Pacific Northwest MAA Spring 2025 Meeting Recap

Members of the Pacific Northwest Section of the MAA and others came together on April 25th and 26th at the University of Washington Tacoma. The often-rainy climate abated for a few days to provide us with some ideal springtime weather as attendees explored the campus and surrounding amenities in downtown Tacoma.

Section NExT activities began Friday morning with a mix of discussions and presentations on current topics in math pedagogy, ranging from course design to data collection. It was followed by the mini-course Transforming Textbook Problems into Engaging Student Activities, which examined tools, ideas, and strategies that can be used to create engaging problems for any mathematics course.

Our Friday plenary speaker was outgoing MAA President Hortensia Soto, who spoke on the use of embodied activities in Linear Algebra and shared some student-created metaphors that linked the activities and linguistics to students' cognitive understanding of the concepts

Our Saturday morning plenary speaker was Steven Klee, who presented on the utility of mathematics in both academic and industrial settings while also illustrating how mathematics can combine with machine learning to solve meaningful problems at Amazon Web Services. Steve and Hortensia also joined MAA-PNW Section President Kathy Temple as part of the Saturday panel discussion, Careers and How to Catch One.

The conference concluded on Saturday evening with Candice Price's plenary presentation, Can We Make Grace the Norm in Our Class-rooms? Candice spoke to the frequent struggles that students experience in the mathematics classroom, and shared impactful and grace-filled approaches to instruction to overturn the anxiety-inducing paradigm of college mathematics.

Throughout it all, numerous speakers from around the PNW Section, including many undergraduate students, shared their enthusiasm and hard work in Saturday's parallel sessions. We can't wait until next year!

In This Issue...

Section NExT News

by MEGAN BUZBY

Applications to Section NExT for new faculty members will be due January 30, 2026. Details can be found on the section website.

NExT activities will be held the morning of the 17th before the spring meeting. Look for more details communicated in the listserv. Feel free to contact Megan Buzby at mbuzby1@alaska.edu with questions.

Northwest Undergraduate Mathematics Symposium

by NATHAN GIBSON

The 18th annual Northwest Undergraduate Mathematics Symposium was held at University of Washington Bothell on Saturday Nov 8, 2025. The link to the conference site is `https://sites.uw.edu/nums2025/`. Due to PME and MAA funding, there was no registration fee for this conference. The Keynote Presentation was given by Allison Henrich of Seattle University. In addition to the Keynote Presentation, there were 25 undergraduate student presentations, as well as informal social breaks including lunch and afternoon snack. There were 70 participants. Presentation Prizes were awarded to:

- Jacob Benson (Whitman College): *US Drunk Driving Deaths vs Alcohol Consumption*

- Hanna Dempsey (Oregon State University): *Constructing Toeplitz Operators that Remap Polynomials*

- Yifan Ding (University of Washington Seattle): *Approximately Jumping Toward the Origin*

- Mia Escobar (University of Washington Tacoma): *Early State Exclusion in Quantum Spin Chains*

The next NUMS meeting will be Fall 2026, location TBA. If your institution is interested in hosting, please contact the NUMS Steering Committee at nums@math.oregonstate.edu.

Announcement: PNW MAA Spring Meeting 2026, April 17-18

The Pacific Northwest Section of the MAA will be having their next section meeting **April 17-18, 2026**. The meeting will be held at *Linfield University*, in McMinnville, OR. Plenary speakers include Pamela Harris (University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee), Steve Butler (Iowa State University), and Lisa Marano (West Chester University). Additional details will be available soon on the website: `https://mphitchman.com/pnwmaa2026/index.html` and in the next issue of the newsletter. Questions? Contact Dr Jen Nordstrom at jfirkins@linfield.edu.

Pacific Inland Mathematics Undergraduate Conference

by AMY YIELDING

Save the Date! Whitman College is pleased to host the 8th annual Pacific Inland Mathematics Undergraduate Conference (PiMUC) on Saturday, May 2nd, 2026.

PiMUC is a wonderful opportunity for undergraduate students in the Pacific Northwest Inland Region to present their work including, but not limited to: senior capstones, individual research projects, and original solutions to mathematical contests. Topics in every area of mathematical sciences are welcome including: theoretical math, applied math, statistics, data science, and math education. For more info and conference registration please investigate the PiMUC 2026 website. Questions? Contact Dr Amy Yielding at ayielding@eou.edu.

A note from the editor

by KATE KEARNEY

After having been newsletter editor for four years, I'd be happy to pass the torch. If you are interested in becoming our next section newsletter editor, please get in touch! Do you love reading the newsletter? I'd love to hear your feedback, or any suggestions for future inclusions. Contact me: Kate Kearney at kearney@gonzaga.edu.

PNW Section Trivia

According to PNW MAA section history, the section was formed after a petition of 18 faculty to the MAA's Board of Governor's in 1945. The faculty involved represented the University of British Columbia, the University of Washington, the State College of Washington, the University of Oregon, and the State College of Oregon. The first section chair was Dr. Morris Knebelman of the State College of Washington. Dr. Knebelman later served as a department chair and a dean at the State College of Washington (which was renamed Washington State University in 1960, shortly before Dr. Knebelman's retirement). The WSU Mathematics department now supports a prize in his honor. *Going to Washington State: A Century of Student Life,* by William Stimson describes Knebelman as a professor: "he could be sarcastic, cool, or could shout, "That's childish!" at a disappointing student-yet was also cited as an excellent teacher. His patience in answering after-class questions "saved my life when I entered Harvard graduate school," said Ralph V. Wood, Jr., '43."

2025 Distinguished Teaching Award: Jill Faudree

by CHRISTINE COLE

The committee is pleased to share that Dr. Jill Faudree, from University of Alaska Fairbanks, is the winner of the 2025 PNW Section Distinguished Teaching Award!

Dr. Faudree excels in her teaching, both in her direct interactions with students at all levels (lower-division, upper-division, and graduate). She has taken a leadership role in revising how Calculus is taught at UAF:

- incorporating corequisite instruction for students with weak preparation;

- using active learning in the classroom, and sharing these resources broadly;

- collaborating to provide a consistent structure and set of expectations between sections and across semesters;

- providing, as supports for students, access to a large number of previous assessments (with solutions) so that it is very clear what students are expected to know.

In addition, she is carefully analyzing student data, with the support of a grant from the NSF, to determine which of these interventions actually makes a difference to student success. She is sharing the results of her curricular work with a wider audience, both within the university and local community, but also more broadly through participation in national meetings and via publications.

Finally, her work on Coordinated Calculus has worked to increase the advancement in mathematics courses of students from rural Alaska, as well as other first-generation students, who benefit from the increased consistency and student supports available in the corequisite instruction, as well as in the increased emphasis in clarity of expectations.

Distinguished Teaching Award Nominations

Each year, the section solicits nominations for the MAA Pacific Northwest Section Distinguished Teaching Award, which is now supported by the Carol Crawford Teaching Award Fund. The preliminary nomination deadline for the 2026 award was November 1, 2025.

Preliminary nominations only require filling out the first section of the Haimo nomination form, which consists of collecting some demographic information about the nominee and a short abstract summarizing how the nominee meets the evaluation criteria in the context of their institution and its teaching expectations and resources. Please note that membership in the MAA and seven years of teaching a mathematical science is required for eligibility.

The DTA committee will select two to three semifinalists. The nominators of the semi-finalists will then be asked to complete a full nomination packet, including letters of recommendation, typically **January 1st.**

The winner of the Section Award will receive a $500 prize, and the nominator will receive $100, both supported by the MAA's Carol Crawford Teaching Award Fund. The section winner will also be nominated for the national MAA Deborah & Franklin Tepper Haimo Award. Up to three Haimo Awards are given each year. Recipients of the Haimo Award receive $1,000, partial support for travel to MAA MathFest, and a certificate of recognition.

Note that new semifinalists who do not receive the Section award will automatically remain in consideration for the next two nomination cycles.

To submit a preliminary nomination:

- Consult the eligibility requirements to ensure that your nominee is eligible.

- Nominate your colleague by downloading and completing only the first section of the nomination form.

- Email your nomination to the section Secretary: Christine Cole.

For questions contact PNW Section Chair Corban Harwood.

- MAA Guidelines for the Deborah & Franklin Tepper Haimo Award:
  https://maa.org/deborah-and-franklin-tepper-haimo-award-for-distinguished-college-or-university-teaching-of-mathematics/