

MSCS Mess

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Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science
St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN 55057

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This Week's Colloquium

Title: Estrogen and Dementia: An Exploration of Study Design and Statistical Methods through Example

Speaker: Kathryn Ziegler-Graham

Date: Thursday, September 22nd, 2011

Time: 2:30 P.M.

Location: RNS 310

About the talk:

About the speaker: Katie Ziegler-Graham has been at St Olaf since 2006 where she primarily teaches statistics courses. She received her PhD in Biostatistics from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. While a graduate student she began working in Alzheimer's research. Katie is currently collaborating with a group at the Mayo Clinic further investigating the role of estrogen on cognitive aging.

Problem of the Week

Here's a standard-looking calculus problem. Standard calculus tools suffice, but be sure to defend your solution carefully and completely, and don't rely on decimal approximations of key numbers:

Find the minimum value of $\cos x - 1 + \frac{2x}{\pi}$ for x in $[0, \pi/2]$.

E-mail solutions to Paul Zorn (zorn@stolaf.edu) no later than Tuesday.

Tea Time

A new social period has arrived in the Math Department! Tea Time offers a chance for students and professors to get together to drink tea, socialize, play games, and talk about math. Tea Time will be on Monday, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays every week from 3:10 to 3:40 in the 6th floor lounge of the Math Department Building. There will be cookies and a variety of teas to enjoy.

Problem Solving Club is Back and We Want You!!!

Do you like Math? Do you like fun, interesting, and intriguing problems? Do you want to take the Pizza Trophy back from Carleton? The Math Problem Solving Group meets weekly to socialize, tackle a variety of problems, and discuss problem-solving strategies. Additionally, students can use the meetings to prepare for the contests (some of which have case prizes) such as the MAA North Central Section Team Contest, the Putnam Exam, and the Konhauser Problemfest. This is an excellent opportunity for all mathematics students, including those pursuing careers in math education, contemplating graduate mathematical study, or who just want to have some fun! All interested students are welcome, regardless of courses taken.

The club meets Thursdays (starting September 22), 6-7 PM in RNS 206. Interested students should contact Prof. Berliner (berliner@stolaf.edu) to be added to the information list, even if you cannot attend regularly!

Interested in teaching mathematics?

If you are interested in becoming a secondary (grades 5-12) mathematics teacher, please contact Prof. Ryota Matsuura (matsuura@stolaf.edu). He would be happy to talk to you about our Mathematics Education program. Below are some "nuts and bolts" details about the program:

1. Who is it for?

The Math Education program is primarily for students who are interested in becoming high school or middle school math teachers. But many of the courses we offer are applicable to a variety of career paths (e.g., Educational Psychology).

2. What are its requirements?

Students in the Math Education program will take a course load of a regular mathematics major, plus additional courses in the Education Department. They also complete a full semester of student teaching during their senior year (or 9th semester).

3. What do I get when I graduate?

Students who complete the program will earn a B.A. in Mathematics and possibly a concentration in Educational Studies. They will also obtain a Minnesota secondary (grades 5-12) mathematics teaching license, which may be transferred fairly easily to most other states.

4. What are some strengths of the St. Olaf Math Education program?

For one thing, you complete a full mathematics major -- this makes you extremely attractive as a teaching job candidate. (In fact, St. Olaf graduates are highly sought after by schools in Minnesota.) Our students also gain a lot of "field experiences" in secondary schools, not only

during their student teaching semester, but from very early on in the program. Our courses are taught by professors who have teaching experience in a wide range of grade levels and are still very much connected with the latest trends in today's K-12 schools. Oh, and we have an interim course called Multicultural Education in Hawaii. (Yes, it's an off-campus course.)

Travelers is coming!

Want to know more about what it takes to become an actuary? St. Olaf alums who work for Travelers Insurance in St. Paul will be on campus Thursday, September 29, 6-7 PM in BC 143. They will discuss what the career is like, what courses to take while at St. Olaf, and how to go about getting summer internships! Travelers is particularly interested in making contact with students before their senior year, so sophomores and juniors are encouraged to attend (in addition to seniors, of course). If you have any questions about the event, please email Prof. Berliner.

MSCS Games Collection

Last year the Math Dept purchased a sizable collection of board games for public use. These are located on the 6th floor (the lounge) of the Math Department Building and are for a variety of players! Please do not remove the games from the lounge (even if you are taking them to your dorm room).

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If you would like to submit an article or math event to be published in the Math Mess, e-mail jacobsoj@stolaf.edu.