

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – LA CROSSE

MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

No. 8

Summer 2002

Seeking Internships for our Students!

If any of you know of other possible opportunities including internship positions that we may be able to offer mathematics students, please let us know. We have already received help from alumni in identifying some opportunities.

Statistical Consulting Center

Statistical services are now available to UW-L faculty and staff, master's level students, and undergraduate researchers through the newly established Statistical Consulting Center. This may include advice and assistance in areas of research design, data modeling and analysis, and interpretation of results of any project that has a statistical foundation.

The statistical consulting center will give students, under faculty supervision, hands-on experience with data and statistical problems, while providing support for clients in the UW-L campus community.

The Statistical Consulting Center will operate through the office of the Provost under the direction of Dr. Abdulaziz Elfessi and is currently open for business. Please call Dr. Elfessi (608-785-6612) to arrange a consultation.

UW-L Mathematics Department Holds Annual Recognition Reception

The Mathematics Department held its eight annual recognition reception for all mathematics majors and minors on April 17th. This is an event where the faculty treat the students to a meal in recognition of the hard work they have done throughout the year.

An awards program followed the meal. Kevin Hufnagl (Lisbon, IA) received the Outstanding Graduating Senior Mathematics Award. Kevin's name was engraved on a plaque that lists the names of all of the senior mathematics award winners and is displayed on the first floor of Cowley Hall.



Dave Koster presents the Senior Mathematics Award to Kevin Hufnagl.

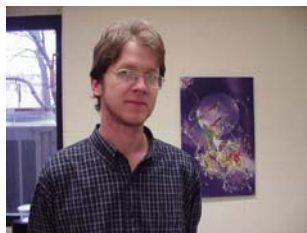
Matthew Bedalov (Franksville, WI) received the Junior Mathematics Scholarship. The full Mathematics Department faculty selects recipients for awards and the faculty also funds the event, awards and junior scholarship.

Math Club

The Math Club enjoyed a very active this year. (13 Mar) The club was led by our three student officers: President Matt Wokasch (McFarland, WI), and Co-Vice Presidents Victor Feltes (Osseo, WI) and Jesse Schoenemann (Cross Plains, WI). The year started with a talk by Dr. Kathryn Nyman of Texas A&M University on Conditional Probability, Taxi Cabs and the Prosecutor's Fallacy. Next, Viterbo's math club invited us to join them for a screening of the movie "Pi". Other activities included UW-L's own Dr. Andrew Matchett talking about the optics of rainbows (very enlightening - get it?), bowling at River City Lanes with the Viterbo University math club, a talk on encryption by new mathematics faculty member Dr. Patricia Nelson, and helping on a fundraiser for the Red Cross.

Department Happenings

Who is new?



Karl Kattchee

After earning my Ph.D. in 2001 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the field of commutative algebra, I proceeded immediately to UW-L. Since arriving in La Crosse, I have tried hard to blend into the local population by learning the language and customs. So far, so good. Professionally, I enjoy teaching mathematics and thinking about mathematics. Personally, I like to work on music, art, history, keeping life simple, and being with my wife, Patricia Nelson. I am originally from Coralville, Iowa.



bachelor's degree, majoring in mathematics, and everyone assumed that they had seen the last of him. However, apparently Dennis had been insufficiently challenged by undergraduate mathematics, so he moved on to graduate study at the University of Wyoming, and picked up a master's degree in mathematics in 1965. He immediately returned to UW-L, this time as a faculty member. This lasted only a single year because Dennis wanted to see what a real job would be like and he set off for Washington, D.C. Fortunately, he quickly came to his senses, and once again returned to his alma mater – this time for good – in 1969. A leave of absence in the mid-1970's at Wyoming resulted in a Ph.D. in statistics, earned in 1977.

For the past 25 years, Dennis has been the mainstay of Literally thousands of students have learned firsthand that he is a demanding, but caring instructor, with a the applied statistics program at UW-La Crosse. penchant for really, really bad jokes. (Have you heard about the new corduroy pillowcases? You should have – they're making headlines. Do you know what Cole's Law is? A succinct definition is posted on his office door: Thinly sliced cabbage.) A number of his students have paid him the high compliment of electing to follow in his footsteps, deciding upon graduation to pursue graduate study in statistics. Perhaps, at some point, one of them will one day take his place on the UW-L math/stat faculty.

Jim Sobota – Summary by Jack Scheidt



After receiving his Ph.D. in Mathematics from Michigan State University in 1970, Jim Sobota embarked on his long career teaching mathematics at UW-La Crosse. This May he is retiring after 32 years of dedicated service to the University. Jim always had his door open to help students, some of whom were not even in his



Patricia Nelson

My name is Patricia Nelson and I am in my second semester at UW-L. I graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln last May. My research area is graph theory and I enjoyed having the opportunity to teach that here last fall. In my free time I enjoy hiking, camping, reading, baking, and watching movies. I used to be an avid runner and I hope to be one again, once I recover from some injuries.



Michael Lang

I'm basically a Wisconsin boy. From Ashland to Green Bay to Madison to La Crosse. I've just been moving around the state. Actually, I have done stints elsewhere, like D.C., Texas and Hungary. In fact, I do like to travel quite a bit. In the past few years I've been to Asia, Australia, Central America and Europe. Something keeps pulling me back, though. Maybe it's the brats, maybe it's reliably being able to watch the Packers, maybe it's the mosquitos. Okay, it's not the mosquitos. Whatever it is, I'm looking forward to finding some volleyball and racquetball, learning waterskiing and golf, and working on some cool combinatorics (as if there were another kind).

So who retired?

Dennis O'Brien – Summary by David Bange

With his retirement, Dennis O'Brien will end an astonishingly long association with UW-La Crosse. It all began when he enrolled here as an undergraduate long, long ago. By 1964 Dennis had earned his **So who S**

class. He was patient, yet challenging to his students, an A in Jim's class was well deserved. As evidence of his willingness to help students and his overall effectiveness as a teacher, he won "The Most Accessible Instructor Award" in 2000 and a few years earlier an "Outstanding Teacher Award" (if you have a few minutes, Jim would be glad to share the details of this latter award).

Jim was also a valuable contributor to the University of Wisconsin System. He served for years (many as Chair) helping create the numerous problems on the UW Mathematics Placement Test. This is the test that was used to place you in the proper mathematics course when you entered UW-La Crosse. Hopefully, you started your career in the most appropriate course. If not, blame Jim.

A concern to some professors contemplating retirement is what to do in retirement. Not to worry with Jim. He loves to travel and plans on revisiting Alaska in his motor home. He loves to fish and hunt and he is purported to be excellent in these endeavors. He also loves to golf and maybe, in retirement, he can elevate his game to the "decent" level. (Practice makes perfect, Jim). Finally, he will be able to spend more time with his wife, children, and granddaughter.

Jim, we'll all miss you.

What else?



Two new babies in the Department!

No, Dave Reineke was not one of the new parents. His was only a basketball. Becky LeDocq has a new baby girl named Ella and Susan Kelly has a baby boy named Kyle. Both were born in March of this year.

Check out our web page at
<http://www.uwlax.edu/SAH/Mathematics/Home.html>

Contribution Form for the Mathematics Scholarship Fund

Enclosed is a gift of \$10 \$25 \$50
 \$100 \$ _____
to the Mathematics Department Scholarship Fund.

Name _____

Address _____

Please list my donation as an

- individual gift
 joint gift with _____

My employer will match my contribution yes no
Employer _____

Please make checks payable to the UW-La Crosse Foundation -Math Scholarship. Your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Return this coupon and your gift to: Susan Kelly, Department of Mathematics, UW- La Crosse, La Crosse, WI 54601

What are you doing these days?

We would love to hear from you and be able to pass information on in our next newsletter.

Name _____
Class of _____

Please return to Susan Kelly, Department of Mathematics, UW-La Crosse, La Crosse WI, 54601 or send the response by e-mail to kelly.susa@uwlax.edu