New Scholarships Established

Each year, the Mathematics Department awards several scholarships to high-achieving students here at UND. This year, the department has established a new scholarship, and it will soon establish another one. The first new scholarship is the Diana L. Wells Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is named in honor of Dr. Diana Wells, who served as a faculty member in the UND Mathematics Department from 1991 to 2002. The other new scholarship is the Deann and Lee Christianson Scholarship. This scholarship is specifically for a full-time student majoring in Mathematics. Funds are scheduled to be available to the first recipient of the Deann and Lee Christianson Scholarship in March of 2015. This new scholarship has been made possible by a generous contribution from Drs. Deann and Lee Christianson.

The scholarship recipients for the 2014-2015 academic year are as follows:

**Kathryn S. Sigurdson** (Diana L. Wells Memorial Scholarship)

**Caleb B. Larson** (Judy Ann Utton Memorial Scholarship)

**Lindsey M. Peterson** (Jay O. & Marie Bjerkas Mathematics Scholarship)

**Nathaniel J. Peterson** (Ronald C. & Ann C. Bzoch Memorial Scholarship)

**Zachary J. Craig** (Paige Plagge Memorial Mathematics Scholarship).

We would like to thank the donors who have made the old and the new scholarships possible!

Liams and Khavanin Promoted

Mathematics Department faculty members Dr. Michele Liams and Dr. Mohammad Khavanin have been promoted to the rank of Full Professor. Both promotions became effective at the beginning of the fall 2014 semester. Dr. Liams completed her Ph.D. in Education here at UND in 2002. Her research specialty area is mathematics education. Dr. Khavanin finished his Ph.D. degree in Mathematics at the University of Texas at Arlington in 1986. His research specialty area is differential equations. The Math Log congratulates Dr. Liams and Dr. Khavanin for their promotions. Both have done very good work here!

New GTA and Lecturers Join Department

**Erich Jauch** began work as a GTA here in the Mathematics Department this past fall. Erich is from Peru, Illinois, and he has attended Illinois Valley Community College and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His undergraduate major was in Mathematics. Erich enjoys reading, video games, and acting in theater. He recently became engaged. Erich and his fiancée plan to marry after they both have completed their master’s degrees.

**Joe Newhall** began service as a lecturer here last fall. He is from Portland, Oregon, and he holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of Colorado. He completed his Ph.D. in 2010, and the research for his Ph.D. dissertation dealt with functional analysis and vector optimization. Dr. Newhall enjoys playing basketball, softball, and the guitar.

**Radha Panini** also began service as a lecturer here last fall. She is originally from New Delhi, India, but she lived in Chicago before coming to Grand Forks. She completed a Ph.D. degree in Financial Mathematics at Stony Brook University in Stony Brook, New York, in 2004. Dr. Panini enjoys reading, doing puzzles, and watching and studying stock markets.

Visitors Present Talks

Professor Thomas Q. Sibley presented the talk “Getting Hyper from Painting Cubes” on February 27, 2014. Professor Sibley currently serves in the Mathematics Department at the College of St. Benedict and St. John’s University, which are located near St. Cloud, Minnesota. Professor Sibley’s talk was part of the Ed Nelson Memorial Lecture Series.
Professor Dale R. Buske, of St. Cloud State University, presented the talk “Simple, yet Complex, Iteration” here at UND on October 30, 2014. Professor Buske’s talk was also part of the Ed Nelson Memorial Lecture Series.

Dr. Nathan Axvig presented the talk “Mathematical Modeling for Sports Scheduling and Conference Alignment” here on November 13, 2014. Dr. Axvig is currently a faculty member in the Mathematics Department at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. He received a B.S. degree in Mathematics from UND in 2005 and a Ph.D. in Mathematics from University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2010.

GTAs Graduate

Patrick Durkin received his M.S. degree in Mathematics in May of 2014. As part of his graduate studies, he wrote a thesis entitled “Geometry of Quivers,” and he presented a talk on his thesis work on April 29, 2014. His academic adviser was Dr. Bruce Dearden. Patrick is currently pursuing a Ph.D. degree at the University of Oregon.

Alaina Sandbakken completed her M.Ed. degree in Mathematics in May of 2014. The title of her independent study report was “The Effects of Procedural and Conceptual Instructional Approaches,” and she presented a talk on her independent study work on April 30, 2014. Alaina’s advisers were Dr. Michele Liams and Dr. Cheryl Halcrow. Alaina is now serving as a Mathematics faculty member at Lake Region State College in Devils Lake, North Dakota.

Where They Are and What They Are Up To

Elizabeth (Hagen) Huso (B.S., 2008) has previously worked at an accounting firm and as a school business manager. She currently works with her husband on the family farm in Aneta, North Dakota, assisting with bookkeeping in the office. The couple has a boy named Herlof, who was born in May of 2013.

Craig S. Olson (B.S., 1988) lives in the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, area and is employed by Rockwell Collins, a company serving aerospace and defense customers. He is currently the Vice President and General Manager of the company’s Business and Regional Systems unit in Cedar Rapids. Craig is originally from Grand Forks. While still a UND student, he was a cooperative education engineering student with Rockwell Collins. He accepted a full-time position with Rockwell Collins at the time of his graduation in 1988. In 1995, he completed an MBA degree from the University of Iowa. Craig’s wife, Minny (Deol) Olson, is also a UND graduate. Craig and Minny have a son and a daughter. Their son, Rajin, is a law student at the University of Minnesota, and their daughter, Ria, is a junior at Iowa State University. Ria is studying Economics and Vocal Performance. Craig has very fond memories of his experiences here at UND.

Tim LaBerge (B.S. 1987) is currently employed by Microsoft Corporation in Redmond, Washington. He writes software that helps to automate the networks that provide Microsoft’s on-line services, such as Bing, XBox Live, Skydrive, and Azure. Several months ago, Tim traveled to Japan. During the trip, he attended a meeting of the Japanese Network Operators Group and presented a talk at this meeting. Tim took a probability course from Professor Ed Nelson here at UND in the 1980s. Tim says that Professor Nelson was respected and well-liked by both students and faculty.

Bruce Smith (B.S., 1970) has published Nowhere But North Dakota: Clear Skies and Open Airspace, a book describing the history of the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences here at UND.

Wendell Uutala (M.Ed., 1976) lives in Ladysmith, Wisconsin, and is now retired. He taught mathematics at Ladysmith Junior High School for eleven years and at Ladysmith High School for twenty-four years. He has coached girl’s basketball, and he has served as athletic director and as commissioner of the Heart of the North Conference. You can reach Wendell and his wife Janet at 204 West Phillips Avenue, Ladysmith, WI 54848. Wendell and Janet’s telephone number is (715) 532-3748.

Katrina (Nagel) Eberhart (M.S., 2007, B.S. 2005) is currently an Assistant Professor of Mathematics at Bismarck State College in Bismarck, North Dakota. She is working on a Ph.D. degree in Teaching and Learning from UND. UND offers a limited number of courses in Bismarck, and Katrina has taken a few of these. She has also taken courses which UND offers in the on-line format via the Internet. She hopes to complete her Ph.D. in 2016.

Danica (Belanus) Allard (M.S., 2012, B.S. 2010) began service as a full-time Assistant Professor in a tenure-track position at Bismarck State College (BSC) in Bismarck, North Dakota, last fall (fall 2014), and she enjoys her work there very much. Since her arrival at BSC, Danica has attended the annual conference of the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges in Nashville, Tennessee. Danica’s husband, Steven, works as a credit analyst at Kirkwood Bank and Trust in Bismarck.
Michael Simmers (M.S., 1993) lives in East Grand Forks, Minnesota, and is now serving as a mathematics instructor at Northland Community and Technical College in Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

Timothy Pennings (M.S., 1981) is currently the Chair of the Mathematics Department at the Grand Rapids campus of Davenport University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He received his Ph.D. degree in Mathematics from Iowa State University in 1987.

Faculty Footnotes

Bruce Dearden, Joel Iiams, and Jerry Metzger have published the article “Rumor arrays” in the Journal of Integer Sequences.

Dr. Joel Iiams presented the talk “Vanilla, Crunch, Separation Anxiety and Survivors” at the North Dakota Undergraduate Mathematics Conference at Minot State University in Minot, North Dakota, on September 20, 2014.

Dearden Works on Projects

UND Mathematics Department faculty member Dr. Bruce G. Dearden is on sabbatical leave for the 2014-2015 academic year. He is spending most of his time at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, where he is working on two projects. The first project is a mathematical research project involving dynamical systems and modular arithmetic. The other project involves UND’s Discrete Mathematics course (Math 208). Several years ago, faculty members here developed a book of typeset lecture notes for Math 208. Many instructors of Math 208 (including the Math Log editor) often use these typeset notes as the textbook for the course. Dr. Dearden plans to modify these lecture notes; he plans to incorporate “inquiry-based” pedagogical methods into the notes. Dearden is also planning to incorporate WeBWorK into Math 208. WeBWorK is an on-line computerized homework system which is available free of charge.¹

Zerr Serves on Team to Develop New College Program

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) is currently developing a new program which is intended to improve undergraduate college education in the U.S. The program is the Scientific Thinking and Integrative Reasoning Skills (STIRS) program. The AAC&U recently selected thirteen faculty members from several different academic disciplines and from several different colleges and universities in the U.S. to serve as STIRS scholars. These thirteen scholars will assist with the establishment of the STIRS program. One of the thirteen scholars is UND Mathematics Department faculty member Dr. Ryan J. Zerr.

The STIRS program specifically aims to develop the ability of students to use evidence-based problem-solving techniques to solve difficult real-world problems. The strategy of the AAC&U and the STIRS program is to develop a set of case studies that college and university teachers can use in their classes. For purposes of the STIRS program, a case study is an exercise in which students investigate some specific practical problem or question. By using empirical evidence and scientific reasoning, the students then find a solution or answer to the problem or question. For example, Dr. Zerr is developing a case study in which students investigate the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. The apportionment process is surprisingly complex, and this leads to all sorts of challenging questions for students to investigate. Each of the other twelve STIRS scholars is likewise developing his or her own case study.

All of the case studies will be rather substantial in nature. Dr. Zerr estimates that students will usually spend one to three weeks working on a typical case study, but in extreme cases, they might spend up to an entire semester on a single case study. Each STIRS scholar is currently developing and refining a written description of his or her case study, along with written guidelines and suggestions for dealing with the problem or question of the case study.

The organizers of the STIRS program plan to select a new set of scholars each year for the next several years and have them develop additional case studies. As the collection of case studies grows, the organizers hope to make the case studies available for use by college and university teachers throughout the U.S. They could do this by publishing the case studies in a book, posting them on the Internet, or by some other means.

In addition to developing the case studies, the mission of the current group of STIRS scholars also includes the task of planning the future of the STIRS program. For this reason, the scholars recently traveled to Portland, Oregon, where they met with each other and with two representatives of the AAC&U. During the meeting, the scholars and representatives discussed possible ways of publicizing the new case studies. They also discussed other aspects of the STIRS program, such as ways of continuing the program after the initial funding from the AAC&U is exhausted. The group plans to hold a similar meeting in Washington, DC, in January of 2015. The AAC&U has agreed to cover the travel expenses of the STIRS scholars for the Portland and Washington meetings.

¹ Information on WeBWorK is available on the Web at http://webwork.maa.org.
Dr. Zerr became a STIRS scholar after he submitted a successful proposal to the AAC&U. He first learned about the STIRS from Dr. Tom Steen, the director of UND’s Essential Studies program. Steen was familiar with Dr. Zerr and his previous work. He told Dr. Zerr about the STIRS program and encouraged him to submit a proposal.

Further information on STIRS is available on the Web at

http://www.aacu.org/stirs.

You can also find a short description of the STIRS program and a color photograph of Dr. Zerr on page 51 of the Summer 2014 issue of the UND Alumni Association’s Alumni Review magazine.

**Department Holds Annual Math Track Meet**

The UND Mathematics Department hosted the annual Mathematics Track Meet on Monday, February 17, 2014. Mathematics Department faculty and lecturers prepared several short mathematical exams for students in grades seven through twelve. On the day of the Math Track Meet, 188 students from high schools and middle schools in the Grand Forks area came to Witmer Hall here on the UND campus to take the exams, and the Mathematics Department promptly graded each exam. At the end of the day, the Department announced individual and team winners.

**Gilsdorf Accepts Position in Mexico**

Former UND Mathematics Department faculty member Dr. Thomas Gilsdorf is now serving as a visiting professor at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) in Mexico City. He is officially retired from UND.

**Mathematics Professor Emeritus Dr. Gene Kemper Discusses Years at UND**

Last summer the *Math Log* editor visited with Dr. Gene A. Kemper. Dr. Kemper first came to UND in 1951 and retired in 1996. He served as a faculty member here in the Mathematics Department for several years, but he also served the University in other capacities. Dr. Kemper’s career story sheds some light on how UND has come to be what it is today, and it also gives examples of ways in which mathematics can impact areas outside of the field of mathematics itself.

Dr. Gene Kemper was born and raised in the town of Drake, North Dakota. He came to UND as an undergraduate student in 1951. In 1956, he completed a bachelor’s degree with a double major in Mathematics and Physics and a minor in Education. In the fall of 1956, he began work on a master’s degree in Mathematics at UND. During his graduate studies here, Kemper also served as a full-time instructor in our department. He completed his master’s degree in the spring of 1959 and went to work for Hughes Aircraft in Los Angeles, California, the following summer. In the fall of 1959, he returned to the UND Mathematics Department and took a faculty teaching position here.

As you may know, the Cold War was in progress at this time, and the Soviet Union had recently launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite to orbit the Earth. Sputnik led to an increased interest in science, technology, and education in the U.S., and because of this, administrators here at UND decided that faculty members should have higher academic credentials. Sometime during the 1959-60 academic year, the college Dean told newer Mathematics Department faculty members that if they wanted to pursue a teaching career here at UND, they needed a Ph.D. degree. Kemper did not have a Ph.D. at this time, of course, so at the end of the year, he left UND and went to work for the Boeing aircraft company in Seattle, Washington.

**Work at Iowa State**

Dr. Kemper kept in touch with his former UND colleagues Jim Rue and Tom Robinson, who had also left UND in 1960. Rue and Robinson had begun Ph.D. studies at Iowa State University. Kemper was interested in applied mathematics, and Rue and Robinson spoke highly of the applied mathematics program at Iowa State. Kemper decided to join them at Iowa State, and in 1961, he began work on his own Ph.D. there. He studied numerical analysis, differential equations, functional analysis, topology, and physics. He completed his Ph.D. at Iowa State in 1965.

When Kemper finished his Ph.D., he wanted to teach at the university level. But he had kept in touch with a friend from Boeing, and the friend suggested that Dr.
Kemper return there. Kemper received a very good offer from Boeing, one which he “could not refuse.” The offer was for half-time work in Boeing’s aircraft division and half-time work in the Boeing Scientific Research Laboratories (BSRL). Dr. Kemper accepted the offer and returned to Boeing in 1965. In his new position, Kemper used his applied mathematics skills to solve problems relating to the design and use of aircraft. Kemper specifically mentioned the problem of installing a radar system on an airplane, as well as problems related to takeoff and landing of aircraft on unpaved runways. Some of Dr. Kemper’s work at Boeing involved computer programming, which he learned to do at Boeing.

Dr. Kemper’s activities at Boeing were challenging, but he was also interested in teaching. He had enjoyed working at UND, and he wanted to return here. In addition, he wanted to be close to his family here in North Dakota. For these reasons, he applied for a faculty position in the UND Mathematics Department. He came for an interview, received an offer, and returned here in the fall of 1966.

When Dr. Kemper returned to the Mathematics Department, he taught mathematics courses and did most of the things that mathematics professors normally do. In the years following 1966, he advised graduate students, published research papers, and helped develop an applied mathematics program within the Mathematics Department. He says that the department was very supportive of his efforts to work on the projects and activities that interested him.

The Computer Committee

One important activity for most university professors, of course, is work on committees. Dr. Kemper’s computer experience qualified him for service on the University Computer Committee, and he was appointed to this committee shortly after his return here in 1966.

One of the main tasks of the Committee was to establish policies governing the use of UND’s Computer Center. The Computer Center was a room in Twamley Hall in which the University used computers to perform data processing for administrative offices here at UND. The Computer Center also served students and faculty who needed to run computer programs for their studies or research. The Computer Center had its own staff, and this staff actually operated the computers. Technology was less advanced at the time. Computer users would use keypunch machines to encode computer programs and data on heavy paper cards. The Computer Center staff would then feed the cards into a card reader machine, and the computer would process the program and the data. Minutes or hours later, the users would receive the data processing results. The Computer Committee formulated policies that allowed students, faculty, and University administrative offices to share the services of the Computer Center in an efficient and fair way.

Another mission of the Computer Committee was to encourage the very use of computers, both here at UND and at other schools. Computers were still somewhat new in the 1960s, and many schools did not use them at all. To promote the use of computers, Dr. Kemper, along with Mr. Conrad Dietz, the director of the Computer Center, established the Small College Computing Symposium (SCCS). The SCCS would invite speakers to give computer-related presentations to college and university faculty and administrators from across North Dakota. In some cases, the SCCS would conduct workshops in which participants would use the services of the Computer Center. The SCCS still exists today but is now known as the Midwest Instruction and Computing Symposium.

Nowadays most colleges and universities have a computer science department which offers courses and degrees in computer science. At the time of Dr. Kemper’s return here in 1966, UND had no such academic department, but Dr. Kemper soon came to see the need for computer science studies at UND. Before long, Dietz and Kemper developed a proposal for a computer science program at UND. Some other faculty members helped them with this effort initially but later dropped out from the project. University committees eventually approved the proposal, and the UND Mathematics Department began to offer courses in computer science. A few years later, UND established the Department of Computer Science, and all computer science courses and degrees are now offered through that department.

From 1966 to 1969, Dr. Kemper was officially a full-time member of the UND Mathematics Department. In 1969, however, he began part-time service as a member of the Computer Center staff. In 1979, he switched to a full-time role as Associate Director of the Computer Center. In the course of his career, Kemper was also involved with the development of the North Dakota Higher Education Computer Network (HECN), the North Dakota Interactive Video Network (IVN), and the Online Dakota Information Network (ODIN). Dr. Kemper and Mr. Dietz received two summer grants from the U.S. National Science Foundation to host workshops on instructional use of computers for college and university faculty. In the summer of 1969, Kemper worked at the Atomic Energy Commission Lab at Iowa State University.

In the early 1980s, a position opened up in the office of UND’s Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Kemper applied for it. He was hired, and in 1981, he began service as the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. During the 1992-93 academic year, Dr. Kemper served as the interim Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). This was an important position. Under the current organizational structure at
UND, the VPAA reports directly to UND President Robert O. Kelley, and most of the college deans report to the VPAA.

From 1993 until his retirement in 1996, Dr. Kemper served as Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs of the North Dakota University System (NDUS). The NDUS currently includes UND, North Dakota State University, and nine other public colleges and universities in North Dakota.

Recent Years
Dr. Kemper and his wife Mickey currently live in Bemidji, Minnesota, but they usually spend each winter in Arizona. Dr. Kemper keeps in touch with many of his former colleagues from the UND Mathematics Department. He frequently sees Dr. Jim Rue, and he has recently visited Dr. Dave Uherka.

At the end of my discussion with Dr. Kemper, I asked if he had any concluding remarks or thoughts. He began by describing how exciting it had been to observe and experience the many changes that took place during his years here. But he also reflected on his education, in particular, the education he received here at UND. Many people, he said, might think that a degree from a larger or more prestigious school might be more valuable than a degree from UND. But he said that he received a good education here and that this education has served him well throughout his career. Dr. Kemper’s story shows, of course, that his education has indeed served him well. I hope that all of us can say the same about our own education. We may not all accomplish the same things that Dr. Kemper has accomplished over the course of his career, but our education can still serve us well in a variety of ways!

The Pseudo-Sum
By Larry Peterson

Several different construction projects are currently under way here on the UND campus. Workers are constructing a new home for UND’s School of Medicine and Health Sciences several blocks north of the UND campus. UND is also constructing a new indoor athletic practice facility. (See photo.) It appears that this facility will be large enough to contain a full-size indoor football field. The new building is located immediately to the east of UND’s Memorial Stadium. And near the center of the UND campus, the University is constructing a modest addition to the Law School Building. Finally, an October 8, 2014, posting in UND’s University Letter announced a planned ground breaking ceremony for Robin Hall, a new building to be located in the extreme southwestern portion of the UND campus. Robin Hall will serve UND’s John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences.

Other things are also happening here at UND, of course. The University is considering changes to the way that resources are allocated among the various colleges, departments, and programs. There may be changes at the Chester Fritz Library. People have been discussing possible changes to the University Senate. And plans are under way for finding a new nickname and logo for UND’s athletic teams.

I think that many of you also enjoy reading about events in the lives of the Math Log’s readers! The “Where They Are and What They Are Up To” section of this issue of the Math Log contains an abundance of news from our readers. Please keep this news coming! But whether we hear from you or not, I hope that things are going well for you!

Mathematics Department Faculty and Staff for 2014-2015

Anthony J. Bevelacqua ................................................. Professor
Gwennie A. Byron .................................................. Senior Lecturer and Math Learning Center Director
John B. Collings ...................................................... Associate Professor
Bruce G. Dearden ................................. Professor (on leave for 2014-2015)
Gerri M. Dunmigan .............................................. Associate Professor
Stuart R. Farn ....................................................... Senior Lecturer
Cheryl L. Halcrow .................................................. Associate Professor
Doojin Hong .......................................................... Associate Professor
Joel E. Iiams .......................................................... Professor and Chair
Michele A. Iiams ...................................................... Professor
Mohammad Khavanin .............................................. Professor
Liliya Martsynyuk ...................................................... Clerk
Jerry M. Metzger ...................................................... Professor
Richard P. Millsapugh ............................................. Professor
Michael C. Minnotte ............................................... Professor
David P. Morstad .................................................... Senior Lecturer and Mathematics Computer Lab Director
Joseph Newhall ....................................................... Part-Time Lecturer
Radha Panini .......................................................... Lecturer
Lawrence J. Peterson .............................................. Associate Professor
Timothy M. Prescott .............................................. Assistant Professor
Mary E. Rerick ....................................................... Senior Lecturer
Thomas L. Richards ............................................ Senior Lecturer
Jessica R. Snyder .................................................... Senior Lecturer
Lona Spicer .......................................................... Administrative Secretary
Shuzo Takahashi ................................................... Associate Professor
Eun-Jung Youn ....................................................... Part-Time Lecturer
Ryan J. Zerr ........................................................... Associate Chair

2. The University Letter is available on the Web at http://webapp.und.edu/dept/our/uletter.
The following persons are responsible for monetary gifts to the UND Alumni Association specifically designated for the improvement of the Department of Mathematics. We thank you for your generosity!

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Dorothy & David Uherka  Matching donation for Forrest J. Bjerkaas

Deann & Lee Christianson Scholarship
Drs. Deann & Lee Christianson

* multiple contributions

If you would like to make a monetary contribution to UND, to the UND Mathematics Department, or to one of our scholarships, please make your check payable to the “UND Foundation.”

Your generosity is gratefully acknowledged and sincerely appreciated!

Let us hear from you!