

MSCS Mess

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Department of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science
St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN 55057

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This Week's Colloquium

Title:	Two Mathematics Practicum Projects
Speaker:	Practicum Students
Date:	Monday, March 3
Time:	3:30
Location:	RNS 410

Admissions

About the talk: St. Olaf Admissions department constantly aims to find applicants that will meet the increasing academic and financial standards of the college while constructing a more diverse student body. St. Olaf has also recently transitioned from a predominantly “regional college into a more elite grouping of “national colleges. Hence, St. Olaf has the opportunity to attract an elite group of prospective students from around the country, rather than strictly recruiting regionally. As a group from the St. Olaf Math Practicum course, consisting of Josh Martin, Zack Meyer, Kellan Passow, Andy Switzer, and Drew Voigt, we investigated the locations where the Admissions department could expand to find more potential applicants on its way to becoming more competitive on a national level.

Andy Switzer is a senior from Duluth, MN majoring in Math and Asian Studies with concentrations in Statistics and Chinese. After St. Olaf, he plans on going to China to teach English.

Josh Martin is a senior Math and Political Science major from Decorah, Iowa. After he graduates from St. Olaf, he hopes to either attend graduate school at the London School of Economics for a Masters degree in Social Policy or work at Epic as a project manager in Madison, Wisconsin.

Zack Meyer is a senior math major with a concentration in statistics from St. Paul, MN. In his free

time, he plays baseball and likes to hang out with his great roommate. After graduating from St. Olaf this spring, he hopes to work either as a data analyst doing consulting work or as a teacher through Teach for America.

Kellan Passow is a senior chemistry and math major from Orono, MN. After graduation, he intends to attend graduate school for medicinal chemistry.

Drew Voigt is a senior from Bloomington, Minnesota. He is a mathematics major with a biomolecular science concentration. After graduation, he will begin a clinical research internship at a biotechnology company in Seattle.

American Red Cross

About the talk: Our group spent this interim looking at data from the American Red Cross regarding yield of their recent blood drives. First, we looked at factors influencing the yield of their drives. We then assessed the current Red Cross blood drive prediction method and used gradient boosting for regression trees to provide an alternate method of prediction.

Joe Barnard is a senior with a mathematics major and statistics concentration. Outside of classes, he plays clarinet in the St. Olaf Band and is the captain of the St. Olaf Triathlon Club.

Kelsey Grinde is a senior mathematics major with a concentration in statistics. Outside of class, Kelsey spends time volunteering in the Northfield Public Schools and serving as President of the Spanish House. Next year, she will be attending graduate school in either biostatistics or statistics.

Andrew Hirst is a senior mathematics and music major with a concentration in statistics. He sings in the St. Olaf Choir and is a volunteer with the St. Olaf chapter of Habitat for Humanity. Next year Andrew will be serving at the AmeriCorps NCCC Pacific

Region Campus. After the year of service, he hopes to go to graduate school in statistics or biostatistics.

Kate Mangold is a senior from Bloomington, MN. She is majoring in chemistry and mathematics. In her spare time, she enjoys playing viola and reading. She will be attending graduate school in biomedical engineering.

Michael Tillman is a senior mathematics and economics double major. He enjoys playing intramural soccer, and he plans on going to graduate school to study Operations Research.

This Week's Seminar

Title:	Bayesian Statistics: "The Theory That Would Not Die"	Speaker:	Alicia Johnson
Date:	Friday, March 7		
Time:	3:35 PM		
Location:	RNS 204		

About the Seminar: Traditionally, undergraduate statistics courses have been grounded in the frequentist philosophy. However, the Bayesian alternative is playing an increasingly integral role in modern statistics. Highlighted by Nate Silver of fivethirtyeight.com and Baseball Prospectus fame, Bayesian statistics has even reached a popular audience. I will discuss what all the fuss is about, present the main points in the Bayesian vs frequentist debate, and demonstrate why implementation of Bayesian methods requires sophisticated Markov chain Monte Carlo computing techniques.

Math Across the Cannon

Each year St. Olaf's MSCS Department teams up with the Mathematics Department at Carleton for the Math Across the Cannon Speaker Series. This event brings a renowned mathematician to Northfield to deliver a lecture on each of our campuses. This year's speaker, Prof. Joseph Silverman of Brown University, will be in town on Thursday, April 3. His afternoon talk, here at St. Olaf at 3:30, will introduce math majors to some interesting interactions between number theory and dynamical systems. That evening Prof. Silverman will give a lecture at Carleton College guiding us into beautiful areas of mathematics where number theory, geometry, and algebra interact in surprising ways. The evening talk promises to entertain math majors and non-majors alike. Mark your calendars! More details about the talks will appear in a future Mess.

MSCS t-shirt Contest

The math club (now known as the math honor society Pi Mu Epsilon) is in the process of designing t-shirts.

They are in need of designs for the t-shirt. Whoever creates the winning design will receive a free t-shirt. If you have an idea, please submit it to Josh Jacobson (jacobsoj) by Monday, March 17.

New Actuary Club

The St. Olaf Actuary Club will begin meeting every other Tuesday. St. Olaf has a history of sending graduates into the actuarial profession, yet in past years, there has been no campus organization to bring these students together. Actuary Club will provide a support network for those interested in actuarial science, including help with the following:

- Studying for exams
- Applying for internships and full-time jobs
- Classes to take at St. Olaf
- Property/casualty vs. life insurance

Their first meeting will be on Tuesday, March 4th, at 7 pm in Buntrock 144 (Grieg Room). Whether you have only recently learned about the career or have already passed a couple of exams, we hope to see you there! Feel free to email Zach Westermeyer or Tyler Muehlbauer with any questions or suggestions you may have.

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If you would like to submit an article or event to be published in the Math Mess, e-mail jacobsoj@stolaf.edu