Congratulations and welcome!
Agenda

- 1:30pm – Introduction by Faculty and Staff
- 1:45pm – GRADventure by Sarah Howard
- 2:00pm – MActSc & MQF students leave
- 2:15pm – Workday by Lisa Yuhasz
- 2:30pm – Orientation continues; Lisa, Mary Lou & Shoja
About the Department

• 50+ research-active faculty members
• ~175 PhD, MMath, MQF, MActSc students
• Largest Stat & ActSc group in Canada
• One of the largest in the world
• 1000+ undergrad students
About the Department

• international reputation for
  – scope & depth of undergrad & grad programs
  – range & strength of faculties’ research

• distinguished faculties
  – numerous research chairs
  – many awards & honours
Welcome

by Chair & Staff
Some Dept People

Stefan Steiner  
Chair
Carlos Mendes  
Admin Officer
Greg Preston  
Technical/Web Specialist
Steve Van Doormaal  
Instructional Support Coordinator

Shoja Chenouri  
Associate Chair, Grad Studies
Lisa Baxter  
Grad Coordinator, MMath
Helen Chen  
Program Coordinator, MQF, MActSc
Mary Lou Dufton  
Grad Coordinator, PhD
Program Advisors/Directors

- **MMath, PhD:**
  - ActSc: Ruodu Wang
  - Biostat: Richard Cook
  - Stat: Shoja Chenouri
- **MQF:** David Saunders
- **MActSc:** Diana Skrzydlo
Many Young Professors

• highly energetic; cutting-edge research

• Stat/Biostat:
  – Audrey Beliveau; Aukosh Jagannath;
  – Peijun Sang; Nathaniel Stevens
  – Samuel Wong;

• ActSc:
  – Ben Feng; Mario Ghossoub
  – Fangda Liu
Graduate Student Reps

- Graduate Student Association
  [https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-student-association/](https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-student-association/)
- Pavel Shuldiner
- S.A.D. “SAS-grad Anti-Depression” club
  - Gracia Dong & Ilia Suchlutsky
GRADventure: Graduate Professional Development

by Sarah Howard

Graduate Student Experience Specialist
Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

See the slides
Onboarding information session

Workday by Lisa Yuhasz
Human Resources

See the slides
Dept of Statistics & Actuarial Science

Orientation for New Grad Students

Tuesday, Sept 3, 2019
MC 4020
13:30 – 3:30
A Great Choice!

“I keep saying the sexy job in the next ten years will be statisticians. People think I'm joking, but who would've guessed that computer engineers would've been the sexy job of the 1990s?”

— Hal Varian, Chief Economist, Google, 2009
Faculty-Level Orientation!

- different from this one (department-level):
- Thursday, Sept 5 (two days from now):
  - 4:30pm, dinner + registration
  - 5:30pm, orientation starts
- web site (connect and remove “…”):
  - https://uwaterloo.ca/math/…
  - current-graduate-students/…
  - new-graduate-student-information
Some Boring but Crucial Info
(The Real Orientation)

MMath + PhD
MMath

- **Essay option (3 terms):**
  - 7 courses (typically 3+3+1)
  - essay (need NOT be original or publishable)
  - other milestones (grad student skills workshop, etc)

- **Thesis option (3 to 4 terms):**
  - 4 courses
  - thesis (**somewhat original** & **almost publishable**) If not, committee may find your thesis unacceptable …
MMath

• All courses @ 800 and 900 levels
• At most ONE course allowed in other areas e.g., not “STAT XXX”
• Essay option (by default):
  – numerically graded
  – full-time financial support = 2 TAs/term x 3 terms
• Thesis option (extra approval needed):
Thesis: MMath vs PhD

• A thesis (PhD or MMath) must contain …
  – original & publishable research!

• PhD expectation:
  – multiple peer-reviewed papers

• MMath expectation:
  – one peer-reviewed paper
MMath

- Secure supervisor by 2\textsuperscript{nd} month of 2\textsuperscript{nd} term
  - e.g., Feb 2020 for those who started in Sept 2019
- Check faculties’ research profiles & talk to them
- Ask program advisors for suggestions
- Faculty research presentation day TBD
- Many highly-energetic new faculties
  - at the very frontiers of our discipline
  - strongly encourage you to approach them
PhD

• Course requirements
  – 6 in total, no exemptions
  – these courses must include STAT/ActSc 900 PhD Research Skills, and 3 breadth requirement courses.
  – expected to fulfill basic requirements quickly and move onto research. (e.g., take STAT 901, STAT 908)
  – may take some topic courses (e.g., STAT 946, STAT 947) in later years
  – by end of third term, you are required to take at least 5 course and complete breadth requirements
PhD

• Comprehensive Exams, Stage 1 (“breadth requirement”)
  – Required to take 3 courses, one from each of 3 the breadth categories and achieve a grade of at least 75% in each of them
  – Pass Stat 900 or ACTSC 900 PhD Research Skills
  – Prepare a portfolio and undertake an oral exam

• Comprehensive Exams, Stage 2 (“thesis proposal”)
  – By the end of 7th term
PhD

- terms 1 – 12 (first 4 years): fully supported
- terms 13+ (year 5+): mostly RA from supervisor
- international doctoral award:
  - full award for year 1 – 3; 2/3 for year 4; none for year 5+
- term progress report (TPG):
  - starting from term 2, must complete a TPG each term …
  - by end of the first month (i.e., Jan, May, Sept) …
  - for your progress in the previous term (i.e., Fall, Winter, Spring)
  - also used as a base for many other internal awards
Grad Student Skills Workshop

• part of degree requirement (milestones)
  – TA skills workshop (one evening, ~ 3 hrs)
  – writing skills workshop (three sessions)

• mandatory for all new grad students
TA Skills Workshop

• Date: Wed, Sept 4, 2019
• Time: 5:30pm – 9:00pm
• Location: M3, 3127
• Food: light dinner provided
Writing Skills Workshop

- Dates (must attend ALL):
  - Friday, Sep 27, 2019 in M3 3103
  - Friday, Oct 04, 2019 in M3 3103
  - Friday, Oct 25, 2019 TBA

- Time: 10:30am-12:30pm
MFCF Graduate Workshop

• Math Faculty Computing Facility
• Strongly encouraged to attend (mandatory)
• Dates are
  – Sept 13 at 11am in M3-3103
  – Sept 20 at 11am in M3-3127
Academic Integrity

• Mandatory (MMATH & PhD) online course
• access through learn.uwaterloo.ca
• watch out for email in your mailbox
Harassment and Discrimination

- Harassment and Discrimination are issues taken seriously by the University of Waterloo
- **mandatory** (MMATH & PhD) online course
- access through learn.uwaterloo.ca
Departmental Seminars

- Thursdays, 16:00 – 17:00
- great way to get educated for real
- try to attend as much as you can
- minimum requirements:
  - MMath students: 2 (Fall); 2 (Winter)
  - PhD students: 4 (Fall); 4 (Winter)
  - attendance forms available from Lisa or Mary Lou
Teaching Assistantship

• each TA unit ~ 80 hrs of work during the term
  – marking assignments (& keeping student records)
  – holding office hours
  – teaching tutorial sessions
  – proctoring tests/exams
  – etc

• learning the course material
  – not counted in the “80 hrs” workload
  – considered part of your qualification
Teaching Assistantship

- have chance to express preferences (though they are not always met)
- funding level depends on number of TA units you request/hold (0, 1, or 2)
- MMath expectation: 2 TAs/term x 3 terms
Teaching Assistantship

• A well-paid job!
  – over $48/hr; qualification by being our grad student

• Be professional!
  – performance monitored throughout the term
  – formal evaluation end of term
  – will be **fired** if performance < expectation (any time)
  – TA award: a significant item for your resume
Teaching Assistantship

• expected to
  – stay in touch with your course instructor(s), your immediate boss of your TA position
    (stay in touch with the Instructional Support Coordinator)
  – be physically available on-campus for the entire term
    (including the exam period)
Teaching Assistantship

• workload varies
  – Life is not fair.
  – Accept it, and be professional.

• no excuses
  – If you cannot take it, you don’t have to hold the job, and we don’t have to fund you either.
Teaching Assistantship

• MUST communicate with instructor if
  – cannot meet a deadline or perform a TA duty (e.g., proctoring)
  – **suggestion**: find qualified substitute; either swap duties or buy dinner/gift; but MUST have permission from instructor

• NEVER book any trips (vacation, holiday, honeymoon, …) UNLESS you know it will fit into your TA schedule – will be FIRED for violation.
Teaching Assistantship

• all TAs also in the “faculty reserve pool”
• can be randomly selected to proctor exams for large courses in the Math Faculty
• part of your TA duty
A Piece of Advice

• Faculties do talk to each other (and to me) about their interactions with our students.

• You do quickly develop a reputation in the department, and your reputation can help you or hurt you much more than your academic performance does.

• Examples:
  – Reference letters are more important than transcripts.
  – Employers do call us about our graduating students.
Teaching Opportunities

• After your proposal, if you are interested in an academic career you may get a chance to teach an undergraduate course

• When you are applying for jobs this experience can be very valuable on your CV

• Talk to your supervisor first to find the right time

• Plan ahead as teaching schedules are fixed a year in advance
Additional Funding

• scholarships
  – entrance, graduate, senate, …

• chair’s awards

• international doctoral awards

• NSERC & OGS
  – domestic students only
Additional Funding

• research assistantships or studentships

• travel assistance - see Lisa (MMath), Mary Lou (PhD)
  – for presenting your work at a research conference

• bursaries (see Student Awards Office)
  – if you have financial difficulties
Computing

• IST
  – UW user ID
  – wireless connection (eduroam, WatIAM)
  – virtual private network (VPN)
  – discounted software (Matlab, etc)

• MFCF
  – [biglinux / fastlinux].math.uwaterloo.ca
  – “P:” drive in Windows = “/u/jdoe” directory in Linux
Your UW Email

• your UW email, e.g., jdoe@uwaterloo.ca
  – your responsibility to manage it
  – free to forward to gmail, yahoo, whatever from your Watlcam account from jdoe@connect.uwaterloo.ca
  – but excuses such as “I don’t check my uwaterloo email” are NOT acceptable
  – UW is legally allowed to assume that, if information has been sent to your UW email, then you can be held responsible for it.
In QUEST, verify personal & academic info.

– courses
– financial support
– other
Add / Drop

• ≤ week 3, can add/drop courses in …
  QUEST
  week 4-10, drop online but WD in transcript.

• > week 10, need signature from …
  – lots of people (a big headache!)

• once final period begins, cannot drop/add
Problems, Questions

• People to ask ..
  – Supervisor or Program Advisor (…)
  – Grad Student Reps (Pavel)
  – Grad Coordinators
    • Mary Lou for PhD only
    • Lisa for MMath only
  – Associate Chair of Grad Studies (Shoja)
Department Social

When? Wed, Sept 11, 2019; 4:30pm–6:30pm

Where? M3, Bruce White Atrium

What? Food
Drinks
Fellow students
Professors