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The Mathematical Association of America Southeastern Section 91st Annual Meeting

March 22, 2012

The Department of Mathematical Sciences had a large contingency of students and faculty attend the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) Southeastern Section 91st Annual Meeting, March 9-10, 2012, at Clayton State University in Morrow, GA. The Southeastern section is one of the largest and oldest sections of the MAA. As such, the section works to advance the mathematical sciences, especially at the collegiate level, by supporting effective mathematical education at all levels, supporting research and scholarship, providing professional development, influencing public policy, and promoting public appreciation and understanding of mathematics in the States of Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. One of the primary activities of the MAA-SE is the annual meeting, which began in 1922, and includes presentations of mathematical research by faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students; presentations involving the scholarship of teaching and learning undergraduate mathematics; professional development activities for new college faculty; and activities for undergraduate students.

One of the highlights of the meeting was Hua Wang receiving the 2012 MAA-SE Award for Distinguished Teaching by a Beginning College or University Mathematics Faculty Member. The MAA-SE established this award to honor beginning college or university faculty whose teaching in the Section has been extraordinarily successful and whose effectiveness in teaching undergraduate mathematics is shown to have influence beyond their own classrooms. An awardee must have taught full time in a mathematical science in the Southeastern Section for at least two years, but not more than a total of seven years in any collegiate institution. Hua Wang joined the Department of Mathematical Sciences in Fall 2008 after serving as a John Thompson Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Florida and completing his Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of South Carolina in 2005. According to one of his letters of support, "...it's often hard to believe that he is only in his fourth year with us when I pause to recognize his many accomplishments in a short amount of time as one of my colleagues". To date, he has mentored 8 undergraduate students and 4 masters students in research projects. His students have earned recognition with the Patterson Prize as a top student presenter at the MAA-SE Meeting, with travel and research funding, and with top graduate school assistantships in prestigious Ph.D. programs. As one of his student nominators wrote, "...No matter how busy he was, I was always relevant and important enough for his time. This kind of availability from a professor really opens the doors for success for many students, as it did for me." In addition to serving as an advisor to the Student Chapter of the MAA on campus, Dr. Wang also coaches GSU's Math Jeopardy Team with Jiehua Zhu, an Associate Professor in the department. At this year's MAA-SE meeting, Georgia Southern University sponsored two teams in the Math Jeopardy competition. The team of Anthony Coggins, Yen Le, Dongsub Lee and Will Trott earned 3rd place out of 34 teams from around the U.S. and Canada, which was an outstanding result after months of preparation led by Drs. Wang and Zhu. The department's second team of Mary Beth Edwards, Katie Milhous, Phillip Stevens and Tabitha Williford also performed well.

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