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# For Your Information

## AMS and SIAM Online Mentoring Program

The AMS and the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics have collaborated on a project designed to increase awareness of the employment opportunities outside academia that are available to mathematicians. The Web site <http://www.ams.org/careers/> is the centerpiece of the project. A new feature of this project has just begun: an online mentoring program is designed to connect students with mathematicians working in industry, government, or business.

The program is aimed at students who are enrolled in master's or doctoral programs in the mathematical sciences at U.S. institutions. In addition, those who received their graduate degrees up to one year ago may participate.

Participants will be assigned a mentor who will answer general questions about preparation for working in industry and about the work environment in industry, discuss what to expect on an interview, and share their career experiences. In addition, participants can ask mentors to look over the courses already taken and make recommendations about future course work, read over a résumé and give feedback from the perspective of someone hiring in industry, and give guidance about putting together a cover letter suitable to industry. The mentor will be available for discussion and questions for no more than a year through this program.

If you are currently working in a nonacademic position and are interested in more information about being a mentor, please contact Linda C. Thiel, [thiel@siam.org](mailto:thiel@siam.org), telephone 215-382-9800.

—from AMS-SIAM Careers Web Page

## Electronic Mailing List for NSF Announcements

The Division of Mathematical Sciences (DMS) of the National Science Foundation (NSF) has an electronic mailing list called "MATHDEPT" which is used to alert the mathematical sciences community to NSF announcements. The announcements are usually a couple of paragraphs in length. Those who would like to be added to this mailing list should send the following one-line message to the address "listmanager@nsf.gov":

subscribe mathdept [followed by your full name]

Other information of interest to the mathematical sciences community can also be found via the World Wide Web on the DMS home page: <http://www.nsf.gov/mps/dms/>.

—DMS

## Report on Teaching in the U.S. Cites Flaws

"Most states pay more attention to the qualifications of veterinarians treating America's cats and dogs than to those of the people educating the nation's children and youth," states a recent report on teaching in the U.S. The report contains the following statistics:

Nearly one-fourth (23%) of all secondary teachers do not have even a minor in their main teaching field. This is true for more than 30% of mathematics teachers.

Fifty-six percent of high school students taking physical science are taught by out-of-field teachers, as are 27% of those taking mathematics and 21% of those taking English.

In schools with the highest minority enrollments, students have less than a 50% chance of getting a science or

mathematics teacher who holds a license and a degree in the field he or she teaches.

Entitled "What Matters Most", the report was produced by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, a 27-member group that included school administrators, classroom teachers, university presidents, industrialists, and elected officials. Chairing the commission was James B. Hunt Jr., governor of North Carolina.

The report discusses a number of problems in education today, including inadequate teacher education, slipshod recruitment and hiring, "sink or swim" induction for beginning teachers, lack of professional development and rewards for knowledge and skill, and the weak structure of schools that supports neither students nor teachers.

The report's recommendations include instituting standards for learning; the Standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics is cited as an example. One of the recommendations focuses on school structure. In a typical high school in New York, the report says, only 58% of the school staff are teachers, and the average teacher sees 167 students per day. A few schools in New York have been restructured so that 70%-75% of the school staff are teachers and the average pupil load per teacher is 36. In these schools there were improvements in attendance, grades, graduation rates, and college-attendance rates. The report also recommends changes in teacher preparation and development and using recruitment and rewards to ensure high levels of teacher knowledge and skill.

Copies of the summary and the full report are available from: The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, P.O. Box 5239, Woodbridge, VA 22194-5239. The full report is \$18, the summary is \$5, and the two are available for the package price of \$20. There is also a videotape and discussion guide for \$15. The complete package of all these materials is \$30. Shipping and handling are included. Orders must be prepaid by check or money order. For information on bulk rates call 212-678-3015. There is also a Web site at <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/~teachcomm/>.

—Allyn Jackson

## Harris Leaves NSF

William C. Harris, formerly assistant director for mathematical and physical sciences at the National Science Foundation (NSF), is now president and executive director of the Biosphere 2 Center in Oracle, Arizona. The NSF directorate that Harris oversaw includes the Division of Mathematical Sciences. John B. Hunt, the directorate's executive officer and a permanent employee of the Foundation, currently serves as acting assistant director. At the time of this writing, the NSF was still developing plans for a search for Harris's replacement. Suggestions for candidates may be passed along to Neal Lane, Director, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22230; e-mail [nlane@nsf.gov](mailto:nlane@nsf.gov).

—NSF

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