

**December 14, 2023**

Dear Faculty, Students, and Friends of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics,

As we approach the holiday season, I want to take a moment to reflect on our department's remarkable accomplishments and share the exciting news that we are immensely proud of. This year, despite challenges, has been a period of great success and growth for Mathematics and Statistics!

Let's begin by extending our warmest welcome to the new faculty members who recently joined us. Dr. Qingguo Hong, a talented tenure-track assistant professor specializing in data science and numerical analysis, has joined our team from Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Clayton Lungstrum, our new teaching assistant professor, arrived in August from Virginia Tech, holding a Ph.D. from Rochester and an undergraduate degree from S&T. Additionally, Dr. Wumaier Maimaitiyiming, another teaching assistant professor, brought expertise from UCLA and Iowa State University, where he completed his Ph.D. Currently, we are conducting two faculty searches, including one for an endowed professorship.

Our department has welcomed eleven new undergraduate majors and seven new graduate students, including a prestigious Kummer Doctoral Fellow. We also celebrated the graduation of four students with doctoral degrees, three with MS degrees, and sixteen with bachelor's degrees, with nine more expected to graduate by year's end.

Amidst these changes, we bid farewell to Dr. David Grow upon his retirement, thanking him for his dedicated service. We also celebrated the promotions of Dr. Gayla Olbricht to Full Professor and Paul Runnion to Teaching Professor, both making substantial contributions to our department.

Further, we're proud to acknowledge the exceptional achievements of our colleagues. Dr. Xiaoming He received a prestigious S&T Faculty Research Award, while Drs. Martin Bohner and Xiaoming Wang were recognized among the Stanford "World's Top 2% Scientists" for 2022 and their lifetime achievements.

On the research front, Dr. Rob Paige secured a two-year NSF Collaborative Research grant, and Dr. Xiaoming He obtained a three-year NSF Collaborative Research grant, both leading projects with far-reaching impacts. Dr. Akim Adekpedjou is currently on sabbatical at the University of Grenoble, enhancing his expertise in Europe.

Our dedication to education shone through achievements in student competitions and scholarships. The S&T team, sponsored by Dr. Olbricht, received the "Best Use of Statistical Analysis" award at the ASA DataFest 2023, while our Team A, coached by Dr. Grow, won the 2023 Missouri Collegiate Mathematics Competition.

The department is extremely grateful to Dr. Leon Hall, an alum, a retired faculty, and a past chair, whose generous gift enabled us to establish the Grimm Graduate Fellowship, in memory of Dr. Louis Grimm,

another past chair. Guy Easton Brawley was selected as the recipient of the inaugural award among a large pool of strong candidates.

Recognizing excellence, Mingway Wang and Pathum Randunu received the 2023 Akers awards for lab and lecture excellence, respectively. Our graduates continue to find success in their careers, a testament to our holistic training approach.

In staff transitions, we bid farewell to Linda Guyton upon her retirement and Carrie as she transitioned to the Chemistry department. Welcoming Jennifer Pratt, we're excited to benefit from her experience from the St. James school district and her earlier experience at S&T.

Finally, our Pi Day celebration and inaugural graduate student poster competition, organized by Drs. Jason Murphy and Gayla Olbricht, were resounding successes, showcasing our department's enthusiasm and academic fervor.

As we embrace the holiday season, let's celebrate these achievements and look forward to a promising year ahead. Your unwavering support has been pivotal in our success. Thank you for your dedication and support. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me in case you have any comments or suggestions.

Wishing you all a joyful and peaceful holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

Warm regards,

Xiaoming Wang

The Gary Havener Endowed Chair

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