A Message from Professor Kehe Zhu

Professor of Mathematics and Department Chair

April 15, 2011

Dear Entering Student,

The members of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics welcome you to the University at Albany. We are committed to making your time here productive, stimulating, and enjoyable.

Historically, nine of every ten entering students take mathematics courses while here, and with the new Regents mathematics requirement every student will. Many fields of study, such as all sciences, computer science, economics, and business, consider mathematical training essential to mastery of their discipline. Consequently, these departments require math courses prior to admission into, or as a component of, their major.

We want to offer the mathematical training you need, and to maximize your opportunities for success, both in mathematics and in your chosen field of study. An important step in this process is the calculus readiness exam posted on this web site, to be taken at your convenience prior to your Summer Planning Conference. This test has proved invaluable, both in helping students choose an appropriate first mathematics course, and in identifying need for additional mathematical support for students expecting to take math-intensive courses as part of their studies.

Please print out a copy of the exam before your Planning Conference and take it precisely according to the instructions. After, you can look at the answers (along with a brief explanations) also posted on the web site. Correct the exam, and bring the score (and ideally the exam too) to have available when you meet with your advisor. This test, information in your file and your own input, will help you plan a schedule that best meets your goals and optimizes your likelihood of success. The Department's many options will enable you to choose a course at an appropriate level and pace, with technology best suited to you.

All freshmen take this exam. I urge you to take the test precisely as instructed in the test booklet, without referring to books, taking extra time, using a calculator, or getting help. This test will not become part of your record, and is solely a guide to help us, working with you, decide on the right level math course. Enrolling in too advanced a course because of an artificially high test score won't help you; correct placement will.

This is an exciting time to develop skill in mathematics. Although the Regents have mandated that all students take a mathematics course, a review of enrollment indicates that more than 90% of you would anyway. Why? With an economy increasingly derived from technology, depending on a workforce with specific mathematical capabilities and the analytical ability that those skills develop, the employment outlook for mathematically skilled graduates has never been brighter.

Once again, we welcome you to the University at Albany. If you have any questions, want to tour the Department, or just say hello, please feel free to stop by. Our welcome mat is always out.

Sincerely,

Kehe Zhu
Professor and Chair