



GMATYC News

A Publication of the Georgia Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges

President's Corner

Jessica Craig, GMATYC President
Georgia Perimeter College, Dunwoody

The weather in Georgia has turned to spring bringing thoughts of the easier days of summer to mind. While you are making summer plans, consider taking part in the GMATYC Blog. This summer, Calandra Davis and I will be creating a special topic in this blog which should help us all learn more about AMATYC's "Beyond Crossroads". Who of us does not feel that we can do a better job in developing in our students a greater appreciation for mathematics and an increased confidence to use mathematics? "Beyond Crossroads" gives us the rationale and process for implementing change in our math classes in particular and in the two-year college mathematics programs in general. We hope to address questions such as how best to teach technology savvy students? How can we engage students in active learning? How can we test our new methods and strategies to see what works best for our teaching style? To make this blog topic work, we must all take

part. We need to learn from each other. This blog is by invitation and to use it you must be a GMATYC member. If you misplaced your invitation to the blog, contact Calandra Davis cdavis@gpc.edu.

This year's annual GMATYC meeting took place at the 20th annual Georgia Perimeter College Mathematics conference. It was a wonderful conference, chaired by Dr. Kouok Law. Check out the newsletter article by Dr. Law for more information about this conference. If you were not able to attend this year's conference, you missed a good one. I hope you will be able to join us next year. These conferences and our annual GMATYC meetings offer us a wonderful opportunity to network with and learn from other Georgia instructors who teach students their first two year's of college mathematics.

If you missed the conference and missed renewing your GMATYC

membership for this year, please do so now. You can do this by going to the GMATYC webpage <http://www.gmatyc.org> and click on the "Become a Member" link. Fill out the form you find there and send it along with the \$10 annual membership fee to Alice Pierce.

At our annual meeting, it was announced that the next AMATYC meeting was changed from New Orleans to Minneapolis. This change was required because the scheduled New Orleans hotel could not guarantee that it would be ready for the meeting. I hope you will be able to join us at the AMATYC conference next fall. Because this change is a hardship for the already burdened New Orleans conference local arrangement committee, we voted to send \$200 to the AMATYC Foundation Special New Orleans Fund to help fund their travel expenses to Minneapolis.

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The next Bill Bompert Teaching Excellence Award will be given in 2008. Now is the time to start considering who would make a good candidate. You could be the next recipient. See the announcement on page 6 and find more details at :

www.gmatyc.org

President's Corner

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(continued)

At this meeting, it was also announced that Dr. John (Jack) Robertson, Georgia Military College - Milledgeville is our new President Elect. Congratulations Jack!!! He should have some wonderful ideas to further improve our organization.

I am looking forward to working with him. The two new members of the Nominating Committee are Ilene Grant and Robby Williams, both from Georgia Perimeter College. The new members of the Membership Committee are Alvina Atkinson, Fort Valley State University (who has agreed to serve another three year cycle on this committee) and Allan Hagerstrand, Georgia Highlands College. Thank all of you for volunteering to help! GMATYC could not function without the help of its members. Next year we will be electing a new Secretary and a new Treasurer as well as two new members of the nominating committee. Consider running for one of these positions. Your help is needed to keep GMATYC a strong and growing organization, and serving as an officer in GMATYC is a professionally rewarding opportunity. If you are interested, contact the members of the nominating Committee listed on the GMATYC webpage.

We are also asking for volunteers for our new list of campus contacts to Georgia colleges. These contact people will encourage membership in GMATYC at their schools as well as act as a liaison for distributing information from GMATYC and AMATYC. The vol-

unteers we already have are Don Brown, Macon State College; Jessica Craig, Georgia Perimeter College-Dunwoody; Gloria Hitchcock, Georgia Perimeter College-Rockdale; Kouok Law, Georgia Perimeter College-Clarkston; Lewis May, Coastal Georgia Community College; Donna Saye, Georgia Southern University; and Heather Walker, Savannah Technical College. Thank all of you for volunteering! If you teach at a school or campus that is not represented here and are willing to serve as a campus contact person, please email me, Jessica Craig, jcraig@gpc.edu.

This fall we will again award the Bill Bompert Teaching Excellence Award. This award is given to recognize excellence in teaching. The winner will become the GMATYC nominee for the AMATYC Teaching Excellence Award for the following year. A one-year membership to GMATYC, a one-year membership to AMATYC, and a plaque will also be given to the award winner. Please consider nominating a colleague for the award. The chair of the Bill Bompert Teaching Excellence Award Committee this year is Jack Robertson, our new president-elect. Nominations and inquiries should be sent to him jroberts@gmc.cc.ga.us. You can find the nomination information on the GMATYC webpage.

I am also pleased to tell you that one of our own, Donna Saye, is running for AMATYC Regional Vice President to replace Rob Kimball

as he retires from this position. If you are a member of AMATYC, you should consider voting for her during the next round of AMATYC elections.

My last comment is that I hope you will all consider becoming active in our wonderful organization, even if it is just contributing to our blog. GMATYC offers a unique opportunity for professional development to those of us who teach the first two years of college mathematics in Georgia.

I also want to invite everyone to come to this year's GPC Mathematics Conference on February 16 and 17, 2007. It promises to be a very exciting conference thanks to the hard work of this year's conference chair, Kouok Law. While you are at this conference, don't forget to come to the annual GMATYC meeting! Read more about the conference in Kouok Law's article in this newsletter.

Finally, tell your colleagues about our organization. Share your enthusiasm for GMATYC with others and, if they aren't already members, invite them to join. Our organization is enriched by every member and the more members we have, the richer we will all be for it.

Meeting the Needs of Unprepared Students: GPC's Essential Algebra Course (Math0096)

Sandee D. House, Georgia Perimeter College

Under the quarter system, the Learning Support Mathematics program at GPC offered three courses to students who were admitted to our institution, but were not prepared to enter the first freshman-level, credit course (at that time either College Algebra or Liberal Arts Math). Once the system converted to the semester system, however, the BOR mandated the following of all LS areas.

"All Learning Support programs must be designed so that students can complete all requirements in an area in a maximum of two semesters. A maximum of twelve semester hours or three semesters, whichever occurs first, may be taken in any area."

This presented quite a dilemma for the Learning Support Mathematics faculty who had to decide how to redesign a three-course curriculum to be covered in a two-course sequence. Since 15 quarter-hours "converts" to 10 semester hours, the best and most logical choice for our new courses would have been two 5-hour courses. This was not acceptable to administration, however, that was looking at other considerations such as the costs associated with faculty workload. Like most other USG systems, GPC chose to create two 4-hour courses and cover less of the topics at the beginning of the sequence. That meant that our students were directly losing two-hours of instruction and that they would also be taking more classes at the same time. A "lose-lose" situation for our weakest students.

The first semester we taught the course, anecdotal evidence suggested that these weaker students were not going to be able to make it in this two-course sequence. Over the years, we began to think of creative ways to present the pre-algebra (arithmetic) material that had been eliminated as a result of the semester system conversion. So, during the 2005 – 06 academic year, we created Math0096 – Essen

tial Algebra. This is a 6-hour course that covers arithmetic and all of Beginning Algebra. If a student passes this course, he (she) goes directly to our Math0098, (Intermediate Algebra) course. Although we had evidence to suggest that students scoring as high as 24 on the COMPASS needed such a course, we chose to place students whose COMPASS scores were 16 or lower in this new course. That resulted in fourteen (14) sections of Math0096, with an average enrollment of almost 22 students per section.

We are still collecting data so it's too early to say exactly what effect this course is having on student success. We do, however, already know the following to be true.

1. Math0096 students are more likely to be older (out of high school longer), African-American, receiving need-based Financial Aid, have other Learning Support needs (taking Reading and/or English) and lower standardized test scores.

Remarks: This course is addressing the needs of an underserved student population, meaning that students with these demographics are not graduating at rates proportional to their enrollment rates. While this might be expected due to their level of under-preparation, should it be acceptable to admit these students to our institutions and not offer the support needed (courses and services) to ensure their successful completion of coursework?

2. 54.40% of students who took Math0096 were successful during their first attempt at the course last fall. It is extremely important to remember that these students completed both arithmetic and ALL of our beginning algebra (Math0097) content. Although they had the lowest placement scores, their pass rates with the beginning algebra content were only 5.24% lower than students who had made scores as high as 29 (17 – 29) on the COMPASS. In addition, the pass rate for students making lower than 16 on the COMPASS was more

than 13% higher than those students making this score and taking Math0097 Fall 2004 through Spring 2006 – 54.40% vs. 40.73% (before the Math0096 course was available.)

Remarks: Although the data is preliminary, the course in its first semester appears to have been successful because these students completed the course at rates comparable to those in Math0097 and they were more likely to pass this course than the traditional Math0097 course.

3. The pass rates of Math0097 in Fall 2006 were also the highest they had been in the last 3 years.

Remarks: Removing the weakest students from the Math0097 Course probably contributed to this increased passing rate.

What Now?

The results of our Math0096 course continue to be collected and analyzed. We do believe it is contributing to the success of our weakest students and we want to continue to modify the course during its second year to see if we can do even better.

For a complete listing of course outcomes, please check out the following link:

<http://www.gpc.edu/~mcse/CourseDocs/learnsupport/cco0096-fall2006.doc>

If you have any questions about this course, please contact Sandee House at GPC.

Email: shouse@gpc.edu



The 20th Annual Georgia Perimeter College Mathematics Conference

Kouok K. Law, Georgia Perimeter College

The 20th Annual Georgia Perimeter College Mathematics Conference was held at the Lawrenceville Campus of Georgia Perimeter College on, February 16th and 17th 2007.

The Conference started with a Welcome Address from the new President of Georgia Perimeter College, Dr. Anthony Tricoli, who took office in October 2006. With his outstanding record in leadership at many institutions of higher education, we are certain that President Tricoli will keep on supporting the GPC Mathematics Conference. In his speech, Dr. Tricoli praised the Mathematics Conference and recognized all the participants.

The Conference was honored to have Dr. Gary Rockswold as the keynote speaker. Dr. Rockswold is professor of mathematics at Minnesota State University, Mankato; his opening address titled "Mathematics, Science, and Reality," was truly fascinating, introducing the audience to the strange worlds created by Einstein's relativity, quantum physics, and string theory. With sounds and images, his presentation really showed us how mathematicians play an essential role in society, and why we should communicate mathematics better: the general public is not aware of the abstract universes that mathematicians have conceived. He concluded his address by saying that "even if these ideas were to be proved false, they would still make beautiful pieces of mathematics!" Afterwards, he continued his presentation by providing an opportunity for discussion and questions in the workshop "Just How Much Power Does Math Have?" that was filled to capacity.

To celebrate its twentieth anniversary, the GPC Mathematics Conference issued a limited number of commemorative T-shirts, ran a continuous slides show of pictures, taken in the past Conferences, in the Atrium during the afternoon, and entertained the Friday Dinner with a jazz band, "The Three D's."

Starting immediately, the GPC Math Conference is resuming the publication of the transcripts of talks presented at the Conference. So if you would like to write a paper based on your presentation, please send your file as an attachment in Word format to klaw@gpc.edu for posting on the web at the GPC Mathematics Conference site.

Here are the statistics for the 20th Annual Conference: a total of 38 GPC faculty members were involved as committee members or volunteers to run the Conference, there were one hundred thirty people who registered, and twenty nine speakers. We had a significant increase in the number of attendees to the Saturday workshops presented by Bruce Wahl, Paul Zorn, Fred Peskoff, and James Wilson. The conference attendees, from 7 states, were from the following 24 institutions:

Borough of Manhattan Community College
Brewton-Parker College
Chattahoochee Technical College
Chattanooga State Technical Comm. College
Coastal Georgia Community College
Columbus State University
Dalton State College
Fort Valley State University
Gainesville State College
Georgia College & State University
Georgia Military College
Georgia Perimeter College

Georgia Southern University
Kaplan University
LaGrange College
Macon State College
Minnesota State University, Mankato
North Florida Community College
Northern Virginia Comm. College
Savannah Technical College
St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN
Tri-County Technical College
University of Georgia
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Mrs. Andrea Hendricks will be the Chair of the GPC Mathematics Conference XXI. Starting next year, we will accept students co-presenting with faculty members either oral or poster sessions. The GPC Mathematics discipline group has established a Fund through the GPC Foundation to award the best student presentations with cash rewards. These Awards will be most likely given according to categories. The GPC Mathematics Conference Awards Fund is soliciting donations from all that are willing to promote the teaching of mathematics. Dr. Rockswold was the first individual, from outside GPC, to contribute to the Fund, by donating his honorarium of \$400. If you wish to contribute, please contact The GPC Foundation, 3252 Panthersville Rd, Decatur, GA 30034, or send an email to klaw@gpc.edu.

If you would like to have your name placed on the Conference mailing list, please contact Mr. Albert Lu, the conference registrar, at alu@gpc.edu. For more information and the most recent updates, check the conference website www.gpc.edu/~gpcmathc. We look forward to seeing you all at the 2008 Conference that will be held at the Clarkston Campus.



Gainesville College Mathematics Tournament

Thomas Hartfield, Gainesville College

The 13th Annual Gainesville State College Math Tournament was held in Gainesville, Georgia on April 13th, 2007.

Nearly one hundred students from ten colleges across the southeast participated in this one day event. Students were challenged by a morning individual round involving calculus and an afternoon team round involving algebra, geometry, and other precalculus topics.

Georgia Perimeter College swept top honors in the college, team, and individual categories this year.

Perry Atangcho from the Dunwoody campus of Georgia Perimeter captured the morning competition by a single question over Kwang-Yong Lee of the Clarkston campus of GPC and students from Itawamba Community College in Mississippi and Wake Technical Community College in North Carolina.

Georgia Perimeter had six of the top thirteen students: Atangcho, Lee, Tapas Misra, Abel Eshete, Yeol-Hoon Choi, and Jacob Bridges

Amongst other competing Georgia colleges, the top individual students were: Kenji Nomura and Garrett Sisk from Gainesville State College who finished in a tie for seventh and tenth, respectively; Isaac Lockman from Dalton State College who finished in a tie for twenty-second; and the pair of Bradley Waters and Himaben Patel from East Georgia College who both finished in a tie for twenty-seventh.

In the afternoon competition, a pair of teams from Georgia Perimeter topped the ladder. The team of Yeol-Hoon Choi, Kwang-Yong Lee, Joseph Phillips, and Cheuk-Yam Tam from the GPC Clarkston campus finished first.

Students earned cash prizes up to \$400 for placing in the top four in the individual round and gift cards up to \$40 for being a member of one of the top three teams. Students were also eligible to receive partial scholarships to attend Mercer University with the top students receiving offers of up to \$16,000 per year renewable for three years.

Overall winners were:

1st Place:

Georgia Perimeter College, GA

2nd Place:

Wake Technical Comm. College, NC

3rd Place:

Itawamba Comm. College, MS

The individual round winners were:

1st Place: Perry Atangcho, Georgia Perimeter College—Dunwoody

2nd Place: Kwang-Yong Lee, Georgia Perimeter College—Clarkston

3rd Place: Jamal Daher, Itawamba Community College, MS

4th Place: Ahmad Saffouri, Wake Technical Community College, NC

The team round winners were:

1st Place: Georgia Perimeter College—Clarkston Campus, GA

Yeol-Hoon Choi, Kwang-Yong Lee, Joseph Phillips, Cheuk-Yam Tam

2nd Place: Georgia Perimeter

College—Dunwoody Campus, GA

Natalia Almanza, Perry Atangcho, Erica Johnson, Tapas Misra

3rd Place: Wake Technical Comm. College, NC

Reema Alnizami, Cheng Hao,

Kathryn Murphy, Ahmad Saffouri

Participating Colleges:

Catawba Valley Community College of Hickory, NC

Dalton State College of Dalton, GA

Durham Technical Community

College of Durham, NC

East Georgia Community College of Swainsboro, GA

Gainesville State College of

Gainesville, GA

Georgia Perimeter College of

Clarkston, Decatur, Dunwoody, and Lawrenceville, GA

Itawamba Community College of

Fulton, MS

Northwest Mississippi Community

College of Senatobia, MS

Southwestern Community College of

Sylva, NC

Wake Technical Community College

of Raleigh, NC

Announcements

Bill Bompert Teaching Excellence Award:

Do you know of an excellent teacher?

Are you an excellent teacher?

*Nominate for the
GMATYC's Bill Bompert Teaching Excellence Award
are being accepted.*

The winner will become the GMATYC nominee for the AMATYC Teaching Excellence Award for the following year. A one-year membership to GMATYC, a one-year membership to AMATYC and a plaque will also be given to the award winner. Nominations must be sent to

*Dr. John Robertson
Department of Mathematics
Georgia Military College
and are due by Friday November 30, 2007.*

For more information and the nomination forms, go to the GMATYC website: www.gmatyc.org .

Mark your calendars.

*The next Georgia Perimeter College Mathematics Conference will be
February 15 and 16, 2008
at the Clarkston Campus of Georgia Perimeter College.*

The next GMATYC meeting will be held during that conference.

GMATYC Congratulates...

- ***Marwan Zabdawi was promoted to Associate Professor of Mathematics at Gordon College***
-
- ***Alvina J. Atkinson joined the faculty at Georgia Gwinnett College as an Associate Professor of Mathematics.***



President Jessica Craig Georgia Perimeter College, Dunwoody Campus	Past President Donna Saye Georgia Southern University
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