

AFTERMATH

Texas A&M University – Commerce

Mathematics Department Newsletter Fall 2014 vol 28 no 1

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The title which I most covet is that of teacher. The writing of a research paper and the teaching of freshman calculus, and everything in between, falls under this rubric. Happy is the person who comes to understand something and then gets to explain it. - Marshall Cohen

Comings and Goings of Faculty

The department was deeply saddened by the loss of one of its retired faculty members in 2013: **Dr. Archie Doyle Brock**. Dr. Brock was a long-serving faculty member who was known for his Statistical knowledge. Many of his students credit him with saying repeatedly: "If anyone ever wins the lottery with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6... Well, you just come looking for me, because those are the numbers I'm playing." The reason why? This combination is, statistically speaking, just as likely as any other "random" combination when pulling balls out of a hopper.

Born on December 14, 1932, Archie Brock was the captain of the football team while at Crescent High School, where he graduated in 1951. He attended multiple institutions of higher education: Northern Oklahoma Junior College (graduated 1953); Northwestern State University (B.S. in Mathematics and Physics in 1957); University of Oklahoma (M.A. in Mathematics in 1960); and Virginia Polytechnic Institute (a Ph.D. in Statistics in 1968). Archie Brock served in the US Army (artillery) from November 1953 to August 1955.

Academic positions held by Dr. Brock included Mathematics Instructor while at OU from 1957 through 1960, Assistant Professor of Mathematics at Radford College, Radford, Virginia, from 1960 through 1968, and from 1968 to 1995, he was Professor of Mathematics at East Texas State University, now Texas A & M University at Commerce. While at A&M-Commerce, Dr. Brock served the department in many areas. A few of his positions included: Graduate Counsel, Faculty Senate, Faculty Appeals Committee, Faculty Grievance Committee, and Student Advisor.

Dr. Brock passed away suddenly on Wednesday, November 20, 2013. He was still a resident of Commerce, and was often seen at departmental events, even as recently as last fall. Archie served as Weather Observer for the city of Commerce, Texas since 1978, attending annual National Weather Service schools. He was at one time a member of the Commerce Rotary Club, and he held a Ham Radio Operator license since 1975. Dr. Brock was dedicated to his family. He was married to Lela since August 31, 1957. Together, they had three daughters; Jennifer, Janet and, and Jane, and they have enjoyed the presence of multiple grandchildren over the years.



Dr. Archie Brock,
retired faculty 1995



University flag at half-staff for Dr.
Brock



Lunch this Spring with Dr. Brock
in attendance

When considering the current faculty, The Texas A&M University-Commerce Department of Mathematics has undergone numerous changes this year. Indeed, we lost several faculty this year to other opportunities. While we are sad to see them leave, we wish them well in their experiences. These openings have given our department numerous opportunities to find new inductees to our group, as seen below.

Full-Time Faculty



Dr. Aslan's retirement reception this Spring

Farhad "Bill" Aslan finally did what he has been threatening for years: he retired. The department was saddened to see Dr. Aslan step into retirement after a long career. His employment from 1967-2014 makes him our longest serving faculty member, ever. While we are sad to see him retire, we are happy to see that the university and the Texas A&M University System have decided to honor his contributions. It has been

officially announced that Dr. Aslan will receive the rarely-awarded status of Professor Emeritus. There will be a reception to honor this award on November 12th. For details, contact the main math office.

In our own efforts to honor Bill and his contributions to the department and university, the department held a dinner in his honor on October 10th. The event included a reception beforehand and an opportunity for friends and family to congratulate Dr. Aslan on his many years of accomplishments. **Mr. John Davenport** graciously served as the Master of Ceremonies for the event. Comments from many of the Department Heads, both current and past, were given and Dr. Aslan also spoke. In all, the event was a great success and a wonderful way to honor Bill and his family.



Dr. Aslan with the plaque from the department

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A few of the pictures of the event are on the following page.



Dr. Aslan's retirement reception this spring



Collage of pictures from Dr. Bill Aslan's retirement dinner



We were fortunate enough to be allowed to hire three full time faculty members this past year. As a result, however, we lost multiple Ad-Interim faculty positions. Fortunately, however, these faculty members were marketable in other areas. We wish them well with their new job experiences. Last December, we lost **Mr. Eric Pleasant** to a wonderful teaching opportunity in Red Oak. We have been able to spot him a time or two, however, when he has come to campus to continue work on his Ph.D. This Spring, we lost **Mr. Mickell Bruce** and **Dr. Derege Haileselassie Mussa** when their contracts expired. We have heard, however, that Dr. Mussa is currently contracted with UT-Dallas. In fact, he will be a speaker for this year's Colloquium series.

It was a busy Fall and Spring last year as we conducted nation-wide searches to fill three full time faculty positions. However, all three searches were fruitful, and we were even able to hire an additional Ad-Interim, due to Dr. Aslan's recent retirement. We would like to welcome those new people to our ranks now.



Adam Bowden at MAA 2014

The department welcomes **Adam Bowden** in his first semester as Ad-Interim Instructor, after graduating with his Master's degree in August. His experiences from the past couple of semesters have taught him much about math and the teaching of mathematics. He is currently contributing a lot to the First Year Math program, and he hopes to continue.

Rebecca Dibbs is an Assistant Professor in Mathematics Education. She earned a PhD in Educational Mathematics with minors in Applied Statistics/Research Methods and Educational Psychology from the University of Northern Colorado under Michael Oehrtman. She holds a MS in Mathematics from Western Michigan University. She also substitute taught 7th grade in Detroit Public Schools as an undergraduate. Rebecca's primary research interests are in undergraduate mathematics education and teacher professional development. She completed a one year fellowship sponsored by the Education Assistance Program for teaching Modified Moore Method Geometry, and is currently conducting a study on how students' unconscious beliefs about learning influence their performance in calculus courses and retention in STEM majors. Rebecca is originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan, but has spent the last five years in Colorado. This is her first time living in Texas. When not teaching, Rebecca is a triathlete and breeds Ragdolls. Her twin brother lives in Boston.



Rebecca Dibbs



Hanan Kuzat

Ms. Hanan Kuzat serves as a Mathematics Instructor. She came to the USA from the Middle East holding two Bachelor degrees: one in Mathematics and Physics and another one in Environmental Sciences. She earned a Masters degree in Mathematical Sciences in 1997 (Ms.c), and an Education Specialist degree in Administration and Supervision (Ed. S.) in 2008. Finally, she is currently in the dissertation stage of a Doctoral degree in Education, Ed. D (ABD), all from Tennessee

State University. She lived in Tennessee State from 1994 until 2014 and worked as full time Math Instructor from 1999 till 2014. At her past job, she was responsible for many technological projects where she enjoyed working with technology and implementing it into the instructional delivery process in or outside the classroom, as well as working on website designs.

Ms. Kuzat joined the faculty in August 2014, and she states that she really enjoys working in the Mathematics department with this “great group of professionals” and is looking forward to “bringing the best projects and research ideas that will enrich the knowledge of our students and improve their Mathematics and technological skills.”



Pani Seneviratne

Pani Seneviratne is originally from Sri Lanka. He received his MS and Ph.D degrees from Clemson University, South Carolina. Before joining our faculty, he was at the American University of Sharjah. His area of research is in applications of algebra and discrete mathematics, especially algebraic coding theory. Already, he has become an active member of our faculty by coordinating the Colloquium series in the department. In his family life, Dr. Seneviratne has one daughter.

Adjuncts

When we look at adjuncts, we are sad to say goodbye to **John Michael Melendez-Casellas**, who served as a Graduate Assistant in the department and then as an adjunct for our online College Algebra course. John Michael is currently working at a fulltime job in Fort Worth for Perr & Knight Insurance. We also say goodbye to **Bill Knutson** as he has changed to the Greenville school systems and will no longer be teaching our Dual credit courses at the Commerce High School.

We welcome **Frances Luse** back to the faculty as an adjunct instructor who is teaching College Algebra for us this Fall. Frances is a graduate of our program, with both a BS and an MS in Mathematics from A&M-Commerce. During her Master’s degree, she worked as a Graduate Assistant, teaching First Year Math courses. She says that she is happy to be working with our students once more.

Finally, for returning adjuncts, **Donna Holt** says she is enjoying her second year teaching as an adjunct instructor for the department. She also worked for the department as a Graduate Assistant the previous five semesters. Prior to that time, Donna taught Math and English in Texas public schools for 30 years. In her free time this year, Donna and her husband have spent much effort on putting together a lovely wedding for their son. **Carolyn Roland** taught as an adjunct during the 2013-2014 year, and she returns this Fall semester. She has been teaching First Year Math courses and says she enjoys teaching for the department where she looks forward to going to work on MWF. During the summer, she taught College Algebra and Pre-Calculus (face to face and online – a new experience) at Northeast Texas Community College in Mt. Pleasant. She found a new friend to stay with in Daingerfield during the week. She says she thoroughly enjoyed her time there, and it was nice to have a summer job, but she is happy to be back at work at A&M-Commerce this Fall. **Brenda Reed** and **Sheri Beck** continue to work for the department as adjuncts at the Navarro Campus.



Donna Holt

Graduate Assistants

In the area of Graduate Assistants, the department was sad to see several of our GAs leave, for various reasons. Several students graduated, and some are still finishing up their programs while working at other jobs. Graduate Assistants who are no longer with us since last year include: **Faizan Baig**, who graduated; **Derek Fort**, who is working at L3 in Greenville, but should graduate in December; **Cassidi Jacobs**, who should complete her degree within the year; **Xuexin Jin**, who graduated and is currently working two jobs in the Dallas area while she is doing her OPT – Optional Professional Training; **Divya Miryala and Anusha Narelli**, who graduated; **Catrina Sikes**, who has taken a teaching job, but is finishing up her degree in either December or May; **Christine Siler**, who graduated; **Pranathi Soma**, who is graduating this December; and **John Whitehead** took a job teaching at Leonard High School, and should be graduating within the year.

Joining us as new GAs this year are several new faces. **Ayoub Al-Amin** joined us in the Spring semester. Ayoub serves as a Supplemental Instruction leader for our upper-level Calculus courses. He is a happy person who is always willing to pitch in and lend a hand whenever the department is in need. **Tabbatha Crouch** joined our faculty as a Teaching Assistant in the Spring semester. She came



Kristen Ewing

to A&M-Commerce as a transfer student after a year at a community college. After two and a half years of undergraduate classes with this “wonderful staff”, as she calls it, she decided to stay here for her master’s degree. She is on track to graduate in the coming May, and currently applying to several PhD programs. As a long term career, she wants to be a mathematician and work in the field of cryptography. **Kristen Ewing** lives in Anna with multiple dogs, cats, and guinea pigs, and her husband of 4 years, who is an officer in the U.S. Army. Two of her passions are math and animals. Kristen joined our teaching team in the Spring. In addition to teaching for us, she is also an adjunct at Collin College. She received a Bachelor of Arts in

Mathematics from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs in 2008, and is currently on track to graduate with a Master of Science in Mathematics this December. **Steven Jahn** graduated from TAMUC last spring with a double major in Physics and Math and a double minor in Computer Science and Astronomy. As is probably quite apparent from his undergraduate studies, he is interested in the applied area of mathematics; specifically, computation and



Steven Jahn

statistics. He hopes to eventually experience both working in industry and teaching at a university as a professor, but he is not certain which may come first. **Michelle Rosenbaum**, who graduated with a double major in Math and Computer Science prior to a lengthy sabbatical, joins us for the first time this fall. During her time off, she taught in a small private school in Tennessee for several years. She and her husband have five children and two grandchildren. After she completes her Master's degree, she hopes to be able to teach



Michelle Rosenbaum

at a college level. **Vallery Schmidt** joined the department as a GA in the Spring. She graduated from Commerce with a Bachelor’s degree in Applied Mathematics and Music in August 2012, and she plans to obtain two Master’s degrees: Mathematics and Counseling. In addition to teaching for the department, she also works part time at a church in Dallas doing financial processing in their accounting department. After receiving her Bachelor’s

degree, Vallery worked for a time in the engineer realm where she worked for different companies using CAD, GIS, and AGI. However, she soon learned that her passion did not lie there, so she came back to school. In her free time, she sings and plays in the orchestra for her church. In the future, she hopes to teach full time or as an adjunct for a college in Dallas and to counsel in the private sector. A career goal would be to work for the FBI in the behavioral analysis unit. Her favorite saying is “Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to past but learning to dance in the rain”.

In the Academic Testing Center, we have four new Non-Teaching Graduate Assistants this Fall: **Dayo Adetayo, Dimeji Kolawole, Venkatesh Naralasetti, and Swati Tataneni**. As Supplemental Instruction GAs, with have added: **Britt Long, Zhang He, and Eбенуwa Ugochukuu**. Each of these GANTs provides a valuable support position for the department.



Sheng Lu

Returning GAs include **Rachel Landers**, who has been working as a Graduate Assistant for the Mathematics Department since August 2013. She is currently writing a thesis with **Dr. Hasan Coskun** as her advisor on the combinatorial interpretation of the qt-binomial coefficients and will present her findings in Greensboro, North Carolina at an AMS conference. With any luck, she will be graduating this May! **Sheng Lu** returns this year. He is originally from China, where he received a Bachelor’s and a Master’s degree in Mathematics from China. Sheng says: “It’s really interesting to me to experience different culture here. For me, mathematics is not only science, but also an art.” His research field is Differential Geometry, which he says is a beautiful and interesting thing and is connected deeply with Theoretical Physics. **Swathi Munagala** returns as a ½ GA Non-Teaching, as she continues to work on research projects with **Dr. Nikolay Sirakov**. She expects to graduate in the next year. **Rebecca Steward** continues to work on her Master’s degree in both Mathematics and English. She plans to graduate in May of 2015. She is enjoying teaching and her goal is to become a college level Math instructor. In her spare time, she enjoys visiting with her family.

Grants

Finally, in the area of grants, **Darla Heath** has left the position of Grant Coordinator of the **Comprehensive Student Success Program** grant, as the grant has drawn to an end in August. Darla has taken a job teaching Junior High mathematics at Rains ISD. She says she is very grateful to be back in the classroom, and she loves working with the students.



Darla Heath

...As we said, there have been a LOT of “Comings and Goings” this year!

Updates on Returning Faculty and Staff



Stuart Anderson at the Spring
2014 lunch

Stuart Anderson says, "Other than the teaching that I am fortunate enough to get to do, my efforts during the past year have been devoted to collecting History of Mathematics materials." These includes notes for the course required of prospective middle school teachers. He also gave a talk at the annual meeting of the Texas Section MAA, "What the History of Mathematics Says About Online Classes," and presented a talk to the Math Clubs about R. L. Moore. Additionally, he is at work writing some history of the Texas Section of the MAA. This is in preparation for the MAA's Centennial Celebration next year.

Thomas Boucher joins us for his third year on our faculty. As he is establishing himself as our resident "stats guy", he is also being ambushed on all sides. Tom has been added to numerous committees, both as a member and as the chair. While he is a steady fixture in his office, often being seen there throughout the days and even into the evenings, he also manages to find time to play. Discussions are often heard about trips to the lake to go fishing, as well as the occasional trip to Maine in August for vacation.



Tom Boucher



Hasan Coskun

Hasan Coskun continues his research program in applied areas such as speaker identification, wireless communication, and combinatorics. He is organizing another special session on "Multiple Combinatorial Numbers and Associated Identities" at the AMS Fall Southeastern Section Meeting #1105 at the University of North Carolina in November 2014. It will be the second meeting on this topic following the special session he organized in October 2013 last year (http://www.ams.org/meetings/sectional/2209_program_ss11.html#title). This year, one of our graduate students, Rachel Landers, is scheduled to give a talk at the meeting! (http://e-math.ams.org/meetings/sectional/2222_program.html)

Charles Dorsett is pleased to have completed eleven years of employment in the Department of Mathematics. He continues to be active in research and has several more papers published. In the past year, Dr. Dorsett and Mrs. Singleton managed to once again coach THREE Calculus Bowl teams. This year, one of the teams won 2nd place! (See Math Clubs below.) Following our recent victories, however, it will be difficult to see Dr. Dorsett leave his role as coach. However, he has made an announcement, both to the faculty and the students: He plans to retire at the end of this year.



Charles Dorsett speaks at
Homecoming 2013

Leanne Farquhar has been with us for 16 months now. Time is flying by and she is doing a wonderful job of taking care of the department, including remembering ALL of the faculty birthdays in the last year and baking a “special treat” for that person, along with having a card available for everyone to sign. She says that she enjoys working with all the different cultures in the department. We are hopeful that we will have many more years of culture and treats to share with her!



Leanne Farquhar and KaSai Un at Bill Aslan's retirement dinner



John Heath

John Heath, now in his 40th year on the Mathematics faculty, is still enjoying his family life. This summer, he and Marilyn made the trek down to Rockport to see another son get hitched! In celebration, they purchased a new sedan that would make the trip in air conditioned style!!

Vanessa Huse recently wrapped up her Teacher Quality Grant for 2013-2014. The topic was Algebraic Thinking in the Middle Grades. Through this grant, A&M-Commerce was partnered with Athens ISD with 18 teachers involved in the project. The total grant amount for the project was \$195,846. In addition, Vanessa has continued to travel to international conferences and to offer talks and professional development for in-service teachers.



Vanessa Huse

Debra Newton begins her second year in a permanent position as an Instructor. In the last year, she has taught multiple sections of multiple First Year Math courses tirelessly. She attended her first Conference for the Advancement of Mathematics Teachers (CAMT) this summer in Fort Worth, Texas. Debra also continues her service to the department by acting as the Business Math Coordinator, as well as serving on the SACS committee, a search committees, and the Scholarship committee. Outside of work, she continues to serve on an external scholarship board, as well. All this while trying to balance the demands of three pre-teen and teenaged kids (one of whom just received a Learner's Permit to drive)!!



Debra Newton



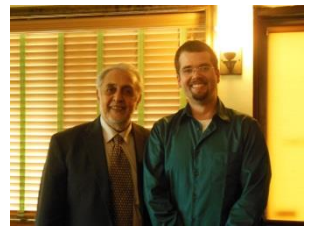
Yelin Ou speaks in China

Yelin Ou gathered a good harvest in research this year as 5 of his research papers were published in science citation indexed math journals. He was invited to give a talk at the joint meeting of mathematical societies of Hong Kong and Yunnan Province that was held in Lijiang (China) in July 2014. Besides traditional face-to-face teaching, Yelin is teaching an online graduate course this semester. He finds the new exploration and experience both interesting and challenging.

Again, Yelin and Baifang spent some summer time visiting China this past year. They so enjoyed the family gatherings, high school and college classmate reunions, and good food that they almost forgot about the flight being 18 hours in the air for a single trip!



Yelin Ou – What a catch in China!!



Joshua Patterson at the Spring 2014 lunch

Joshua Patterson joins us in an Ad-Interim position as an Instructor of Mathematics. He teaches a number of First Year Math courses and is known for his “Mathmagics,” which is a collection of short math based magic tricks that he acquired while obtaining his M.S. in Mathematics from Texas A&M University-Commerce. He has worked at a number of institutions part time since obtaining his M.S. degree, including Northeast Texas Community College in Mt. Pleasant as well as Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins. Currently, he is considering a number of Ph.D. programs and hopes to begin working on his Ph.D. during the Fall of 2015. During his leisure time, Joshua likes to study the stock market, tinker in Mathematica (A computer-based algebra system), and is a licensed amateur radio operator.

Lymeda Singleton presented workshops on multiplication and division of whole numbers using base-10 blocks at the Conference for the Advancement of Mathematics Teaching (CAMT) in Fort Worth in July. At the business meeting of the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators – Texas Section during CAMT, it was announced that she had been elected Treasurer for the term 2014 – 2017. She and Joshua Patterson presented 12 hours of “Mathemagic” tricks at Good Earth Days at Fair Park in Dallas in April. Mrs. Singleton continues to provide at least 12 professional development workshops annually on Fridays for the elementary and middle school certification majors at A&M-Commerce. She also sponsors the three math clubs: MAA-Alpha Gamma Alpha for pure and applied math majors, Council of Teachers of Mathematics for all levels of math education, and Pi Mu Epsilon which is the mathematics honor society. Members of all the clubs helped with registration, the NE Texas Algebra competition, break-out sessions, and as ambassadors and tour guides at the Activities in Mathematics (AIM) Day for area high school students in February. Seven new members were inducted into PME at the club meeting in April.



Singleton and Math Club Members at AIM 2014

Nikolay Sirakov has published three journal and two peer reviewed conference papers. Two of the papers are published by mathematical journals with impact factor, and another paper is published by a top 1% Computer Science conference. He says that through the entire year, he was glad to work in the positive atmosphere of the Math Department with such good colleagues.

In particular, Nikolay lost his mother this year. He was very close to his mother, and he says, “This loss broke my heart. I am thankful to my relatives, friends and colleagues who helped me to walk through this difficult time.” Dr. Sirakov then goes on to discuss the successes of his daughter, Nona. Her hard work has landed her a job as a Project Manager with Microsoft. Nikolay could not be any more proud of her as he declares, “She has been my major source of emotional and spiritual support.”



KaSai Un celebrates her eighth year teaching in the department. She is the coordinator of College Algebra and enjoys working with our graduate teaching assistants and adjunct faculty members. KaSai went home during the summer to Macau. She was able to visit her family and she also went on a trip to Bangkok, Thailand to visit some friends whom she met in Texas.



KaSai Un in the “Big Chair” at the Big Texan in Amarillo

KaSai presented with **Pamela Webster** and **Jeremy Gamez** at the Texas Community College Technology Forum 2013 last November with the topic *Using Technology to Enhance Blended and Virtual Learning* in Frisco, TX. She also presented with **Pamela Webster** at The New Horizons in STEM Education Conference with the topic *Promote Student Success through Standardizing First Year Mathematics Curriculum* in San Antonio, TX in March. In addition, she presented at the annual Conference for the Advancement of Mathematics Teaching (CAMT) with the topic: *Visualizing Fractions with Models and Manipulatives* and another presentation over *Using Video and Audio Elements to Enhance Math Instruction* with **Pamela Webster** and **Jeremy Gamez** in Fort Worth, TX in July. Also of note, KaSai received the Texas A&M University-Commerce Faculty Senate Recognition Award for Professional Excellence – Teaching Classroom Award, 2013 -2014.



Tingxiu Wang

Tingxiu Wang says that his most memorable activity in 2013-2014 was teaching Math 500, Discrete Mathematics, online in Summer I. It was never his intention to teach the class, nor to teach it online. However, only four weeks before the class started, he decided to teach it online. He began developing video lectures immediately after the spring semester was over. He wrote lecture notes and then spent about three hours every day at the Faculty Center for Teaching with Technology to record video lectures. Each video lecture had only one topic for about 10 to 18 minutes, but recording each video lecture took approximately one hour. This amount of time was primarily due to his desire to make sure each video was error free (although, according to him, there are still two excusable minor errors ☺). Often, Dr. Wang would have to record two or three times before he would be satisfied with the video. Philosophically speaking, he believes that “error free videos” are necessary since any error can stay there forever, and could potentially be viewed by students a million times. The recording lasted through the entire Summer I semester. Students reported that they found the video lectures to be clear and helpful. They stated that they liked this online class and felt as if they learned a lot.

Another activity Dr. Wang had this year was a visit to China for 12 days to see his siblings and parents-in-law. He says that although he has taken trips to China in the past ten years, this was the only trip that he did not give a talk in China. Thus, this trip was more relaxed. The picture of his siblings and their family members was taken at Yong Ding Tu Lou, a world heritage site



Tingxiu and his family this summer in China!

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fujian_Tulou). In terms of professional activities, Tingxiu continues reviewing papers for the Mathematical Reviews. He also was on a review panel of the National Science Foundation. Funded by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, he is directing two undergraduate students on research concerning boundedness of differential equations. Dr. Wang says that he hopes they will come up with some interesting results in the next semester. Even with so many interruptions, he strives to continue his research. Currently, a paper is being written up and will be presented at our math colloquium and the annual meeting of the Texas Section of MAA.

Pamela Webster begins her 16th year as a faculty member in the department. This year, she has given multiple talks including at the following conferences: MAA Texas Section, CAMT, TACHE, the Texas Community College Technology Forum, the New Horizons in STEM Education conference, the Student Success Summit, and various other conferences and workshops. She also had a publication titled *AlgeBlocks from Elementary to High School* in the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators – TX online publication, the [LINK](#).



Pamela Webster with Adam Bowden, Darla Heath, and Bill Aslan

Dr. Webster has worked on several external grant initiatives during this past year, including the Texas Regional Collaborative out of Region X. She also continues doing contractual work in the area of Math Education. In August of this year, the **Comprehensive Student Success Program** grant was complete. Although the funding from the state has gone, the Academic Testing Center remains and, hopefully, will become fully supported by the university.

This year, Dr. Webster completed work with another Honor's thesis student, Allison Stauffer. Allie graduated in August after writing a thesis which explored measurement conversions and applications in the fourth grade classroom. In her free time, Pamela continues to ride and jump horses several times during a week. However, she has not been SCUBA diving in quite a while, and she is currently looking for a new dive buddy. ☺

Retired Faculty

We are blessed to see many of our retired faculty around town from time to time. Many of them attended a departmental dinner this Spring. Although they are all extremely busy, we occasionally get to visit with them when they drop by the department for some special reason. We look forward to seeing many of them at the Homecoming Breakfast each year. **Dale Bedgood** and his wife, Betty, celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary this year. The Bedgoods stay very busy. However, Dr. Bedgood managed to find time recently to come to the department and record some thoughts



Dr. Bedgood speaks at Homecoming 2013

about **Dr. Bill Aslan's** career. He and Betty also came to Dr. Aslan's retirement dinner at the beginning of October. It was a pleasure to see them both there and to hear Dale speak about memories of Bill when he was a new faculty member in the department. We unfortunately lost **Dr.**



Dale and Betty Bedgood at the Spring 2014 lunch

Archie Brock this year (See Page 1 Above). He and his wife, Lela, would have celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary in September. Archie's willingness to entertain us with stories of the department, especially stories about Bill Aslan, will be missed greatly. **John Davenport** is beginning his 9th year of retirement. He and his wife, Donna, can be seen at departmental dinners from time to time. In fact, John served as the Master of Ceremonies for the retirement dinner for Dr. Aslan this month. In their free time, they are avid Rangers fans. **Jack Lamb** and his wife, Mildred, continue to reside in Central Texas, where they are near their grandchildren. **Howard Lambert** and wife Freda continue

to enjoy retirement and travel as much as possible. While Dr. Lambert was out of town for the retirement dinner for Dr. Aslan, he was seen in the department, recording his thoughts about Bill's retirement. We greatly appreciate his words of wisdom. **Vance Underhill** and wife, Ann, celebrated their 6th wedding anniversary in August. Dr. Underhill is also an occasional visitor to the department, and we always enjoy the visit! It was also heart warming to see them present at the retirement dinner this month. Thank you to all of the retired faculty who were able to contribute to the celebration in some way!



Vance and Ann Underhill at Bill's retirement dinner

Alumni News

This year, we graduated FIVE students from our Master's program. We would like to wish them each "Good Luck" as they begin the next phase of their lives. We also hope that they will keep in touch with us as they proceed in their life paths. Please keep us updated!



Graduation August 2014



Graduation May 2014

We also have news from some of our not-so-recent alumni. Much to our delight, **Eddie Mize**, class of 1990-something, attended last year's Homecoming breakfast AGAIN. He is working for Chevron and lives in Conroe, TX, with his wife and children.



Hoyle Julian speaks at Homecoming 2013

From more recent years, **Lacy Gaines** continues to work at Texas Instruments. **Aida Murtazina-Allen** is currently teaching at Trinity Valley Community College and is looking to expand her family. **Dustin Flowers** is working at Como-Pickton High School, and **Derek Fort** (BS Spring 2013) has taken a job at L3 in Greenville. Last but not least, **Allison Stauffer**, who graduated in August, has taken a job teaching elementary math at Mesquite ISD.

We know there are more of you out there who have stories to tell and accomplishments to share! We would love to hear from you so that we can include you in this section of the AfterMath Newsletter. Send us an email, or better yet, come and visit us at the Homecoming Breakfast on Saturday, November 1st!

Departmental Outreach/Grants



Algebra Competition winners 2014

Adventures in Mathematics Day (AIM) in February marked the second annual Northeast Texas Algebra Competition. Ten area high schools sent 173 high school students and 19 high school teachers to participate in the day of activities. While the students were here, they did not only compete in the Algebra Competition. Students were placed on a rotation that allowed them to view a show at the Planetarium, tour the campus, be entertained by Joshua Patterson as he

presented “Mathemagics”, or participate in “Maximum Thrill, No Kill” with Mrs. Lymeda Singleton. Students also learned about the production of a Pixar© movie from Mr. Kevin Singleton. The top-performing students in the Algebra Competition were given vouchers for scholarships to A&M-Commerce, should they come here and major in mathematics.



Maximum Thrill, No Kill competition at AIM Day 2014

Teacher Quality Grants – “Algebraic Thinking in the Middle Grades” was continued for another year for the Athens area and was authored by **Vanessa Huse**. **Maribeth McAnally** served as the co-director. The grant was completed this year.

The **Comprehensive Student Success Program** grant was funded for an additional year, ending in August of this year. **Dr. Pamela Webster** served as the director while **Wendy Gruver** served as co-director. The grant supported the First Year Math program and placed many structures into the program that will assist our students with being successful in their math courses.

Mathematics Clubs and Other Student Activities



OUR WINNING CALCULUS BOWL TEAMS

The CALCULUS TEAM, a part of MAA-AGA, had another successful year. The Calculus Bowl is held in conjunction with the MAA-Texas Section meeting each year in April. For the second year, all three teams made it to the final round. The team of Bradford Garcia, Jeff Hinkle, John Pollock, and Tyler King

placed SECOND in the state at the Calculus Bowl in a field of 27 teams from approximately 20 universities across Texas. The team of Sirong Lin, Lupe Barbosa, and Malik Green-Ellison placed 6th. The team of Jenny Patterson, William Gutierrez, and Maria Zaldivar placed 8th. We want to thank the faculty, staff, and alumni who helped make flying to Laredo possible by buying popcorn or donating to the Math Club Excellence Fund. The team is coached by Mrs. Lymeda Singleton, Dr. Charles Dorsett, and Mr. Joshua Patterson. The department appreciates all of the hard work they put into making these victories possible for our students!



The Council of Teachers of Mathematics was able to sponsor 14 math education students to CAMT in Fort Worth in July. Pre-service teachers



were able to get 15 hours or more of professional development hours, plus many free gifts in the exhibit hall. A big Thank You to those who bought popcorn or donated to the Math Club Excellence Fund which made a partial refund to the students for their conference registration fees possible.

Seven new members were inducted into Pi Mu Epsilon at the club meeting in April. The picture below is of all PME members, new and current, who were present at the April meeting.



Math Skills Center and Developmental Mathematics and First Year Mathematics Programs

The **Math Skills Center** continues to thrive! The last year has seen record attendance. Our First Year Math courses have had record numbers of sections and the enrollment is tremendous. Additionally, many of our courses require tutoring of their students. All of this has added to our usage level as students find a particular “favorite” tutor who explains things in just their language.

As the number of sections in the First Year Math courses increase, those in the **Developmental Mathematics Program** have shrunk. The section sizes are reasonable, and our Graduate Teaching Assistants are able to learn many techniques for working with students through our continued GA training program. In this program, GATs meet once a week to discuss teaching strategies, issues in the classroom, and technology.

The **First Year Mathematics Program** continues to thrive as many more sections of College Algebra, Business Math, and Liberal Arts math are offered. The program has evolved greatly in the past couple of years. In particular, the First Year Math courses are more standardized and faculty and staff have received training in various areas of interest, often including technology.



Spring 2014 GA meeting

Foundation and Scholarship news

We are most thankful for friends of the department who over the years have helped countless students with their mathematical careers. Working with two other departments on campus, we are now able to assist some of our students who are currently teachers; this is in addition to our ability to help needy undergraduates. In addition, the department has recently made a renewed effort to recruit and support graduate students.

A **new Excellence Fund** was founded last year with the specific goal of assisting our students in being able to attend major conferences. In particular, this fund was used to assist with the cost of airfare and other travel to get students to Laredo to attend the April MAA meeting. The fund was put to good use, as our students did quite well: 2nd, 6th, and 8th (See Student Activities Above). In addition, due to Bill’s recent retirement, there is currently a push on the campus to add to the Bill, Gloria, and James Aslan Scholarship Fund. **Wayne Davenport** at the Foundation has been extremely helpful in our efforts for both of these fund raising goals. If you would like to learn more, please feel free to visit with Wayne or anyone in the department.

If you wish to make contributions to any of our scholarship funds, you may call the Department at 903.886.5157 or the A&M-Commerce Foundation at 903.886.5712

A Note From Our Department Head, Dr. Wang:

Welcome. If we want to elect most significant news happened in the past year in the Math Department, here are my humble opinions ☺:

- Retirement of Dr. Bill Aslan: After 45 years of service at A&M-Commerce, Dr. Aslan retired at the end of Spring 2014. We miss his excellent teaching, service, dedication and contributions. Fortunately, he will still come to the Department and can be reached easily by email, Bill.Aslan@tamuc.edu.
- New faces in the Mathematics department: If you have read through this issue of the newsletter, you may see quite a few new faces in our department. With help from Dr. Benavides, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, we got a temporary fulltime position this year.
- Growth of the Mathematics Department: This is in line with the University record high enrollment. Compared to Fall 2013, in this semester, we have four more sections of Math 1314 (College Algebra), one more section of Math 1324 (Mathematics Business Application I), one more section of Math 179 (Mathematics Applications and Philosophy), and one more of Math 401 (Introduction to Mathematical Statistics), although we have one fewer section of Math 131 (Intermediate Algebra). We also have more graduate students enrolled this semester. Graduate credit hours are increased by 81%. In terms of head counts, we have 45 graduate students this Fall. In 2013-2014, we graduated 14 undergraduate, 5 graduate, and 5 second major students.
- Student success: two pieces of information can demonstrate our student success.
 - Our students won 2nd place at the Calculus Bowl Competition in April 2014 at the 94th Annual Meeting of the Texas Section of the Mathematical Association of America.
 - 100% of our math graduates with 8-12 teacher certification passed the TExES exam.
- Adventures in Mathematics (AIM): For outreach to high schools, we organized the second AIM, in February 2014. 173 high school students and 19 high school teachers from ten high schools attended. We will organize the 3rd AIM in February 2015.
- Alumni Ambassador: Dr. Connie H. Yarema, Professor of Mathematics at Abilene Christian University, was invited as an Alumni Ambassador for the 31st Annual Alumni Ambassador Forum held on February 27, 2014. Connie received Bachelor's and Master's degrees from this department, and even worked in the department in 1990's. We were very happy to see her visit. She gave two talks during her visit, and her presentations were well-received by our students and faculty. We will look forward to more alumni coming back.



**Dr. Connie Yarema,
2014 Alumni Ambassador**

We will have more excitement in the coming year and thereafter. Here is one piece of information that can excite us for more than two years: we have been selected by the Texas Section of MAA to host the 97th Annual Meeting in 2017. ☺

This year, the Mathematics Homecoming Breakfast will be held on November 1, 2014, at 9:00 a.m. in the Sam Rayburn Student Center. Please join us for this wonderful event to meet our faculty, retirees, alumni and friends.

Respectfully yours, Tingxiu Wang

Homecoming Breakfast

The twenty-fifth annual Mathematics Homecoming Student/Alumni Breakfast will be held at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, November 1, 2014 in the Sam Rayburn Student Center, in the Ambitions Rooms. **Please send in your reservations.** The cost is FREE(!) to alumni, special friends of the math department, and their guests – but we must know ahead of time (for catering purposes).

Please RSVP at 903.886.5157 or
via email to Leanne.Farquhar@tamuc.edu



Math Department, Fall 2014

Let Us Hear From You

We would like to hear from all of our former students. Whether you used slide rules or calculators in the classroom, attended ET or TAMU-C, we are interested in what has happened in your life since you left campus. **If you have a story about a favorite professor, we would like to hear that, too.** Please fill out the form below and return it to the Math Department so your information can be included in the next *Aftermath Newsletter*. Or, you can email it to Dr. Pamela Webster, the editor of the *Aftermath Newsletter*, at Pamela.Webster@tamuc.edu.

Name: _____

Address (for our files): _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Degree: _____ Year Graduated: _____

Email address: _____

Please list any career changes, achievements, awards, or personal news you would like to share:

Please send to the address below:

**Texas A&M University-Commerce
Mathematics Department
P.O. Box 3011,
Commerce, TX 75429-3011
or via email to Pamela.Webster@tamuc.edu**



Math Department, Spring 2014