(CM)$^2$ Professional Development Summer Seminar

Speaker: Dr. Matthias Beck

July 21, 2009

1 Introduction to the Summer Seminar Series

The (CM)$^2$ Summer Seminar Series will have 2 components. The 1st half will be a research presentation by a graduate student from the department. The 2nd half of the seminar will focus on some sort of professional development. If there is something you’d like us to talk about let us know.

1.1 Suggested Topics Include

- Preparing for PhD programs:
  - How to prepare for applications
  - How to pick places to apply
  - Contacting people to work with for doing a PhD
- Math Subject GRE
- Research in Graduate School
- NSF Fellowship Grant—we’ll be doing it as part of the Spring course but we can discuss it in the Fall.
- Letters of Recommendations
- Do you have any ideas?

1.2 (CM)$^2$ Spring course

This course is open to everyone in the graduate program and a main focus of this course will be for graduate students to write and submit an NSF grant proposal. We will discuss this shortly in the Fall prior to the Spring course but will go into more depth with the Spring Course.

Concern: You can’t apply for a NSF grant after the 2nd year of graduate school. We need to look into this! It’s ok if you switch fields but not otherwise? We’ll keep you updated.

2 Graduate School Graduation Timeline

2.1 Note:

1. Planning to graduate in the Spring is always useful because it gives you the Summer to finish and still make it to your grad program in the Fall.
2. Writing up little results can help you feel like you have accomplished a lot.
3. Advisors: Meeting with your advisors regularly will help stay on top of your progress and provide you feedback of your graduate decisions.
4. GRE’s: you don’t want to undervalue the regular GRE.
5. Have all your letter writers write you letters prior to applications for a rough draft letter to have something started for the graduate school applications.
2.2 Graduation Year Timeline

**Now / All the Time**

- Contact people you are interested in working with. Conferences are a great time to do this. Also, talk to your advisor to find out people whom you should contact or to have them provide the introduction. They can tell you who is at each school they know that you might be interested in talking with. Mathematics is a community that welcomes this type of contact. Matt often receives and responds to these types of emails.

*One of the students in the department applied this year and experienced a 1:1 correspondence with contacting people and being accepted vs. not contacting and not being accepted. This is extreme but it brings the point across. Contacting people gives a face to go with the application.*

- Go to CONFERENCES
- Visit programs you are interested in. (CM)² people have funds to visit people! Make a travel plan. Non (CM)² funds are available at the graduate schools you go to visit or for student-travel to conferences. Ask other students, your advisor and check the web to find these sources.

- WORK ON YOUR THESIS!

**Summer / September**

- Prep for Math GRE—register for Math GRE (by mid-August for October test)

**October**

- Take GRE’s (10/10/09)
- Ask letter writers—provide your letter writers with information about your packet and giving them extra information about you. Tell them where you are applying.

**November**

- Personal Statement
- Order Transcripts

**December**

- Send out applications.
- Follow up with your letter writers—Send a thank you email to remind them to send the letter.

**January**

- Begin writing—this is going to take at least 3 months. You can think about writing earlier. Write down your results. Start with a rough outline of your thesis and fill in as you find and develop the results.

**April**

- Complete Draft—goes to your committee (doesn’t have to be completely finished but it should be a well-reviewed rough draft).

*It’s nice to have the draft 1 month earlier to give your committee time to provide feedback. If you give it to them too close to your defense you don’t get any feedback and it doesn’t look too great. You’ll receive comments on English/grammar, notation, and introductory mathematics.*

**Before your Defense**

- Check in with Graduate School—check off the thesis format.
  Do this before your defense so that you can bring a correctly formated signature page to your defense.

**May**

- May 1- Latest you want to defend your thesis.
- Hand in your thesis to the Graduate School.

**Graduation—SPRING**