MSCI NEWSLETTER

Dunn Hall

From the Interim Chair

Dear Friends, Alumni, Students, and Colleagues,

As 2024 draws to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on a year marked by significant change. Most notably, Irena Lasiecka, who served as department chair for 11 years, stepped down in August. I have had the honor of stepping in as interim chair. Our department owes a deep debt of gratitude to Irena for her committed leadership during some of the most challenging times. Under her guidance, the Department navigated the comings and goings of several university leaders and steered through the uncertainties of the pandemic and its aftermath. With the support of faculty, students, alumni, and friends, we overcame these trials and are now emerging stronger, more resilient, and ready to embrace the challenges of the future.

Thomas Hagen

Looking ahead with optimism, we are excited to welcome new faculty members who will help shape the Department's continued growth: Assistant Professors Alexander Gavrilyuk and Nathan Lindzey in Graph Theory/Combinatorics, Assistant Professor Andrews Anum in Statistics/Data Science, Assistant Professor of Teaching Stephen Guffey, and Postdoctoral Researcher Sreejith Siju in Functional Analysis.

Our future is filled with promise. With renewed focus on research and student success, the department is taking bold steps to embrace the opportunities ahead. I invite you to join us in shaping a future that builds on our past achievements and leads to even greater success.

With best wishes for the coming year,

T.H.

THE UNIVERSITY OF **MEMPHIS**®
Department of
Mathematical Sciences

New Colleagues

Andrews Anum joined our Statistics/Data Science group as Assistant Professor. Andrews received his PhD from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Alexander Gavrilyuk received his DSc from the Krasovskii Institute of Mathematics and Mechanics in Russia. He joined our Graph Theory/ Combinatorics group as Assistant Professor.

Stephen Guffey joined the Department as Assistant Professor of Teaching. He received his PhD from the University of Memphis.

Nathan Lindzey earned his PhD at the University of Waterloo in Canada. Nathan joined our Graph Theory/ Combinatorics group as Assistant Professor.

Sreejith Siju joined our Analysis Group as a Postdoctoral Researcher. He earned his doctorate from the Indian Institute of Technology, Palakkad.
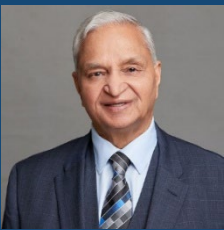
Elaine Williams, a native of Clarksdale, MS, joined the Department of Mathematical Sciences as our new Administrative Assistant.

Former Colleagues

Manohar Aggarwal, Assistant Professor of Teaching, retired after more than 20 years of service in Memphis and more than 30 years at Delhi University, India. Well done, Manohar!

George Anastassiou, Professor of Mathematics, retired from the Department after a 38 year career. In honor of his distinguished contributions to his field and to the Department, he has been awarded Emeritus status. All the best in retirement, George!

Dale Bowman, Associate Professor of Statistics, passed away unexpectedly. A cherished teacher and dynamic scholar, she leaves behind a profound legacy among her students, friends, and colleagues.

Baris Kopruluoglu, Assistant Professor of Teaching, left the Department to pursue a career as Data Scientist at St. Jude/ALSAC. All the best!

Student Spotlight

Our graduate and undergraduate students have achieved remarkable success. This section showcases some of their honors and accomplishments since Summer 2024.

Alexander Jefferson, a graduate student in Mathematics, was awarded a Student Success and Innovation PhD Fellowship. This fellowship is an award made available to the University of Memphis by the State of Tennessee. Alexander recently successfully defended his PhD dissertation under the guidance of Professor Segun George.
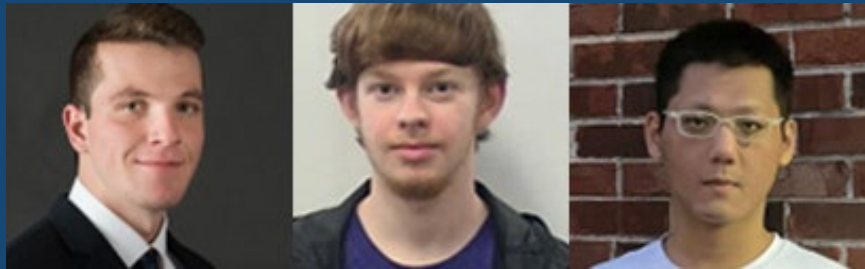
Jake Stewart, an undergraduate student in Mathematics and Physics, was awarded an Honors Summer Research Fellowship from the Helen Hardin Honors College. His research earned first prize in the Mathematics and Computer Science category at the 2024 *Works-in-Progress Symposium.*

Noah Molder, a graduate student in Mathematics, received a Phi Kappa Phi Graduate Fellowship to pursue his Master's degree at the University of Memphis. This prestigious fellowship is highly competitive, with only 54 awarded nationwide across all academic fields. In addition, Noah is the 2024 recipient of the Dr. Karen E. Chancellor Memorial Scholarship for students in the Accelerated Bachelor to Master program.

The Dr. Karen E. Chancellor Scholarship was established by Carol Chancellor in memory of her sister Dr. Karen Chancellor who served as Shelby County's medical examiner for nearly 14 years before her passing in 2021.

Gordian Bruns, Aaron Mathis, and **Runze Wang**

Gordian Bruns, Aaron Mathis, and Runze Wang have been selected by the Department as Senior Teaching Assistants for the 2024/2025 academic year. In this leadership role, they will support other graduate assistants as they transition into becoming instructors of record for their own courses.

Other News and Initiatives

The Dr. Ralph Faudree Award in Mathematics

Starting in 2025, Pat Faudree, the widow of our late colleague and internationally renowned mathematician Professor Ralph Faudree, has increased the monetary value of the Dr. Ralph Faudree Award to $500.

The Dr. Ralph Faudree Award is presented annually to up to two PhD students in Mathematics who have shown outstanding progress toward completing their doctoral degree. We are deeply grateful to Pat Faudree for her continued generosity and unwavering support of this and several other initiatives.

Career Services

In collaboration with **Career Services**, the Department is offering career-readiness workshops designed specifically for undergraduate and graduate students in Mathematics and Statistics. Two career-readiness workshops were held in Fall 2024.

CoRS Grants

The Department recently received two Community-of-Research Scholars (CoRS) grants from the University of Memphis, with faculty from across campus involved in both projects. The first project, "College Algebra for Engineering Students," is led by Alpha Ba, while the second project, "Information-Theoretic Discovery of Synergistic Interactions," is collaboratively run by Segun George and Thomas Hagen.

Established in the fall of 2018, CoRS was created to cultivate interdisciplinary discourse and nurture the growth of research across the University of Memphis.

Directed Reading Program

The Department is launching a new directed reading program aimed at enhancing the appeal of our major. Led by Stephen Guffey, the program will pair undergraduate students with faculty and graduate students to explore advanced topics in mathematics and statistics.

Internships

The Department is excited to announce a new collaboration with the lab of Professor Amber Smith at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. Professor Smith, an applied mathematician by training, will host an undergraduate math major in her lab during Summer 2025 to work on a project focused on infectious disease modeling.

Other internship opportunities, especially with First Horizon Bank and other financial institutions, are being explored.

We need you!

The Department has made tremendous strides, thanks to the dedication and commitment of our alumni and friends. Many of our essential functions and initiatives would not be possible without your ongoing support. We hope you will continue to stand by us. For your past and continued support, we offer our heartfelt

THANK YOU!!

https://supportum.memphis.edu/MathEnrichment