Welcome! We hope you enjoy the first edition of our Union University Department of Mathematics newsletter! Our desire is to keep you informed and up to date on the latest department and faculty news, upcoming Math events, and alumni goings on. If you have any newsworthy items you would like included in our next edition, please email crowland@uu.edu and we’ll be sure to get them in for you!

chair's corner

The Department of Mathematics at Union University is blessed to have been part of the lives of its many alumni. Our alums lead diverse lives, and we would love to hear what you are doing, whether you are working in industry, teaching, retired, raising a family or doing research. Do you live overseas? Are you retired? Bring us up to date.

Many of you have put your mathematical training to work in a variety of settings, and perhaps your story could inspire current students to consider opportunities they might not have considered. Some of you have stories of how the integration of faith and learning at Union has impacted your lives or the lives of those around you. Remember Galatians 6:6!

May God bless you,
Bryan Dawson
Chair and Professor, Department of Mathematics

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Have you visited the Math department’s new faculty/student lounge, The Union Intersection? It’s a great, quiet place to study, either alone or in study groups, eat a snack, or just hang out and chill! We’re so thankful for our faculty and students to have their own personal “math” space.

The Department of Mathematics at Union University recently welcomed to campus Dr. David L. Neuhouser, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Taylor University (Ind.). Dr. Neuhouser gave two public lectures at Union. In his first address, he spoke to a general audience in Harvey Auditorium on the topic “What Does Mathematics have to do with Christianity?” He argued that through beauty, imagination, reason, paradoxes, and obedience, one can find connections between mathematics and Christianity which can lead to growth and understanding in both areas. His chief witness for this claim was 19th century author and preacher George MacDonald. In the second address, Dr. Neuhouser was the guest speaker for the monthly Colloquium Series (co-hosted with the Department of Computer Science). His talk entitled “Many Dimensions” discussed how the idea of higher dimensions is not only a fruitful concept in mathematics, but also is the basis for theories in modern physics, and moreover has been used in literature (e.g. Edwin Abbott, C. S. Lewis, and Madeline L’Engle) and in theology. In addition to his public lectures, Dr. Neuhouser conversed with senior mathematics majors.

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Michelle Nielsen joined our faculty this year. Dr. Nielsen received her Ph.D. in May from the University of Minnesota, specializing in the area of probability. As an undergraduate, Dr. Nielsen attended Bethel University (Minn.), so she understands the mission of a faith-based university.

Dr. George Moss joined the department last fall. He brings teaching experience from the University of Virginia–Wise and Lambuth University. Dr. Moss’ doctorate is from Virginia Tech in the area of applied mathematics, and he is also a graduate of nearby Haywood High School in Brownsville. Dr. Moss also serves as Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Department of Mathematics is planning an alumni reunion during the 2011 homecoming celebration in the fall. Watch Union’s homecoming announcements for details!

Alumni news

Allen Smith (’04, math & computer science) and wife Ruth, also a Union alum, (chemistry), welcomed a new baby boy into their family on October 16. Eric Christopher Smith was born on October 16 and weighed 8 lbs., 2 oz.

Brian Taylor (’05, math & physics) has finished his doctorate in medical physics and is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

Union mathematics alumni in graduate programs include Jennifer Ellis Belton (’05, Univ. of Georgia); Matthew Dawson (’08, Louisiana State Univ.); Robert Michael (’08, Middle Tennessee State Univ.); and Jacob White (’10, Wake Forest, computer science).

Recent graduates teaching high school include Kristin Kirk (’09, South Gibson County High School) and Peter Boedeker (’10, University School of Jackson).

“Mathematics is made of 50 percent formulas, 50 percent proofs, and 50 percent imagination.”

—George Polya

Dr. Neuhouser addresses faith and learning

Meet our new faculty

Homecoming 2011

—the union intersection