FULBRIGHT AWARD – JAMES WILLIAMS

Congratulations and best wishes go to our former student and tutor James Williams, who has been awarded a Fulbright/Ministry of Science and Innovation Graduate Award to study for a PhD in Applied Mathematics at Yale University, New Haven. James, who graduated BSc(Hons) in Mathematics last year, departs for the USA next month. In the photo above, US Ambassador David Huebner presents James with his award during last month’s ceremony at Parliament in Wellington.
CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Adam Gillard, who successfully defended his PhD thesis this month in his oral exam. He will be awarded a PhD in Mathematical Physics after making some minor changes to his thesis. Adam’s supervisor was Ben Martin.

Congratulations also to first year Engineering Mathematics and Physics student Hadleigh Frost, who has been awarded the inaugural Sir Paul Callaghan Young Science Orator Award for a presentation entitled Building the Brain, which explored opportunities to develop artificial intelligence for economic and social benefits. This event took place before a high-profile audience, including the Prime Minister, at the recent ‘Eureka!’ Symposium at Victoria University in Wellington.

WELCOME TO OUR DEPARTMENT VISITORS

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<tr>
<th>Visitor</th>
<th>University/Organization</th>
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<td>Ana-Maria Magdalina</td>
<td>NCRE Visitor</td>
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<td>09.01.12</td>
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<td>Michael Matschiner</td>
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<td>Charles Gonnaud</td>
<td>ENSTA-Paris Tech</td>
<td>A James</td>
<td>14.05.12</td>
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<td>Robin Havea</td>
<td>Univ. of the South Pacific</td>
<td>D Bridges</td>
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<td>G Steinke</td>
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PAPERS SUBMITTED


DeGiorgio, M., Degnan, J.H.: Using minimum coalescence times to infer species trees

Degnan, J.H.: Anomalous unrooted gene trees


PAPER ACCEPTED

PAPERS PUBLISHED


Alex James, Jon Pitchford and Mike Plank have written an article that will be published in Nature this month. The article is entitled Disentangling Nestedness from Models of Ecological Complexity. The research looks at ways of predicting biodiversity in networks describing mutually beneficial interactions between species, such as plants and pollinators. The research was carried out during Jon Pitchford’s visit to the Department as an Erskine Fellow from September to December last year. http://phys.org/news/2012-06-maths-experts-key-ecological-theory.html

- Mike Plank

CONFERENCES AND VISITS

James Degnan: research visit to Stanford University and talk entitled Distribution of gene tree shape under Yule speciation on 27 July 2012. From 28 July – 2 August, he’ll attend the Joint Statistical Meetings in San Diego and on 31 July he’ll present a paper entitled Identifying rooted species trees from probabilities of splits under the multispecies coalescent.

Raaz Sainudiin: gave a talk entitled Regularly Paved Random Histograms and their Statistical Applications at a Department of Statistics seminar at the University of Auckland on 12 July.

OZCOTS CONFERENCE

Irene David, Hilary Seddon and Richard Penny attended the OZCOTS conference (Australian Conference on Teaching Statistics) in Adelaide 12th and 13th July. Richard’s talk was titled 'Statistics training for multiple audiences’. Irene gave an overview of the on-line aspects of the STAT101 course in a forum called 'Online teaching' (see photo). There were many good presentations on aspects of the teaching of introductory statistics. The conference presentations confirmed that STAT101 at UC is in line with, and has the same issues (mainly relating to methods for increasing student participation) as, introductory statistics courses across Australia.

- Irene David

MapleTA

Phillipa Williams’ and Liz Ackerley’s work on MapleTA has been featured at the Maplesoft website: http://www.maplesoft.com/company/publications/articles/view.aspx?SID=134086&P=TC-2526

MapleTA is now being used extensively in our first year MATH and EMTH courses as a formative assessment tool to increase student engagement and support student learning. We are continually developing our pool of questions, in particular focusing on writing more in-depth and conceptual questions (i.e. questions that cannot just be answered by Wolfram Alpha!). Anyone interested in helping with this work or using it in their courses, please see Liz or Phillipa.

- Phillipa Williams
It’s a tough job but somebody has to do it …

Courtesy of Jennifer Brown come these photos of her recent research trip to Qatar with Blair Robertson. Photo left: a pleasant day in 45 degree heat in the mangroves, looking at sites for monitoring. Photo right: Blair Robertson and Trent McDonald (a previous visitor to this department from Wyoming) discussing the finer details of a draft paper with the help of a cooling beverage.

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

* Book Citation Index – the Library has a trial from 9 July to 3 August. It is available through Web of Science [http://bit.ly/M3Du3E](http://bit.ly/M3Du3E) (see the list of Citation Databases)

From the Web
1. Don't Use Khan Academy without Watching this First (eDTech Reporter) [http://bit.ly/P9GBKo](http://bit.ly/P9GBKo)
8. On Self-Citation (Scientific American) [http://bit.ly/SUB8Fx](http://bit.ly/SUB8Fx)

John Arnold
Engineering and Physical Sciences Library – Kā Puna Pūkahataka me te Pūtaiao