

# The First Six Years of the Mathematical Sciences Department

Report from the Former Chair

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I have finished six years as the first chair of the Mathematical Sciences Department. You may recall that six years ago the Mathematics & Computer Science Department split into the Mathematical Sciences and the Computer & Information Sciences Departments. Dr. Joseph Straight is now chair of Mathematical Sciences. We have been quite busy these last six years. Let me tell a little bit about what we've been doing.

We have had three retirements. Dr. James McKenna retired in May 2005. Prof. Janet Meissner just retired this fall and Prof. Dennis Cecala retired in December of 2007. Some of you may remember that Dennis had a long career teaching mathematics at Fredonia High School and then came and spent about ten years teaching calculus for us. Janet taught many Precalculus and Survey of Calculus courses over her 32 years here. Jim served as Department Chair from 1992 to 1998 as well as teaching many different courses over his many years at Fredonia. We were thrilled that Jim Will and Tom Taylor were able to attend the gathering to celebrate Dennis's retirement. This was a mini-reunion of three of the founders of Chi Tau Omega, the Math Club which is still going strong today.



Figure 1: Jim Will, Dennis Cecala and Tom Taylor



Figure 2: Janet Meissner, Jim McKenna and Joe Straight

We've had some promotions. Dr. Julia Wilson and Dr. Meral Arnavut have now been at SUNY Fredonia for ten years. They were both granted tenure and promoted to associate professor in 2006. I was promoted to full professor in 2008. Dr. Joseph Straight was promoted to Distinguished Service Professor in 2009.



Figure 3: Meral Arnavut



Figure 4: Julia Wilson

During my years as chair we hired three new faculty members. In August, 2005, Dr. Lan Cheng joined us. She is from Jiangsu, China. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh in financial mathematics and teaches classes in applied mathematics and financial mathematics. Lan has a young son Ray Cheng Dai and a husband Lijun Dai who lives on Long Island. In August, 2006, Drs. Jonathan and Teodora Cox were hired. Tedi is Bulgarian and Jon is from Wisconsin. Jon and Tedi have two young sons, Josiah and Sebastian. Tedi's field is mathematics education. She and Keary Howard work together to prepare our pre-service teachers and also work with the graduate students in our Masters in Mathematics Education program. Jon teaches mathematics courses such as Calculus, History of Mathematics and Abstract Algebra.

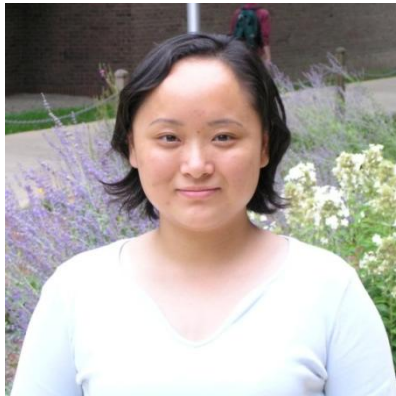


Figure 5: Lan Cheng



Figure 6: Jonathan Cox



Figure 7: Teodora Cox

Several department members have received awards in recent years. Keary Howard received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching and Joe Straight received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Service. Harris Kwong was chosen to give the Kasling Lecture, a recognition of excellence in research. He gave the lecture, *The Magical World of Graph Labeling*, recently. Four of our students have been chosen to receive the Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence. They are Rachel Olson, Alden J. Edson, Whitney Kaczor and Jacob McMillen. We have always known that this is a great department with lots of great faculty and students. We are very pleased to see them get the recognition they deserve.

Our Applied Mathematics major with tracks in Finance & Economics, Physics, and Statistics & Operations Research moved from a track in the mathematics major to a separate major. We have had about 25 students complete our Mathematics Honors Program. Students are invited to join this program and if they decide to accept the invitation they take two special courses for honors students and complete an honors thesis. Our mathematics education programs have received national recognition with our NCATE SPA report.

A few years ago the Fishbowl got a make-over with new paint, carpet, nice chairs and air-conditioning! Here's Bob Rogers trying to get his students to prove a theorem.



Figure 8: Bob Rogers and Students in the Fishbowl



Figure 9: Most of the "Crew" at the latest Seaway Section Meeting

This fall 18 of us drove through the rain to get to SUNY Plattsburg for the Seaway Section Meeting (of the Mathematical Association of America), where Jon Cox organized a few rounds of faculty versus students in Jeopardy. A team of students from Fredonia and Brockport combined to win the final round. Two students, Bernard Moore and Steve Lockwood presented posters on their Honors Thesis work with Joe Straight. Bob Rogers is chair of the Seaway Section for the second time. Last fall SUNY Fredonia hosted the conference where Sam Raghunath gave a talk. This past summer a group went to MathFest in Pittsburgh, where Allison Spencer gave a Pi Mu Epsilon talk.



Figure 10: Faculty Jeopardy Team



Figure 11: Student Jeopardy Team



Figure 12: Allison giving her talk

As many of you know the department always has big presence at the AMTNYS (Association of Mathematics Teachers of New York State) conference. The students are busy preparing their presentations for the upcoming meeting. Bob Rogers is editor of the AMTNYS journal, *The New York*



*State Mathematics Teachers Journal*. Keary Howard will soon become Vice-President. He'll be running next year's conference.

Several alums have stopped in – we love to see you! Many local teachers have helped out with our pre-service teachers. THANKS!! We have had more “official visits” with a few alums who have come to campus to give a presentation to our students. Recently Daniel Wilson, Ron Ogborne, David Bristol and Susan Schall have made interesting and informative presentations.



Figure 13: Mathematical Sciences Students and Faculty Prepare for Graduation 2010