

Report on meeting with new graduate students
August 13, 2003
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The students thought that the lectures were well organized, but several of the students commented that they felt lost, that the material was too much and they could not comprehend it. Some of the students thought that the lectures presented too much new material. The students compared the lectures to attempting to drink from a fire hose. The students also commented that the problems sets were very helpful and were designed to help them understand the lectures, but there was not enough time devoted to the problem sets.

The students commented that the workshop had the feel of a conference. They were very positive about this aspect of the workshop.

The interaction with the graduate students was extremely positive. The students commented that the graduate students were very competent and very helpful. SINCE THIS INTERACTION WAS SO POSITIVE, WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO INCREASE THIS INTERACTION FOR FUTURE WORKSHOPS?

The students commented that the Projects were very good, but there was a downside. Once the projects were introduced, students stopped working on the problems sets. Further, work on the projects detracted from paying attention to the lectures. The students suggested that the projects should be introduced later.

Some of the students complained that there was too much emphasis on algebra and number theory. Most of the graduate students appeared to be specializing in these areas, and the projects also seemed to be concentrated in these areas. Some students would have liked to have had more diversity in the topics presented.

There appeared to be unanimous agreement that the presentation on the trajectory of a student was very helpful. It helped the students understand what was expected of them. It gave a sense as to how they would proceed through their graduate program. Information about the core courses, prelims and even the small details that were provided to them were viewed as very helpful.

Students felt that 13 hours a day was too much. One way of cutting down on the number of hours was to shorten the meal breaks. Students didn't work during these breaks anyway. Students felt that decreasing the hours and increasing the number of days would be more desirable. I pointed out that we had thought about this and we felt that students would not want to devote more days to this. Students felt that serious students would want to be here and that this should not discourage us from increasing the number of days of this workshop. IF WE DO DECIDE TO INCREASE THE LENGTH OF THIS WORKSHOP, PERHAPS WE COULD HAVE SOME OF THIS YEAR'S

PARTICIPANTS TALK TO THE INCOMING STUDENTS NEXT YEAR AND CONVINCING THEM THAT THIS WORKSHOP IS WORTH ATTENDING.

A curious topic came up towards the end. One of the students stated that one aspect of the workshop that made it difficult was that the students were strangers to each other and yet they were immediately placed in situations where they had to work closely with each other. This made it hard to get the work done. I AM NOT SURE HOW TO ADDRESS THIS.

I commented that we had thought of having this workshop offsite, where students would also spend the night. The students were very opposed to this. They felt that having to spend even more time together would make the workshop even more difficult. Students pointed out that being in the building showed them where the different computer labs were, the library, etc. So, there were some very positive aspects to having the workshop in the mathematics building itself.

This discussion brought up another point, and that was housing. One of the students stated that finding housing was very difficult. To arrive in Tucson and have to work 13 hour days made it impossible to also have to find housing. CERTAINLY WE SHOULD INSURE THAT HOUSING IS TAKEN CARE OF NEXT YEAR.

At the end of our discussions, I pointed out that one of the purposes of this workshop was for the students to discover holes in their knowledge base about basic mathematics, and more importantly, how to fill in those holes. Though there was a nodding of heads, no one came forth with any examples. Perhaps next year we could think about this more.

I also pointed out to the students that this small evaluation session should really have been scheduled at the end of their first year. It will be this year that will tell whether or not this workshop was successful. PERHAPS WE COULD SCHEDULE ANOTHER SESSION WITH THESE STUDENTS IN MAY AND ASK THEM AT THAT TIME WHETHER OR NOT THIS WORKSHOP WAS USEFUL.

My overall impression was that the students found this experience to be a very beneficial one. I saw students talking together at the end of the session, so the goal of establishing an esprit-de-corps was certainly reached.