

2014 Award for an Exemplary Program or Achievement in a Mathematics Department

The Award for an Exemplary Program or Achievement in a Mathematics Department was established by the AMS Council in 2004 and was given for the first time in 2006. The purpose is to recognize a department that has distinguished itself by undertaking an unusual or particularly effective program of value to the mathematics community, internally or in relation to the rest of society. Departments of mathematical sciences in North America that offer at least a bachelor's degree in mathematical sciences are eligible. Through the generous support of an anonymous donor, the award carries a cash prize of US\$5,000.

The award is presented by the AMS Council acting on the recommendation of a selection committee. For the 2014 award, the members of the selection committee were: Aloysius Helminck, Monica Jackson, Suzanne Marie Lenhart, J. D. Phillips, and Francis Edward Su (chair).

The previous recipients of the award are Harvey Mudd College (2006), the University of California, Los Angeles (2007), the University of Iowa (2008), the University of Nebraska, Lincoln (2009), North Carolina State University (2010), the Math Center at the University of Arizona (2011), Bryn Mawr College (2012), and the University of Texas at Arlington (2013).

The recipient of the 2014 Award for an Exemplary Program or Achievement in a Mathematics Department is the DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE.

Citation

The American Mathematical Society is pleased to recognize Williams College with the 2014 Award for an Exemplary Program or Achievement in a Mathematics Department. The Williams department has demonstrated excellence in providing exceptional teaching and research experiences for its students, as well as those in the wider mathematical community.

The department has made quality teaching a backbone of its program, and it shows in their success in attracting students to mathematics. Although there is no college mathematics or statistics requirement at Williams, eighty-four percent of students in recent graduating classes have completed a course in mathematics or

statistics, including forty-eight percent who have taken Multivariable Calculus. Participation in statistics courses has grown from fifteen percent of the 1994 graduating class to sixty percent of recent classes. About one of every eight Williams students majors in mathematics (sixty-seven majors, a significant increase since six in 1985). Of eighteen full-time faculty in mathematics and statistics, six have been recognized with national teaching awards from the Mathematical Association of America. Many of the faculty have published books aimed at making mathematics lively and accessible at the beginning and advanced undergraduate level, and these books have had a wide impact on students across the country.

Undergraduate research in mathematics has also thrived at Williams College. Their REU program (the "SMALL" program) has been successful in helping undergraduates from across the nation discover the excitement and challenges of pursuing original research. The 400 alumni have produced over 100 journal publications. Many women REU alumni have won the Alice T. Schafer Prize for their research. Faculty members have maintained notable research programs and have offered an impressive variety of advanced courses as well as senior thesis research projects. The department is one of the four founding members of the Hudson River Undergraduate Mathematics Conference (HRUMC), an annual meeting that draws 500 students from a wide variety of New England schools to present their research. Since its inception in 1994, HRUMC has inspired a number of similar conferences across the country.

In addition, the department has fostered a vibrant community by organizing math-centered social activities, monthly dinners for faculty and students, a public lecture series, and outreach to high school students and teachers. To encourage mathematical communication, faculty and students participate in a colloquium series in which every Williams math major must prepare a talk on a new topic. For the many ways in which the Williams College Department of Mathematics and Statistics has had impact on their students as well as the broader community, we are happy to present the AMS Award for an Exemplary Program or Achievement in a Mathematics Department to Williams College.

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