8 Special Opportunities

A university education entails many things beyond courses, degrees, sports, and social amusements. It is a cultural center. To obtain the most from your experience at WSU, you should take advantage of some of these additional opportunities.

For example, WSU offers such extracurricular opportunities as: clubs and other organizations catering to many interests; lectures, stage shows, film series, concerts, and other such events; an excellent intramural program, and athletic facilities for leisure time use; and, in the libraries, a fantastic collection of books, periodicals, records, tapes, etc. to which you have virtually unlimited access. In particular, you should take a look in the Owen Science and Engineering Library. While the books and periodicals that are kept there are primarily for advanced study and research, some of them are written for - or even by - undergraduates. Among the periodicals, take a look (for example) at *The College Mathematics Teacher, The Mathematics Intelligencer, The Mathematics Teacher*, or *The Mathematical Gazette*.

The Department of Mathematics offers some special opportunities that might be described better as "co-curricular" rather than "extracurricular." What follows is a list of some of these special opportunities.

**Mathematics 499, Special Problems:** This carries variable credit (1-4) and may be repeated. It provides an opportunity to pursue many kinds of special projects on your own, with faculty guidance. In spite of the course number, this possibility is not limited to seniors. If you are interested, discuss this with a suitable faculty member. When you register for the course, you will need to know the number of credits and the faculty member who will be working with and grading you. Bring that information to the Math Department Office to be enrolled.

**Undergraduate Research:** Among the faculty research projects there are almost always some in which an undergraduate can take a meaningful role. (At times, occasionally with financial support from the National Science Foundation, research projects have been set up specifically for the benefit of undergraduate participants.) Such activities can yield credit, publications, stipends, a running start on graduate study or a career, and a great deal of personal satisfaction. Every semester the College of Arts and Sciences (of which the Mathematics Department is a part) also has some undergraduate research scholarships available (see [http://cas.wsu.edu/research/undergraduate.html](http://cas.wsu.edu/research/undergraduate.html)). If you are interested, ask a member of the mathematics faculty about possibilities. The Mathematics Department also offers cross-disciplinary undergraduate research opportunities such as the Undergraduate Program in Biology and Mathematics ([http://www.ubm.wsu.edu/about.html](http://www.ubm.wsu.edu/about.html)).

**Scholarships and Awards:** The department has a number of scholarships and awards available to students at all levels. For more information, go to [http://www.math.wsu.edu/scholarships/scholarships.php](http://www.math.wsu.edu/scholarships/scholarships.php) and [http://cas.wsu.edu/scholarships/index.html](http://cas.wsu.edu/scholarships/index.html). Juniors must have a 3.25 overall GPA and seniors a 3.00 GPA to be eligible for these awards. Applications due in January (see websites for specific dates) and are reviewed every spring. You might also check some of the websites listed in Section 3 to see if any of these societies offer funding opportunities.

**Math Club:** The Math Club is open to all students interested in mathematics. They need not be math majors. The club offers events for socialization, networking, and learning about the opportunities available in the field of mathematics at WSU and the world. Interested students can find information about upcoming meetings at [http://studentinvolvement.orgsync.com/org/mathclub/home](http://studentinvolvement.orgsync.com/org/mathclub/home). In addition, a bulletin board with Math Club announcements is located outside Neill 103.
Undergraduate Teaching Assistantships: The Mathematics Department is sometimes able to employ qualified undergraduates to assist in grading for some courses, or to work as a tutor at the Math Learning Center. Students who have done this have often reported that they have found it satisfying and even exciting. Juniors must have a 3.25 overall GPA and seniors a 3.00 GPA to be eligible for these positions. Applications are reviewed every semester. If you are interested and would like more information see the Chair’s secretary in Neill 113 or go to http://www.math.wsu.edu/positions/welcome.php.

Private Tutoring Opportunity: Students in introductory level classes are sometimes interested in hiring more advanced students to help them learn mathematics. The Department cannot be formally involved in these arrangements, but does maintain a list of students who are willing to tutor. If you would like to be on the list, complete a form in the mathematics main office (Neill 103).

College Modeling Contest: In February of each year there is a national competition in applied mathematics called the College Modeling Contest. Teams of three students spend a weekend attempting to solve a "real world" applied problem. The group's solution is submitted to a national panel of judges. The best solutions get publicized. If you are interested, inquire in the Mathematics main office (Neill 103).

Putnam Competition: Each year in December the Mathematical Association of America sponsors a mathematical problem-solving competition called the William Lowell Putnam Competition. High scores carry considerable prestige and sometimes cash prizes. For a number of years WSU has groomed students for this competition and they have done well. If you are interested, inquire in the Mathematics main office (Neill 103).

Hacker Reading Room: Mathematics majors are invited to use the Hacker Reading Room (Neill 216) for studying and socializing. The room is usually available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, but is occasionally reserved for department functions such as the annual Scholarship and Awards Ceremony. Signs will be posted for any such events.