

# LA/MS SECTION

## Mathematical Association of America

### Newsletter

Winter 2003/2004

Volume 26, No. 1

**University of Southern Mississippi** (Reported by Wally Pye) Fall 2003

#### **New Hires:**

John Harris was hired as assistant professor of mathematics at USMGC. He received his Ph.D. from LSU in knot theory.

Edith Adan-Bante was hired as assistant professor of mathematics at USMGC. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois in finite groups.

#### **Promotions:**

Jose Contreras was promoted from assistant professor to associate professor and was awarded tenure.

#### **Retirements:**

Joe Thrash retired in May after 33 years of service.

#### **Sabbaticals:**

Jiu Ding is on sabbatical this fall. He is at Academia Sinica where he is collaborating with his long-time colleague Aihui Zhou on the application of Markov operators to molecular dynamics. He is supported by an internal grant awarded for faculty excellence.

#### **Special news:**

Retired professor Temple H. Fay was awarded a spot on the Fulbright Senior Specialists Roster by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State, and the Council for International Exchange of Scholars. Consequently, an application by the Technikon Northern Gautang, near Pretoria, South Africa, has been funded to support Professor Fay spending 30 days with them delivering a series of lectures and helping them in curriculum development.

Bill Hornor, Barry Piazza, and Wally Pye attended the AMS-MER workshop "Excellence in Undergraduate Mathematics: Lessons Across the Curriculum" at the University of Alaska in Anchorage during September 11-14. They came back with a method for assessing the undergraduate mathematics program for the upcoming visit by the accreditation agency which will evaluate the entire

university.

## **Louisiana State University at Eunice** (reported by A. J. Roques)

Fall 2003

### **New Hires:**

Enrollment increases at LSUE has caused the addition of new sections of math, and Ms. Katrina Broussard, from McNeese State University, has been hired as adjunct faculty to help.

### **Openings:**

LSUE will have two openings for the Fall 2004 semester, one at the Assistant Professor/Instructor level and one at the Instructor level.

### **Presentations and Conference Attendance:**

Dr. Cascio-Houston will be making a presentation on TI-Interactive at the ITCTM conference in Rosemont, Illinois at the end of October.

Ms. Gloria Hernandez, Ms. Joycelyn Lee, Ms. Lorrie Randall, and Ms. Ellen Stutes will be attending the LaMsMATYC meeting in Long Beach, MS, in September.

### **Promotions:**

Dr. Grace Cascio-Houston has been promoted to Professor of Mathematics.

Ms. Lorrie Randall has been promoted to Assistant Professor of Mathematics.

## **Nicholls State University** (reported by Scott Beslin)

Fall 2003

### **Nicholls State University Proposes New M.S. Program**

Conditional approval from the Louisiana Board of Regents has been granted for the implementation of a new M.S. program within the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science at Nicholls State University. The program of study is entitled *Master of Science in Community / Technical College Mathematics*, and is tentatively scheduled to be initiated in the

2004 fall semester. The primary focus of the program is the preparation of community college mathematics teachers state-wide and beyond, although the curriculum will also strengthen secondary teachers' mathematics content understanding as well. The program consists of a mathematics / teacher education core consistent with post-secondary mathematics education training, as well as elective content selected from mathematics, education, physical science, and computer science. Given the projected growth rate of the Louisiana community college system, the department is confident that the program will serve the state by supplying community / junior college mathematics educators proficient in their content areas, and by enhancing the professional development of secondary and post-secondary instructors. The department welcomes inquiries from prospective students interested in possible pursuit of obtaining this new M.S. degree. The faculty also welcome from instructors and / or students any ideas and suggestions pertinent to specific local needs, and to the success of the program state-wide. Communication may be sent by mail to Dr. Don Bardwell, Head; Department of Mathematics and Computer Science; Nicholls State University; Thibodaux, LA 70310. Alternatively, e-mail may be sent to: [math-dmb@nicholls.edu](mailto:math-dmb@nicholls.edu).

**University of Louisiana Lafayette** reported by Roger Waggoner  
Fall 2003

### **Faculty Changes:**

#### Departures:

Doug Larmour, visiting Assistant Professor in 2002 - 2003 has taken a regular position at Hillsdale College in Michigan.

#### New Faculty

Assistant Prof. Strashimir (aka Mirko) Popvassilev, Ph.D. from Auburn U. in topology.

Instructor Ross Chiquet, B.S. from Northwestern St. U. and M.S. from the U. of Nebraska.  
Assistant Prof. Olcay Arslan, Ph.D. from the U. of Leeds in statistics will be joining us in January.

#### Promotion

Azmy Ackleh to the rank of Professor.

#### Presentations

Kathleen Lopez, Vic Schneider, and Roger Waggoner presented a break-out session on UL Lafayette's upper-level mathematics courses for secondary teachers at the MER (Mathematicians and Educational Reform) Forum workshop hosted by LSU in November. They followed this with a plenary talk and another break-out session at the MER workshop in March at Ithaca College. These presentations gave an overview of the teacher-prep mathematics program at UL Lafayette, along with some specific examples of course work.

#### Projects

This fall semester a two year project, funded by the National Science Foundation, for training undergraduates in bio-mathematics got underway. Three math majors and a biology major were selected to work under the direction of the grant P.I., Dr. Azmy Ackleh, and Dr. Jacoby Carter, an ecologist at the USGS National Wetlands Research Center in Lafayette. During the project the students will collect and analyze data for a green tree frog population, while studying the mathematics necessary to develop structured models for this population. A long term goal is to create a mathematical biology option for undergraduates at UL Lafayette.

UL Lafayette will be offering a professional development workshop this spring on the teaching of problem-driven mathematics courses. Funding for this workshop, including stipends and expense allowances for Louisiana college and university faculty participants, is being provided by a Louisiana Board of Regents Education Enhancement grant. Kathleen Lopez, Pat Jones, and Vic Schneider will be primary presenters. The tentative dates are May 24 - 26, 2004.

**Mississippi College** reported by Tommy Leavelle  
Fall 2003

**Tenure and Promotion:**

Melinda Gann has been promoted to Associate Professor and awarded tenure

**Mississippi University for Women** reported by Bonnie Oppenheimer boppen@muw.edu  
Fall 2003

**Programs:**

Sonia Kovalevsky Day will be held April 2, 2004.

Math Camp 2004 will be June 6-11, 2004. See [http://www.muw.edu/sci\\_math/math\\_camp\\_2004.html](http://www.muw.edu/sci_math/math_camp_2004.html) for application and recommendation forms.

**Promotions:**

Dr. Dorothy Kerzel was promoted to Associate Professor and tenured Fall 2002; she has accepted the position of Interim Division Head for the Division of Science and Mathematics.

Dr. Jane Wenstrom was promoted to Professor Fall 2002; she is currently on maternity leave.

Dr. Bonnie Oppenheimer was promoted to Associate Professor and tenured for Fall 2003.

**Resignations:**

Dr. Beate Zimmer resigned to take a position at University of Texas-Corpus Christi.

**Louisiana State University** (reported by George Cochran, cochran@math.lsu.edu)

Fall 2003

**Math Department News:**

The LSU mathematics department will be dramatically changing the makeup of its faculty over the next five years. The administration is promising substantial funds to the department for new hires to increase the size of our professorial faculty from 44 to 60 over five years. We hope to hire 6 or 7 new professors next year, of which one or two will be at the associate or full professor

level and the remainder at the assistant professor level. We also plan to increase the size of our graduate student body to a total of 100 students by adding 30 new teaching assistantships (an increase from 44 to 74 TA's over five years). At the same time, we will be drastically reducing the size of our instructor faculty, from the current level of 45 instructors to approximately 11 over five years. Next year we plan to let go of 14 instructors by not renewing their annual contracts.

Our instructors are typically people with a Master's degree or an "ABD" in mathematics, who teach sections of lower-level mathematics through calculus. All of the 14 instructors that we will not renew next year have been with the department for at most two years; the instructors that will not be renewed in later years will necessarily be people who have many years of experience in the department. If your institution has job openings available for mathematics instructors, please let me know ([cochran@math.lsu.edu](mailto:cochran@math.lsu.edu)) and I will publicize the information to all of our instructors.

Please inform your students who are interested in graduate study in mathematics that LSU needs graduate students. We offer attractive stipends ranging from \$13,500 to \$25,000, and graduate tuition is being phased out. I will bring brochures on our program to the spring meeting, but interested students can also get information on our program from our website at [www.math.lsu.edu](http://www.math.lsu.edu) or by contacting Prof. Len Richardson at [rich@math.lsu.edu](mailto:rich@math.lsu.edu).

In the past, nearly all of our 1000-level sections of mathematics had enrollments capped at 45 students and were taught by our instructors and graduate students. We plan to maintain small sections of college algebra and engineering calculus, but we will start teaching our trigonometry and business calculus students in a layered instructional format, consisting of lectures in large auditoriums of 500 students, optional recitation sections, supplemental instruction and free tutoring, and web-based assessments and grading using WebWorks.

LSU has redesigned its curriculum for secondary education majors. The College of Education no longer offers bachelor's degrees in secondary education. All secondary math ed students now major in mathematics with a concentration in secondary education and receive a B.S. degree in mathematics. The number of junior-senior math majors at LSU jumped this year from 76 to 98, mostly due to this change. The math ed student will go through a sequence of four "MathStep" courses in which a 3-hour education course is taken concurrently with a 1-hour math lab course---their focus is less on the theory of education and more on hands-on experience in the local schools before the semester of student teaching. The curriculum consists of 19 hours of education and MathStep courses, 9 hours of student teaching, 15 hours of upper-division math and 22 hours of lower-division math beginning with calculus.

### **Deaths:**

On a sad note, Prof John Hildebrandt died in his home in June of this year. John had retired from the LSU Math department in 2001 after 35 years of service and he was a very active member of this MAA section for many years.