PROGRAM DESIGNED TO HELP STUDENTS

CLUB ZERO: STUDENT ORGANIZATION

MATHEMATICS

 BY HAMIDE DOGAN

The Mathematical Sciences department appointed a Faculty Member, Hamide Dogan since 2008, advising the members of a student club, namely “Club Zero,” to ensure that students are informed and exposed to the social and academic enrichment activities provided by the University and the National Mathematics Organizations. The faculty advisor is available at all times, via email or in person communications, to the club officers and many of its members to: 1) provide on its activities and decisions; 2) help organize Club’s activities, 3) help with the brainstorming of new events; 4) Liaison between the Club members, the Mathematics Department, and COS as well as the University Administrations; 5) help raise funding to support conference trips; 6) disseminate research, career, internship, and employment opportunities via a mailing server hosted by the Mathematics Department, specifically for the club members; 7) mentor its members on research projects; conference talks; abstract preparation; 8) help provide opportunities to learn about, and be prepared for graduate schools.

Club Zero elects its officers from its members. These officers work very hard to provide opportunities for socialization, networking, research activities and more. Its current and recently elected officers are the undergraduate students: Paula Reichert, President; Jaime Huerta, Vice President; Corinna Knaust; Treasurer; Carmen Adel, Secretary. A lounge provided by the Mathematical Department has proven to be very effective, and continue to be very effective in providing increased socialization and networking among its members since 2008. The lounge however is now in need of a new AC.

Club Zero has provided and will continue to provide both social and academic events to increase exposure to studies, research opportunities, and careers in mathematical sciences. Club does this by increasing the networking between its members, other UTEP students, and professionals. One such venue (of many) Club zero uses is a bi-weekly “Game Nights” providing socialization, in turn, a sense of community of scholars thus increasing awareness. Club furthermore participates in various University events (Tailgating is one such event) to reach out to UTEP undergraduates.

Club Zero has successfully been using means to increase its member’s involvement in research activities. Club does this by informal advising (mainly by the Faculty Advisor appointed) on potential research ideas; talks on conferences; abstract preparation and more. Club moreover encourages its members’ involvement in research activities by providing informational sessions or email announcements on: 1) UTEP Honors program; 2) COURI center and its activities, its scholarships 3) COURI symposiums; 4) National and Regional Conferences; 5) Summer Internships.

In fact, Club had at least three of its members accepted and participated in NASA summer internship. About ten members gave talks at the COURI symposium, two of whom earning the best poster award. Many of its members attended regional Southwest Mathematics Undergraduate Research Conferences (SUNMARC). They have done this every year since 2008. Most of these members gave talks at this conference. Mathematical Sciences Department and COS financially supported many of the members’ trips (transportation, hotel, meal, registration costs) ensuring their participation. In 2013, furthermore, talks given by the Club Zero Members ranked third, a noteworthy research achievement. Last but not the least, many of the Club members continued into graduate studies in various areas of mathematical sciences or engineering.

Club zero has been growing rapidly. Latest Club’s member number reported on the UTEP’s Mine Tracker site is 122, about 50 percent of whom are active members.

It should be noted here that even though Club Zero has been successful in increasing undergraduate involvement, Club can achieve more if a yearly budget is set a site for incentives to look for new and innovative approaches to attracting and increasing undergraduate involvement in academic areas.