

The BSM Beat

Alumni newsletter for the BSM program

Welcome Dr. Katie Ziegler-Graham! New North American Associate Director

Dr. Katie Ziegler-Graham, Associate Professor of Statistics at St. Olaf College, will be taking over as the new North American Associate Director in July 2018.



Dr. Kendra Killpatrick, who served in this role for the past seven years, will be stepping down to pursue an administrative appointment at Pepperdine University.

Dr. Ziegler-Graham has taught at St. Olaf for 12 years. She was a math major at The College of Wooster as an undergraduate and graduated from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health with a Ph.D. in Biostatistics. Her dissertation title was "Exploratory Inference" which studied the various likelihood-based methods for investigating parameter values.

Her favorite math classes as an undergraduate were Probability and Statistics. As a graduate student she enjoyed the more applied statistics courses. She took classes in combinatorics and graph theory that were a fun change of pace and she really enjoyed taking courses

outside of biostatistics in public health—epidemiology and mental health.

Dr. Ziegler-Graham is interested in working for BSM because she is excited about promoting the opportunities that BSM provides. As a BSM alum, she knows that the experience of living and studying in Budapest is fantastic! Having a semester to focus on mathematics courses as an undergraduate was really great for her and gave her some exposure to what it means to really invest in a particular subject. Her semester in Budapest fit in nicely with her liberal arts experience as an undergraduate. As the North American Associate Director, she hopes to provide continued support to this fantastic program!

When she is not at work, her family keeps her pretty busy! In her free time, she enjoys knitting, reading and traveling. Look for Dr. Ziegler-Graham at the Joint Meetings and make her feel welcome in her new role!

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Spring Semester 2018

- Students arrive for language intensive course:
January 16th
- Orientation and welcome party:
February 4
- Classes begin:
February 5
- Classes end:
May 18th
- Final exams:
May 22-24
- Program ends:
May 25

Student Spotlight, Oliver Meldrum, BSM Spring 2018

Oliver Meldrum is a third year student at Oberlin College. He grew up in Berkeley, California and is took the Fall 2017 semester off of school to hike the Pacific Crest Trail!

Oliver learned about BSM from many fellow math majors who attended and said that is was one of their most valuable mathematical learning experiences they had during their undergraduate years. This made Oliver believe that it would be equally useful for him!

Oliver decided to become a math major because, in his words, "the difficulty that he had with some of his first math classes at Oberlin resulted in the most joy he had experienced in any class." His favorite math class that he has taken has been discrete mathematics because it was the first class that was more like problem solving than simply following algorithms for problems.

Outside of mathematics, Oliver really enjoys helping other students experience the outdoors through the Oberlin College Outing

Club. He spent the last four months hiking in the wilderness so he knows his stuff! He also serves on the Oberlin Math Majors committee. He is passionate about mathematics education, seeking to bring more happiness, diversity and manipulatives to math classrooms around the country.

Oliver spent last summer teaching a class at the Brown Summer High School program in Providence, Rhode Island and also attended the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics annual meeting and exposition. He has led Math Circles for Oberlin elementary school students and has volunteered in middle school math classrooms.

Since Oliver's parents are from the United Kingdom and he has family in Morocco, he has traveled quite a bit to visit family. He has also spent time in Cambodia teaching English. Other than doing mathematics in Budapest, Oliver is looking forward to taking trains to many places. He is taking the Hungarian language intensive course prior to the semester.



After graduation, Oliver is hoping to either work towards an MAT or Ph.D. in math or joining the Peace Corps or Teach for America. He is also considering traveling some more, working as a mathematical consultant, hiking another long distance trail, working in Oberlin public schools, moving to Montana, Canada or Alaska, or just doing nothing at all!

Oliver enjoys walking, listening to the abundance of classical music at Oberlin, running marathons, and boycotting Netflix and other sorts of TV. He is a firm believer that YOU can succeed at math, regardless of whether you think you are good at math or not. Research now shows that there is no such thing as a natural born "math" person and that being good at math is, like most other things, mostly a question of practice.

What's happening in Budapest in the Spring 2018 Semester?

- 71 students will attend the program
 - 6 seniors
 - 64 juniors
 - 1 sophomore
- Students from 50 different schools
- Students from 10 countries
- 34 female students, 37 male students
- There are 37 math majors, 20 computer science majors, 4 math and physics majors, 4 math and economics majors, 1 math and biology major, 1 math and art major, 1 math and classics major, 1 math and architecture major, 1 financial engineering major, 1 math and chemistry major.
- Interesting tidbits about the class: one student has volunteered with organizations in Ethiopia and China to teach math and organize math competitions, one student is on the way to becoming a commissioned officer in the US Navy, one student has performed in his schools opera workshops and is president of the swing dance society.

Student Spotlight, Amanda Burcroff, BSM Spring 2016 and Spring 2018

Amanda Burcroff is a junior at the University of Michigan, studying mathematics and computer science. She attended BSM previously and liked it so much she is returning in the spring! She learned about BSM from the U of M's weekly math newsletter and then talked to several professors and graduate students who had attended the program in the past. Their glowing reviews encouraged her to apply. BSM offers so many fascinating classes that she wanted to return in the spring to take a wider selection of BSM's courses and to continue to pursue her previous research.

Amanda became intrigued by math in high school after seeing the beauty of mathematical proofs. She simply loved every math book she could get her hands on. In college, she initially focused more on the applied side of math with a focus in biology, but after a few courses and a taste of research at

BSM, she is now pursuing theoretical mathematics. She loved her first course in analysis and particularly enjoyed her research experience at BSM with the Hungarian Program Director, Deszo Miklos. She and her fellow collaborators would work on their research problem whenever they had a spare moment, whether that was in between classes, at a café, or on a train to another country. This created a fun and productive environment for all of them!

At Michigan, she has held four course assistant positions and has served in the leadership of the Women in Mathematics Club and the Society of Undergraduate Mathematics Students. She helps to run the university's Math Circle, a weekly program that brings bright middle and high school students to campus for lectures on recreational math. She also helps run an annual high school MMATHS competition at

Michigan and is an active member of Eta Kappa Nu, an engineering honor society.



Last summer, Amanda participated in an REU at the University of Chicago and she has also worked in the Michigan Laboratory of Geometry. Prior to her semester in Hungary in 2016 her only abroad experience was visiting family in the Philippines. This spring in Budapest she is looking forward to exploring more museums and historical sites along with visiting some of the smaller Hungarian towns outside of Budapest and learning more about the Hungarian language and culture. She would like to eventually go to graduate school and become a professor.

BSM 100/3 Reunion: Celebrating 33 Years!

The BSM 100/3 Reunion will be held June 25-July 1, 2018 in Budapest! The reunion will be followed by an international combinatorics conference "Lovasz is 70" from July 2-6, 2018. Laci Lovasz was a BSM co-founder!

On Monday and Tuesday, participants are invited to join in small group excursions to see points of interest in Budapest and the surrounding areas. On Wednesday, there will be a formal opening event and an evening river cruise with banquet. On Thursday morning, participants are invited

to gather with each other as well as with BSM professors and staff. The second week of the BSM summer session will be running concurrently so reunion participants are encouraged to meet and chat with the current BSM students.

Thursday afternoon will feature a talk by Peter Juhasz demonstrating the Posa method (the essence of the Hungarian approach to math education) as well as a one hour live video chat with BSM alumna Cathy O'Neil, author of the book "Weapons of Math Destruction". Friday

through Sunday will feature talks by BSM alumni with a closing lecture on Sunday titled "Groups, Graphs, Algorithms: The Graph Isomorphism Problem", given by BSM co-founder Laci Babai.

Former BSM North American Director Paul Humke and current BSM NAD Tina Garrett will be in attendance, along with Hungarian Director Dezso Miklos and the Hungarian student coordinators. Current information and registration can be found at:

[www.budapestsemesters.com/
bsm-1003-reunion-in-budapest](http://www.budapestsemesters.com/bsm-1003-reunion-in-budapest).

Budapest Semesters in Mathematics

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**Have you updated
your alumni contact
information lately?
Do so today!**

The BSM organization would like to keep in touch with all of our alumni. If you move or your contact information changes, please contact us to update your information so we may continue to send you the BSM Beat and keep you informed about upcoming alumni reunion events. You will find an information update form on our website, www.budapestsemesters.com, under the Alumni heading or you may contact us in any of the following ways:

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Share the news about BSM!

BSM Alumni, we would like to encourage you to share your experiences with the Budapest program with others, particularly those of you who continue to work in higher education. If you are currently a math professor, and if you are interested in giving a talk to the math majors at your institution about the Budapest Semesters in Mathematics program, we have a complete PowerPoint presentation already put together that we would be happy to share with you.

In addition, if you are a graduate student or a math professor who will be attending a Regional Undergraduate Mathematics Conference and would be interested in being on a panel about academic or summer opportunities for math majors or would be willing to sit at a table and hand out brochures and talk to undergraduates about your experience with BSM, please let us know. We would

be happy to help you make contact with the RUMC organizers, provide you with brochures and handouts and we can also provide you with a small stipend to reimburse you for travel expenses.

To request the BSM PowerPoint or to inquire about representing the BSM program at an undergraduate math conference, contact Dr. Kendra Killpatrick at

Kendra.Killpatrick@pepperdine.edu.

If you have further ideas about ways in which you can share information about the Budapest program with undergraduates, feel free to contact us and we will help you in whatever ways we can! You, the alumni, are our most valuable resource for recruiting the next group of talented BSM students.

BSM Alumni Directory

The BSM Alumni Directory will be emailed once a year to all alumni who have given us a current email address. If you haven't updated your contact information, you can do so now by going to the webpage and clicking on Update Your Contact Info. Please encourage other BSM alumni you may know to fill out the form so we can make the directory as up to date as possible!

