



Mathematical Association of America Southwestern Section

Newsletter

Volume 24 Issue 1 | Fall 2010

Section News

Spring Meeting is May 20–21, 2011

The MAA Southwestern Section Spring meeting will be May 20–21, 2011 at Eastern New Mexico University–Roswell and will be a joint conference with NMMATYC. The conference chair is Janet Macaluso, jaymac3000@msn.com. More information will follow.

Larry Lesser Receives MAA Distinguished Teaching Award

At our banquet last April at Scottsdale Community College, Scottsdale, AZ, the 2010 Distinguished Teaching Award for the Southwestern Section was given to Larry Lesser, University of Texas at El Paso. You can go to <http://orspprofile.utep.edu/profilesystem/editprofile.php?pid=1123&onlyview=1> to read about what he has been doing—and why he received the teaching award.



Larry Lesser at the Spring 2010 Section meeting. (Photo by Allen Stenger)

Larry was the official SW Section nominee for the MAA Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo Award for distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics.

—*Joanne Peebles, El Paso Community College*

John Hagood Receives MAA Certificate of Meritorious Service

Congratulations to John Hagood, Northern Arizona University, who



received a Certificate of Meritorious Service Award. John, a past recipient of the section's Distinguished Teaching Award, has served the Section in a number of capacities, including being the Section Governor and

more recently being an integral part of the team who revised the Section bylaws. The certificate will be presented at the awards ceremony at the Joint Mathematics Meetings in New Orleans in January.

—*Tom Gruszka, Western New Mexico University*

Nominations Needed for Distinguished Teaching Award

Nominations are needed for the Southwestern Section's award next April—there are excellent teachers in our section that should be recognized for their work! The SW section asks that you complete the same nomination form that is used for the

national Haimo award. A committee from the section will look at all nominations submitted for the SW Section award, and pick our section's nominee for the Haimo Award. With the permission of the person making the nomination, the nominated people who were not selected will again be considered for this honor next year (with the opportunity to update their nomination, if so desired).

Our section has had two of our nominees for the Haimo Award win the award: Deborah Hughes-Hallett, University of Arizona, won in 2004 and David Pengelley, New Mexico State University, won in 2008. It's time for another winner!!!

You can go to <http://www.maa.org/Awards/haimo.html> to find out more about the award, the eligibility requirements, and the materials that need to be submitted with the nomination. Any member of the SW Section may nominate any other member (self-nomination is not permitted). The completed nomination packet must be received by Joanne Peeples no later than January 31, 2011, she would appreciate it if you would let her know in December (or earlier) if you plan to nominate someone. The completed nomination packet should be mailed to Joanne at 6917 Orizaba Ave., El Paso, TX 79912. If you have questions you can email her at: joannep@epcc.edu or call 915.831.5047. —*Joanne Peeples, El Paso Community College*

Section Bylaws Approved

The proposed Bylaws of the Southwestern Section of the Mathematical Association of America were approved at the August Board of Governors meeting. I'd like to offer a big "Thank You" to the group of members who diligently worked through the process to complete the

revision. Operationally, there will be little changes in how Section business is run. The new bylaws call for six officers of the Section: the Chair, Chair-Elect, Past-Chair, Secretary-Treasurer, Webmaster and Newsletter Editors. These officers, along with the Section Governor, make up the Executive Committee, which is charged with conducting affairs of the Section between Section business meetings, which normally take place during the annual meeting in the spring. The full version of the new bylaws is available on the Section website. —*Tom Gruszka, Western New Mexico University*

MAA National News

Board of Governors Report

The Board of Governors of the MAA met for its usual daylong meeting on 4 August 2010 in Pittsburgh, PA, prior to MathFest. One of the action items at this meeting was to approve the 2011 operating budget. The Board approved a deficit budget of about \$18,500. This compares with a projected 2010 deficit of about \$37,600 and an actual 2009 deficit of \$225,780. Investments still remain strong (compared to the market as a whole) with a total market value of over \$7M.

The next Board meeting will be on 5 January 2011 in New Orleans, LA prior to

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the Joint Mathematics Meetings. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend that meeting. But, Joanne Peeples, current Section Secretary-Treasurer, and a former Section Governor will represent the section at the Board of Governors meeting. Thank you, Joanne! —*Tom Gruszka, Western New Mexico University*

Department News

University of New Mexico

The 2010-2011 UNM-PNM Statewide High School competition first round exam will be administered in November. This is the 43rd year this high school contest has been organized by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of New Mexico. The current directors of the contest are Professors Dimiter Vassilev and Janet Vassilev from our department. Each year over a thousand students from all over New Mexico participate in the first round exam. The top 200 go to the second round exam to be administered at UNM in February 2011. Further information including a short history of the contest and past exams can be found in the contest webpage at: <http://mathcontest.unm.edu/>
The contest is sponsored by PNM, the local gas company. —*Cristina Pereyra, UNM*

Glendale Community College

Glendale Community College in AZ is experiencing an all time high in enrollment. We have roughly 9000 students taking math classes taught by 32 full-time and 76 part-time instructors. We have over 21,000 students enrolled this fall at our two campuses. We will expand the number of full-time math instructors at GCC-North from one to three next fall.

Last spring two long time faculty members retired: Nadine Moore and Jack Haughn. We hired one new instructor,

Nathan Kurtz from the University of Colorado at Denver. We have been approved to hire 4–5 new faculty for Fall 2011. Starting salary for new teachers (Masters) is \$42,000 and for those with a PhD and years of experience is \$80,000. Top of the pay scale is \$92,500. Come join us!

We are moving towards ALEKS as a placement test. We are exploring new ways to retain developmental math students. We continue to have good success with STEM students and the SSEAA (Scholarships and Support Equal Academic Achievement) Awards. And, finally, we have a great group of students participating in the AMATYC Student Math Competition.
—*Anne Dudley, GCC*

University of Texas, El Paso

The Mathematical Sciences department is augmenting and integrating its research areas, as the Graduate Program in Computational Science (including tracks leading to a PhD, Master of Science, or Professional Master; see <http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=61122>) enters its third year under the continuing directorship of Leticia Velázquez, an associate professor in our department. Department faculty are also involved in working on proposals for new PhD programs, beginning with a proposal for a PhD in Statistics, and then aiming for a PhD in Mathematics and Statistics Education (this would be a college-wide program) and a PhD in Pure and Applied Mathematics. ambitious plans are part of UTEP's quest to become the first national research university with a twenty-first century student demographic.

Department faculty have been quite active in conferences, such as the national Conference on Modeling High Frequency Data in Finance co-organized by Christina

Mariani. Also in 2010, UTEP hosted 70 students and 17 faculty from several states to the Southwestern Undergraduate Mathematics Research Conference this past March, with students playing major roles in coordination. The five invited faculty plenary talks and 40 student talks spanned a wide range of areas, as seen from the program at www.math.utep.edu/sunmarc/Program.pdf. The conference was supported in part by NSF grant DMS-0846477 through the MAA Regional Undergraduate Mathematics Conference program. More information about the department is available on its revamped website, www.math.utep.edu.

—Larry Lesser, UTEP

Arizona Western College

The math department has 4 new hires this semester. They include Andrea Tumblin and Sotero Alvarado on Main Campus and Dahwei Chang and Miguel Sanchez on the South Yuma Campus. Our new math building and Mathematics Learning Center are up and running and the department is in the process of revamping the developmental mathematics sequence. —Dan Russow, AWC

Math News

MathWay and StatWay Programs for non-STEM Students

AMATYC, the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching have joined together with an initiative to strengthen the pathways through mathematics for community college students. At the current time two components are in full swing—and pilot courses are planned for each of them at community colleges across the nation.

The StatWay component will create a pathway through Statistics for non-STEM students. StatWay will be a one-year course that will take the student from beginning algebra (algebra concepts will be introduced “just-in-time”) through a credit level Statistics course. It is intended to accelerate the student’s progress through their math requirement, and to provide the algebraic and numeracy concepts necessary for success. El Paso Community College will be piloting one of these courses in the fall 2011, along with eighteen other community colleges across the nation.

The MathWay course is a one semester course (prerequisite will be prealgebra), and will prepare students to take a college-level non-STEM course in mathematics. The course will integrate numeracy, proportional reasoning, algebraic reasoning and the understanding of functions. This integration will be facilitated through the use of rich problems, building mathematical concepts within the problems. The goal is to build algebraic reasoning, not just fluency in algebraic manipulation. I have worked on the structure of this course, as the MAA representative on the committee. Individual lessons are being tested this year, and about twenty community colleges will pilot MathWay in the fall of 2011.

These initiatives will affect mathematics departments at both community colleges and universities, and we, in the mathematics community, should be aware of these changes. —Joanne Peebles, El Paso Community College