

# From the Mathematics Graduate Program Director

August 2016

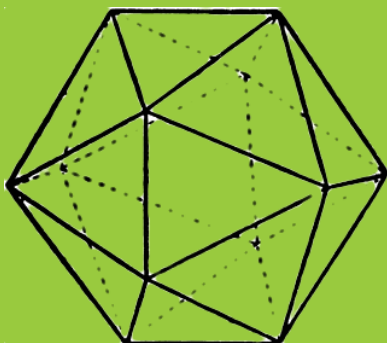
## Welcome!

I welcome our graduate students to a new academic year, and I wish all you success in your studies. I have just taken on the job of Graduate Program Director, and I will be learning the ropes as I help you navigate through the deadlines and requirements of your graduate degree. I ask for your patience and understanding. We are fortunate to have the help of Vicki Lowe, who serves as the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Let me briefly introduce myself. I have been in the math department for 15 years. My research interests lie in the intersection of combinatorics and algebra, and linear algebra. This year you will find me teaching the graduate algebra sequence.

Best wishes,

Brian Curtin



## Rambling Advice

### Courses

New students, your first goal is to complete your core sequences (two of algebra, analysis, topology), upon which the qualifying exams are based. Be aware of other course requirements of your degree. See the department homepage and the graduate catalog.

Students who have completed core and elective sequences requirements are strongly encouraged to continue taking classes when appropriate. You will never have a better opportunity to learn something new. Those who wish to teach can prepare themselves to teach a broader range of courses. Those who wish to research should try to increase types of questions that they can tackle and the tools that they have available. Those who wish to work in industry should bear in mind that the problems don't care where the solutions come from.

### Qualifying Exams

It will soon be time for the Fall qualifying exams. I recommend that you prepare by doing problems, just like you will do on the exams. Use problems to confirm your understanding and diagnose your deficiencies. Focus your review on the material that gives you problems; confront the material that you would otherwise push aside.

I encourage students taking the Fall exams to set aside the remaining Saturday mornings from 9:00am to noon to do old exams. Use this to practice the full range of problem, identify problem areas, and get yourself use to the circumstances. You can find recent exams on the department website.

### Academic Job Search

Do you see yourself in an academic position at this time next year? If so, it may be time to start preparing your applications. Speak with your advisor about what you need to do. September and October are the time to prepare (and revise) your curriculum vita, a teaching statement, and a research statement, as well as ask for letters of recommendation. The first round of applications are due in November and December. Far fewer openings are listed in the Spring.

Interested students should create an account on [MathJobs.org](http://MathJobs.org), which collects many (but not all) openings in mathematics and allows online applications for most.