Baker Kearfott are two of the authors of a graduate level textbook, "Classical and Modern Numerical Analysis," recently published by CRC Press.

Margaret LaSalle passed away in August. Maggie was a long-time MAA member who was a fixture at our Section meetings for many years.

(Submitted by Roger Waggoner)

University of Mississippi

The University of Mississippi Department of Mathematics has been honored by the American Mathematical Society. It has been designated as one of two "Mathematics Programs that Make a Difference" in 2009, cited for outstanding efforts in bringing underrepresented groups into Mathematics.

Dr. Gerard Buskes and Dr. Don Cole have obtained for the department its third consecutive grant from the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program. The GAANN program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, continues to help the department expand its outreach to under-represented groups. This year nine graduate fellows will be supported by GAANN funds.

Dr. Nathan Jones joined the faculty as an Assistant Professor in Fall 2009. Dr. Jones, who obtained his Ph.D. degree from UCLA in 2005, works in Number Theory. Dr. Qingying Bu and Dr. Laura Sheppardson have each been granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor. We have three Visiting Assistant Professors with us this year: Dr. Zhu Cao (Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) working in number theory; Dr. Aida Timofte (Ph.D., Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) in applied mathematics and PDE's; and Dr. Vlad Timofte (Ph.D., University of Bucharest) in functional analysis.

The Twenty-third Cumberland Conference on Combinatorics, Graph Theory, and Computing will be held at the University of Mississippi May 20 - 22, 2010. Professor Talmage James Reid will be the main organizer.

(Submitted by Laura Sheppardson)