



Mathematical Association of America Southwestern Section

# Newsletter

Volume 25 Issue 1 | Fall 2011

## Section News

### Hamide Dogan Receives MAA Distinguished Teaching Award

Dr. Hamide Dogan-Dunlap of the University of Texas at El Paso is the



recipient of the Southwestern Section's 2011 Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics. This award is given each year in each section to an especially influential and effective teacher. (See the next article in this newsletter for the 2012 Call for Nominations.)

Dr. Dogan-Dunlap was cited for being a demanding and challenging teacher, for building up the Master of Arts in Teaching program at UTEP, and for her contributions to a play "Count Her In" created to stir up interest in mathematics among women students. Dr. Dogan-Dunlap's application then advanced to the competition for the national Haimo teaching awards for 2012, but she lost out

to Matthew DeLong, Taylor University; Susan Loepp, Williams College; and Cynthia Wyels, CSU Channel Islands.

### Nominations Wanted for Distinguished Teaching Award

Nominations are wanted for the Southwestern Section's Teaching Award to be given next March, at our section meeting in Tucson, AZ. 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, and our section's "distinguished teacher" nomination will be forwarded to the MAA for consideration for the Haimo award. A committee from our 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 this

Coming sooner than you think...

Southwestern Section Spring Conference

March 30 & 31, 2012, Tucson, Arizona

More information is on p. 3

### Our Section Flag is Missing!

The MAA will celebrate 100 years, with a big party (MathFest) in the summer of 2015 in Washington, D.C. Planning for the Centennial MathFest has begun! When the MAA celebrated its 75th birthday, each section was given their own section flag. The MAA wants to use these flags again at our centennial. Does anyone in our section remember our flag—or have any idea where it might be? I have some old records, but no flag. If we can't find it, the MAA is asking that we have a new one custom made.

If you know any people that were members of our section 25 years ago—or if you were a member—perhaps we can find this piece of SW Section history. At the right is an example of the Southern California Section's flag from 1990. Please let me ([joannep@epcc.edu](mailto:joannep@epcc.edu)) know if you have any idea of where our section flag might be. Thanks. —*Joanne Peeples, El Paso Community College*



packet must be received by Joanne Peeples no later than January 31, 2012, 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](mailto:joannep@epcc.edu) or call 915.831.5047. —*Joanne Peeples, El Paso Community College*

### MAA National News Board of Governors Report

The Board of Governors of the MAA met for its usual daylong meeting on 3 August 2011 in Lexington, KY, prior to MathFest. One of the action items at this meeting was to approve the 2012 operating budget. The Board approved a near balanced budget with operating expenses of about \$7.4M, a 1.4% decrease from the 2011 budget. Investments still remain strong (compared to the market as a whole) with a total market value of over \$8.4M. Other major news at the national level is a change in the leadership. Executive Director, Tina Straley, will be retiring at the end of this calendar year. The new Executive Director will be Michael Pearson, the current Associate Executive Director. Also, John Kenelly

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

### MAA Southwestern Section Newsletter Volume 25 Issue 1 | Fall 2011 Published electronically on 15 October 2011

This electronic newsletter is published twice annually, usually around October 15 and February 15. Please send news items about your department and announcements to the editor:

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<http://www.maa.org/Southwestern>

## MAA Southwestern Section Meeting in Spring 2012

The MAA Southwestern Section is holding its annual meeting in Tucson, AZ on March 30–31, 2012. This meeting will be a joint conference with ArizMATYC (Arizona Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges) and SUnMaRC (Southwestern Undergraduate Mathematics Research Conference). Forms and information are available at the conference web-page <https://sites.google.com/site/2012march30/>. Feel free to contact the conference co-chairs Silvia Saccon ([ssaccon@math.arizona.edu](mailto:ssaccon@math.arizona.edu)) and Erin Militzer ([emilitzer@math.arizona.edu](mailto:emilitzer@math.arizona.edu)) for additional information.

If you would like to propose a special session, organize a contributed paper session, lead a workshop or moderate a panel discussion during this two-day conference, please contact Silvia or Erin by **November 15, 2011** with your proposals. Here are some ideas about topics that may be of interest: teaching and learning, recruiting students to pursue studies in mathematics (in our region), content knowledge and pedagogy for secondary teachers, math club activities, recreational mathematics. You may want to propose a session on your own research area.

A call for presenters is out with a deadline of **February 17, 2012**. Graduate students and faculty members are encouraged to give a talk at the meeting (see above for some ideas about topics). This is a great opportunity to present your work and engage with colleagues at different institutions. Start planning your presentation now!

— *Silvia Saccon & Erin Militzer*

stepped down as Treasurer, with Jim Daniel now taking over.

During this academic year you'll have the opportunity to elect a new Governor who will serve the section for the next three years, starting with Board Meeting in August 2012. My final Board meeting as Governor will be on 3 January 2012 in Boston, MA prior to the Joint Mathematics Meetings. Let me know if you're planning to attend the Meetings and if you'd like to get together for dinner. It's always great to visit with participants from our section!

— *Tom Gruszka, Western New Mexico University*

## Department News

### University of Texas at El Paso

This was an outstanding year for recognition of the department's teaching. At College of Science Pre-Commencement ceremonies in May, three of the eight faculty presented with a "Distinguished

Achievement Award for Teaching" were from our department: Dr. Kien Lim, Mr. Julian Viera, and Dr. Lawrence Lesser. Also, Lesser kept alive a unique streak for the department by being a winner of a 2011 Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award from the nine-university University of Texas System. This is actually the third straight year the Department had a winner of this award (Art Duval won in 2009 and Mourat Tchoshanov in 2010). Finally, Hamide Dogan- Dunlap won the 2011 Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics for our MAA section.

The past year was also strong in scholarly activity. Dr. Helmut Knaust was presented in May with an award from ORSP for "Outstanding Performance in Securing Extramural Funding". His award was one of only five in the college and 20 UTEP-wide. During the last five years, Knaust has been credited for research

*(continues on page 5)*

## New “Math Rooms” at El Paso Community College

In May of 2011 the Transmountain Campus of EPCC had a ribbon cutting ceremony for two new “math rooms”—the new Math Lab and the new Math Emporium. The rooms still needed a bit of furniture, but the good news was that they would be open for Summer School. They will be ready and “tested” for the fall semester.

The Math Emporium room is well designed for emporium classes—it holds 32 student computers, has a large white board on one end, a screen on the other end, and room for the instructor and tutors to walk around and help the students. There is also a small room to the side where the instructor may have conferences with students. On the floor is a large ellipse—unfortunately it is mostly covered by computer stations, but since the ellipse is a bit lopsided and the major axis (determined by electrical outlets in the floor) is not exactly positioned correctly, perhaps that’s a good thing.



The Math Lab is a large, welcoming room, with many windows and views of the mountains. It has a white board at one end, with geometric tables and a projections screen (so we can have our Precalculus math labs at that end of the room). In the middle are bistro tables for studying (the height making it easier for the tutor to help). Our Lab Assistant’s desk is at the far end of the room, with a curved “wall” that she can write messages on (like a white board), and behind the “wall” are a few chairs to accommodate a small study group. There is also a small conference room off to the side of the main room where students can have a study group, or instructors can meet with a group of students. The floors in both the lab and the conference have



golden rectangles on them, and they show how to construct a golden rectangle starting with a square. I will say that the people laying the tile did not have an easy job—but, it really looks nice!

Just outside our biggest window is a seven foot tall, four foot wide sculpture created by one of our students, Mauricio Chacon. It is a “welcoming” Möbius Strip. It is made of iron, so it will rust to match our mountains and the outside color of our campus buildings.

We welcome visitors—we love to show these off!  
—Joanne Peebles, El Paso Community College



expenditures of over \$2 million. Dr. Mourat Tchoshanov spent last fall on a Fulbright Scholarship at a university in Russia, training educators and presenting and conducting research on teacher content knowledge. Dr. Kien Lim received the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award at the 2011 Sun Conference on Teaching and Learning. More news is available in the fall 2011 issue of MAXIMA: <http://math.utep.edu/dept/maxima/>.

—Larry Lesser

### **Pima Community College West Campus**

We have three short items. Pat Townsend has joined our faculty. She has transferred in from the PCC Desert Vista campus. Preliminary work is under way to institute an emporium format for several of the developmental classes. We are in the process of adding a one-semester class which combines Elementary and Intermediate Algebra. —Paul Flasch

### **Northern Arizona University**

Terry Blows has taken over as department chair. Janet McShane has moved from the department chair position and is now acting director of the Center for Science Teaching & Learning.

New hires in the department include Dr. Brian Beaudrie, Assistant Professor of Mathematics Education, and Dr. Derek Sonderegger, Assistant Professor of Statistics. In addition, the department hired three new lecturers and nine instructors.

NAU continues to see significant enrollment growth. This fall, the Flagstaff enrollment is 17,529 and when extended campuses are included, the enrollment is 25,204. Enrollment in mathematics and statistics courses on the Flagstaff campus

has increased by more than 50% over the past five years.

Drs. Shannon Guerrero and Janet McShane received a five-year \$1,450,000 NSF DUE Noyce grant for scholarships. Dr. Guerrero and Ms. Amy Rushall also received two Mathematics & Science Partnership Grants.

Next summer, NAU will host a conference on Variational and Topological Methods for Nonlinear Elliptic PDEs, organized by John Neuberger and Nándor Sieben. The dates are June 6-9. Also in the summer, our longstanding NSF-supported Research Experiences for Undergraduates program continues once again.

Several curriculum initiatives continue: a modular version of precalculus, the hybrid quantitative reasoning course, and a hybrid version of intermediate algebra taught by Coconino Community College on our campus. A new feature is a change from Supplemental Instruction to tutoring throughout the day, Monday through Friday, with designated tutors for each of six classes. We are inching closer to an emporium model for several courses.

As of this fall, we no longer have an extended major. Our standard major has changed, and we post advising information for students interested in actuarial careers, statistics, applied mathematics, and graduate study.

—John Hagood

Meet old friends and make new ones at the Section Spring Meeting, March 30–31, 2012, in Tucson!

