USF to Collaborate with North-West University of Africa

USF and the Mafikeng campus of North-West University in Mmabalho, South Africa, have signed a collaboration agreement to “facilitate academic and research cooperation” between the USF Department of Mathematics and Statistics and the NWU Mafikeng Department of Mathematics. Mafikeng campus, with 9,000 students, is the former University of Bophuthatswana and now one of the three campuses of NWU. The agreement comes into effect in January.

The American Statistical Association Visits USF

The Department hosted the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Florida Chapter of the American Statistical Association on February 6 &7. The theme was The Art of Statistics in Business, Environment and Health. The three keynote speakers were Professor Ganapati P. Patil, Distinguished Professor of Statistics at Penn State University, Ms. Jone Burr, Director of Measurement Science Methodological Research at The Nielsen Company, and Dr. Henry Roberts, Statistician at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

USF graduate student Ryan Thurman received one of two 2015 Brumback awards. It is awarded to the best student speaker at the annual meeting of the Florida Chapter of the ASA. In addition to scholarly recognition, the award includes a cash prize of $100. The award was established by in 2014 by Professor Babette Brumback of the Department of Biostatistics at the University of Florida, and current president of the Florida chapter of the ASA.

The Chapter thanked Chris Tsokos and his student Taysseer Sharaf for organizing the conference.

A New Program for Postdoctoral Faculty

Unlike a generation ago, new academic researchers tend to spend a few years as postdoctoral faculty before seeking permanent positions. And research departments are increasingly hiring “postdocs” to help future researchers and to build connections to other universities.

This fall, the Department launched a new postdoctoral program. Our postdocs have faculty mentors to provide guidance in launching their research programs, and the Department’s cutting edge STEM education programs offer postdocs the opportunity to hone their teaching skills. “This program attracts future leaders to help them jumpstart their careers,” said Department Chair Les Skrzypek. “They will build skills in all aspects of research, from building interdisciplinary connections to applying for grants.”

The Department hired two Postdoctoral Scholars for two-year terms. Mustafa Hajij has just received a Ph.D. from Louisiana
State University, where he worked in mathematics and computer science; his research ranges from quantum invariants to computational topology, and his faculty mentor is Mohamed Elhamdadi.

Youngsoo Seol received a Ph.D. from Iowa State University in 2013, where he worked on random processes, especially random walks; he spent the last two years as a Lecturer at Texas State University - San Marcos, and his faculty mentor is Gangaram Ladde.

The Department anticipates hiring at least one postdoc a year, and hopes to build up the program so that we can hire two a year. And every postdoc will become a faculty member at another institution who has had the USF experience.