UConn Co-op Math Communicator

Newsletter of the University of Connecticut High-School Co-op Program in Mathematics

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Big Changes in the Program

At the April 30 workshop (see article on page 2), the Coordinator announced the retirement of Co-op Program Manager Karen Craig. During the summer, the Interim Co-op manager is Brian Boecherer <Brian.Boecherer@UConn.edu>, telephone (860) 486-1045. Starting August 23, and continuing for the coming academic year, the Interim Manager will be Parul Patel. As of this issue's press time, her e-mail address was not yet activated, but by the time of Brian's departure, it should be Parul.Patel@UConn.edu.

Math 105 and 106 will be removed from the Co-op Mathematics program after this coming academic year. Math 103Q and 107Q are the suggested replacements. (The Math 107 exams distributed at the workshop were incomplete. For a new set, contact Sharon McDermott: telephone, 486-6452; e-mail sharon@math.uconn.edu.)

On May 5, it was announced that Director of Educational Partnerships and High-School Co-op Director Michael Menard would assume the position of Director of UConn's Torrington campus at the end of this month. Interim Director for 2004–2005 is Co-op Associate Director Jill Thorne <Gillian.Thorne@UConn.edu>. Jill has been working actively on the new NACEP accreditation requirements, some of which were discussed briefly at the workshop.

The biggest change for 2004–2005 follows successful pilot testing of a Core Final Exam component. Starting this Fall, every Co-op Math 115Q final will include a collection of questions on the Core Topics for the course, which are posted on the Math Co-op Web Document Repository (see below for coming improved access). Teachers will report each student's score on the Core questions and their full Co-op final exam, and assign Co-op grades consistently with the practice at Storrs: course grades fall within one full letter grade of that for the student's final exam. This responds to the NACEP requirement that each Co-op Coordinator certify Co-op grades are assigned in a manner equivalent to that at UConn. It will be possible to give a different grade to students for their high-school transcript, but the UConn letter grade should, except in isolated and highly unusual circumstances, conform to this standard. For example, should a student score 85 on a final exam for which that grade was in the A– area, the Math 115Q grade would be A, A–, B+, B or B–. This leaves considerable leeway for instructors to factor in their own unique grading philosophy while still assuring equivalence with UConn Math Department grading practice. (Recall that the Coordinator encourages teachers to counsel students to withdraw from a Co-op course unless their grade is B or better, but students are entitled to Co-op credit if their course grade is C or higher.)

Volunteers for pilot testing of the Math 116Q core component are now welcome. To participate, e-mail Jim Hurley <hurley@math.uconn.edu>.

Soon, the Co-op portion of the UConn Math Department Web site will expand, with a password-protected area for downloading Math 115Q exams from last year and this Fall, as well as Math 116Q exams from Spring, 2003 and 2004. Watch for more details. (And see the reminder below!)

Reminder

The Math Co-op ListServ is available to all certified Co-op teachers, and will carry important program announcements, including updates to the Web site and availability of exams. If you have not yet signed up, please send e-mail to Jim Hurley.

Site Visits to UConn Welcome

As mentioned in the last edition (which, like this one, is available at www.math.uconn.edu) you are most welcome to visit the Storrs campus to observe classes that you teach on a Co-op basis. (See the last edition for more, including reactions

of a teacher who did so last year.) Jim Hurley is happy to help identify appropriate sections and coordinate arrangements with you. Contact him at any time to explore the possibilities.

April 30 Workshop Highlights

The elimination of weekday reading days (between the end of classes and start of final exams) at UConn coupled with the observance of Mathematics Awareness Week at the end of April led to this year's re-certification workshop's date of April 30, immediately following Mathematics Awards Day. That date was the *only* choice that allowed the workshop to feature one of the authors of UConn's new Math 115Q–116Q text, Professor Roland Minton of Roanoke College, a person with a very strong reputation as a speaker. The responses of the attending teachers on the evaluation sheets were full of enthusiastic appreciation of both Prof. Minton's and John Duffy's expository skills and the value of the workshop as a whole.

Representative samples: "*much* improved" [Editor's Note: hmm ☺], "Wonderful!!","Terrific," "best one yet!" "Excellent: best one in several years," "extremely informative," "In 30+ years of UConn Co-op participation, this was the *best* presentation," "Minton was sensational/great ideas from Duffy," "continue with this type of presentation," "more teacher presentations," "I enjoyed seeing activities and discovery problems to incorporate in my classroom," "good workshop, very interesting. I really do have a problem with it being just before the AP test," "Please don't schedule it 2 days before the AP exam." "Outstanding! John Duffy's presentation was very good, and I will probably use the lab in class…For the future, don't schedule this two days before the AP exam."

The careful reader will note a contradiction: Scheduling the workshop on that day made it possible to persuade the Awards Day speaker to stay overnight and lead a session on the use of parametric equations to model real-life phenomena. Awards day is tied to the national observance of Mathematics Awards Week, so can't move. Thus, continuing that type of presentation would entail the same conflict with the AP exam that the last three teachers asked us to avoid. The coordinator felt the potential reward was great enough to justify that unfortunate side effect in this year's truly unusual circumstances. (Alas, would that every year's Awards Day speaker were of Prof. Minton's caliber!) As mentioned April 30, the 2006 workshop will almost certainly return to its former mid-May time slot, after UConn final exams and probably after the May 15 seasonal start of its air conditioning system. A reminder: next year's workshop will be in August, probably on the Monday before UConn classes start. (This year, that would be August 23.)

This edition's lead article covers the important program issues that the first session discussed. (Note to several commentators: no matter how much we might wish otherwise, the workshop must include updates on program procedures. We tried to minimize that this year: two-thirds of the coordinator's session was devoted to the new text's treatment of exponential functions. But for a re-certification workshop, program mechanics are part of the permanent agenda.) Per the above comments, John Duffy's lively session on his discovery-based approach to the chain rule and numerical integration was a very big hit. We would very much like to continue having teacher-led workshop sessions, and it's not too early to volunteer! Simply contact Jim Hurley and indicate the topic(s) you would like your session to feature. As Smoky would put it, only *you* can prevent University faculty from blowing smoke at the participants throughout next August's entire workshop!

Willing to be Reasonable!

Any teachers facing de-certification because of not having attended a workshop since 2002 and who felt it was of paramount importance to meet their calculus class April 30 are invited to send a note to Prof. Hurley explaining their absence from the Spring workshop. To prevent registration problems for your students, please send such notes prior to the start of UConn's Fall classes, August 30.