
From the AMS

Thiel Named Director of AMS-SIAM Employment Project

The AMS and the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM) have announced that Linda C. Thiel of Ursinus College has been named Project Director of a joint AMS-SIAM project funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The goal of the project is to provide information and develop services for exploring nontraditional career opportunities in the mathematical sciences. The project is part of an ongoing effort by the Sloan Foundation to provide better resources to scientists seeking employment in nonacademic environments.

"Students are very concerned about their prospects for careers in mathematics," Thiel notes. She points out that mathematics faculty are often asked the question, "What can I do with mathematics?" Even those headed for careers in academia are beginning to realize the need to be aware of how mathematics is used in industry and how mathematicians work in industry."

The project aims to assist students of mathematics at the graduate and undergraduate levels in making educated career plans and choices by providing them with a wide range of information. Among the services will be an interactive career bulletin board, accessible through the Internet, describing the careers of selected individual mathematicians. For a set period of time, five to six mathematicians will be featured on the bulletin board and students will be able to direct queries to them about their careers. Another part of this effort will be an extensive survey of mathematical scientists at the baccalaureate, mas-

ter's, and doctoral levels. This survey will provide information on the career paths of these individuals and more generally on the demands of the technical workplace.

The Sloan Foundation has also granted funds to several other scientific organizations to pursue similar projects. Among these are the American Institute of Physics and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. AMS and SIAM are also investigating the idea of producing an interactive CD-ROM and hope to collaborate with the other organizations receiving funding from Sloan. If produced, the CD-ROM would bring together all of the information generated in the project, as well as perhaps a dozen video interviews with individuals from different scientific areas who have pursued nontraditional career paths. It is expected that colleges and universities would use the CD-ROMs when advising students on career choices and opportunities.

Although near-term concerns about the tight job market make this project especially timely, Thiel points out that the motivations are broader. "There are jobs in industry that mathematicians could do very well, but they are not specified as jobs for mathematicians," Thiel explains. "In some cases a mathematician is clearly the right person for the job. But in other cases, we have to convince industry that mathematicians could do certain jobs very well." One of the goals of the project is two-way communication in which mathematics faculty and students gain insight into how mathematics can be used in industry, and industry develops better understanding of what mathematicians can contribute.

An applied mathematician, Thiel received her Ph.D. from Drexel University. She was a senior operations research analyst with QUANTICS Incorporated before taking a position as an assistant professor at Ursinus College two

years ago. She began June 1, 1995, as project director and will be working out of the SIAM offices in Philadelphia.

—Allyn Jackson

AMS Renovates Headquarters Building

The American Mathematical Society recently completed a major renovation of its headquarters building in Providence. The \$3.4 million renovation project took four years to plan and execute. In addition to a complete remodeling of the headquarters building, the project included the purchase and renovation of a second building to accommodate the Society's printshop, warehouse, and distribution facilities. The AMS building was purpose-built for the Society in 1974.

The entrance and lobby were moved from the west side of the building to the northern end. About fifteen additional windows were put in, offices were constructed and reconfigured, two sets of restrooms were added, and new carpets were installed. Prior to the renovation, a maze of high-walled cubicles dominated the main part of the building. Today, moderate-height cubicles allow for privacy but still encourage interaction among employees.

The ventilation system was replaced by a completely new, state-of-the art computer-controlled system, and a new access and security system was installed. The decor now features a color scheme of wine, teal, and gray, and red was added as an accent in fixtures and furniture. Full-spectrum lighting, installed throughout the building, closely resembles daylight. The new lobby area is an open, inviting space with a large display of AMS publications.

The newly renovated conference room was named in honor of Einar Hille, AMS President during 1947-1948. The room was renovated, furnished, and equipped through a generous bequest donated in memory of Hille by the estate of Mary K. Peabody. A commemorative plaque was installed outside of the Hille Conference Room. In addition, all individuals who now donate an aggregate amount of \$1,000 annually are recognized in a special way. Their names are affixed to a marble plaque denoted "American Mathematical Society Benefactors," which hangs in the lobby.

Artwork features prominently in the building. A marble sculpture, entitled "Cross Cap and Vector Field," was created by mathematician Helaman Ferguson and donated by the MAA on the occasion of the AMS Centennial. The sculpture is in the new lobby area. The lunchroom has a two-canvas painting by the Puerto Rican artist Cybelle Cartagena. Rhode Island artist and AMS employee John Riedel was commissioned to create a painting for the AMS. The painting, entitled "Mathematical Stillife," plays on themes from mathematics and astronomy.

The Society will continue to upgrade its facilities by installing more modular furniture suitable to the workspaces created in the renovation. In addition, the AMS will enhance its computing facilities by equipping employees with work-



Brenda Pelleier

Robert M. Fossum, Cathleen S. Morawetz, William H. Jaco, Franklin P. Peterson, and John H. Ewing in front of the plaque honoring Society benefactors during the celebration for the opening of the newly renovated headquarters.

stations connected to central servers through which files can be shared. Larger mainframe machines will continue to be used for the Society's various databases and for large publication production jobs.

The Society celebrated the completion of the renovations with a special Open House event on May 5, 1995. Attending the Open House were the Governor of Rhode Island, Lincoln Almond, and Providence Mayor Buddy Cianci. Friends and family of AMS employees also attended the affair, as did many former AMS employees. Mayor Cianci gave an impromptu speech during the Open House, adding some levity to the event. In response to Bus Jaco's remark that the AMS was "Rhode Island's best-kept secret," Cianci joked about the building's lack of windows before the renovation. The AMS was a secret, he said, because "you didn't have any windows for twenty years, so no one could see in." In fact, for years the mysterious, windowless look of the AMS building prompted rumors that it is a CIA front. Referring to the fact that the AMS pays no property taxes because it is a nonprofit organization, Cianci remarked: "It's a beautiful building, and my only regret is that I can't tax it."

The AMS Executive Committee and Board of Trustees (ECBT) were also treated to a special Open House celebration during their meeting in Providence in late May. The ECBT passed a resolution of appreciation to the AMS staff for the success of the renovations and for completing the project on time and under budget. "The beautiful facility will be appreciated by all for years to come," the resolution stated.

—Allyn Jackson