

Department of Mathematics Updates
East Texas A&M University
(our first year with a new name)
Homecoming 2025



- One of the biggest pieces of news is that, after 50 years, the Department of Mathematics has been relocated from Binnion Hall to Education North. Binnion has been our home for 50 years and it will definitely be missed. Many of us have fond memories of our time in Binnion, which is arguably one of the prettiest buildings on campus. However, the faculty are working hard to make the Frank Young Education North first floor into our NEW home. We invite everyone to visit us in “Ed North”. (The above picture of Binnion Hall was snipped from a Math Club video created by Dr. John Lamb, Jr. More on that later. But for now, just look at those cars!!)
- We have several new faces in the department this fall.
 - Our new Administrative Assistant, Thressea Stanley, started the first week of September. Thressea comes to us after many years working for a non-profit. While she is new to “working for the State”, she is not new to working with people from a variety of backgrounds. She fits in well with our group and is already heavily involved with departmental events such as preparing for the Homecoming breakfast!
 - Logan Willhoite, ad-interim Instructor, comes to us from Temple College. He is teaching First Year Math courses for us, where he fits in nicely. He’s new to East Texas A&M, but not to the ways of Freshmen. Logan has a Master’s degree from Stephen F. Austin, where he worked with their first year students before taking a tenure-track position in Temple.
 - Kwaku Owusu-Ansah, ad-interim Instructor, comes to us directly from his Master’s degree at none other than Texas A&M University – Commerce! As a Graduate Assistant who completed his program in May, he performed well in his teaching duties. When we had an opportunity for a one-year appointment to fill an empty faculty line, the administration jumped at the chance to keep him around a little while longer! He’s a product of our Master’s program, but he’s come a long way to get here; all the way from Africa.

- This year, the department has kicked off two new programs in Data Science: The Bachelor's degree in Mathematics with an emphasis in Data Science, and the Master's degree in Mathematics with an emphasis in Data Science.
- News from College of Science and Engineering (COSE) includes:
 - Enrollment numbers at the Undergraduate level are looking great; an increase in students has been seen. However, COSE Graduate students are down, in large part due to a decrease in the influx of international students.
 - Creation of a Master's degree in AI
 - Creation of a Master's degree in Engineering
 - Working on a new Mechanical Engineering Program
 - Working on a new PhD in College of Science and Engineering (we don't have one yet)
- Our Department Head for more than a dozen years, Dr. Tingxiu Wang, retired at the end of the Fall 2024 semester. He and his wife, Liping, have entered the next phase of their lives with a long-awaited shift to retirement! While making preparations for this shift, they purchased a home in a retirement community in Denton. His many years of service to the department and many, many contributions as he focused on steering our ship have not gone unnoticed. The department showered Tingxiu with presents (gardening tools might have been a prominent theme to the gifts) and a plaque at a retirement lunch at Luigi's in December. Here's a picture of Tingxiu and Pamela Webster at the luncheon:



- Currently, Dr. Kent Montgomery (Associate Dean of COSE) has been serving as our Acting Department Head, under "other duties as assigned. It will be a year before he is done. Bless him!!
- Following Dr. Wang's departure from the department, a national search was conducted to find a new Department Head. Dr. Ricardo Teixeira has been hired to fill the role. He comes to us from Texas A&M University – Victoria (the newest member school of the A&M System; previously University of Houston - Victoria). During his interview, Dr. Teixeira gave an engaging lecture on developing the concept of a derivative, and he even wowed the audience of faculty with what we hear is his normal approach to engaging his students: card tricks. Ricardo seems eager to join our vibrant and diverse department; he will make the transition over the Christmas break and be here to start the new calendar year with us. We hope everyone gets a chance to meet and visit with Dr. Ricardo Teixeira as the department moves into the next phase of our history.
- Speaking of our history, the Math Clubs continued what is now a long-standing tradition in our department: representing us well at the Texas section of the MAA. During this year's Math Bowl competition, our teams placed second and seventh overall, out of a field of more than 20 schools from around the State of Texas. An adaptation of the previous Calculus Bowl, the Math Bowl asks questions from a wide variety of courses, from Algebra up to and including Math History. This proves yet again that our students can hold their own when it comes to their math skills and their competitive spirit!

- NEW SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

Dr. Stuart Anderson is one of our beloved retired faculty members. He worked for the University and the department from 1973 to 2019 (a whopping 46 years). During this time, he served as Department Head for 15 years before returning to the faculty. Several years later, he was kind enough to serve as Interim Department Head for more than a year while the department searched for a new Head (who happened to be Dr. Tingxiu Wang). During his time with East Texas State University, and then with Texas A&M University – Commerce, Dr. Anderson touched thousands of student lives, both in and out of the classroom. He is well known for both his love of Math History and his banjo-playing skills, and he has the ability to bring the two together in meaningful ways. He is also well-known for his dry sense of humor, which he incorporates into classes and speeches alike.

While Dr. Anderson worked for the Department of Mathematics, he was received both the Regent Professor's Award (the A&M System's highest award for a faculty member), as well as the prestigious Minnie Piper Award, which is a national award for innovative faculty. When presented with his Regent's award, he gave a speech entitled: "To Aging Professors", and noted that, indeed, we are ALL aging. Upon retirement in 2019, Stuart was also given the prestigious title of Professor Emeritus.

In addition to being dedicated to our great University, Stuart was also devoted to furthering the works and influence of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA). He served the MAA at both the state and national levels. He served as Secretary for the Texas State Section, as well as Representative for the national organization, for many years. His legacy of service lives on in both the students he taught and his colleagues; any time he visits the department, it is to the sound of many "Hail, Stuart's" and tons of smiles and hugs! His impact has been great and will continue to ripple through the generations that pass through the East Texas A&M Department of Mathematics.

In honor of Dr. Anderson's legacy, a scholarship is being founded here at ETAMU. The new requirement for endowing a scholarship is \$25,000. To kick-start the effort of endowing this scholarship, a donor has come forward with \$10,000 of matching funds. Anyone who is interested in contributing to the fund can do so at the link below. The first \$10,000 donated will be doubled through the use of these matching funds, which combined will get the University very close to its goal of \$25,000.

<https://www.givecampus.com/schools/EastTexasAMUniversity/honoring-dr-stuart-anderson>



Figure 1: Stuart enjoys ice cream with students at the MAA Figure 2: Stuart gives a talk about Math & Music to the REU students

- **Summer REU at East Texas A&M**

- Professor Emeritus Stuart Anderson and his wife, Tammy, visited our REU-TADM program.

Talk:

- *"Patterns in Fractions and Music Composition"*
- A creative and thought-provoking presentation that revealed deep links between mathematics and music - inspiring students to view math through an artistic lens.

Performance & Lunch:

- Stuart and Tammy shared a beautiful musical performance, then joined students and mentors Pani, George, and Mehmet for lunch and conversation.

Impact:

- Their warmth and insight left a lasting impression, encouraging students to think broadly about the role of mathematics in the arts and beyond.

From Stuart:

"It was a pleasant and memorable day... The students were just as bright as you told me." - *Prof. Stuart Anderson.*

- **Research Activities continue in the Math Department at East Texas A&M**

- Dr. Nikolay Sirakov continues to perform extensive research
- He is currently acting as a PI of a sub-contract of the NIH R1 funded project **Vital Signs in Opioid-Exposed Neonates**, with PI Namasivayam Ambalavanan from the University of Alabama at Birmingham
- He has published 5 peer reviewed papers:
 - 2 in impact factor journals
 - 2 as chapters of books by Springer
 - 1 in the IEEE Xplore Library.
- All papers were written in collaboration with his Master and PhD students.
- His research activities and publications are in Machine Learning and AI.

- Adam Bowden, who has been serving as the Department of Mathematics' archivist and historian, reports that during our move from Binnion, he has unearthed some historic documents. Included in his finds are actual slides, old copies of our AfterMath Newsletter which he plans to digitalize and archive, floor plans for the remodel of Binnion Hall when it was converted to an academic building 50 years ago, and many other gems of information about the department's past.
- One particular gem that Adam has uncovered is a 14 minute video, created by Dr. John Lamb Jr., which seems to have been a recruitment video for our math clubs. The picture of Binnion Hall at the beginning of these updates was snipped from this video. In addition to this photo, there are many other photos of historic relevance and a wonderful voice-over by Dr. Lamb, himself.
- Anyone interested in viewing this video can do so at this site:

<https://sites.google.com/view/abowdenteaching/artifacts>

Anyone wishing to share updates with the Department of Mathematics can do so by emailing math@etamu.edu