

# Math grant provides opportunities

By Brian Baldwin  
News Editor

Are you a math major? What about engineering? Does theoretical math press the right buttons for you? Does the thought of 300- to 400-level math courses give you butterflies in your stomach? If you suffer from a one or two of these choices, then the math department here at Clackamas Community College may have the prescription for you!

Clackamas and Portland State University have received a \$200,000 grant to develop a math course that will be taught by Simmons and Mark Yannotta, math instructors, calling the "Bridge to University Mathematics."

Of that grant, CCC received \$35,000, according to Yannotta. This course will help prepare students who are majoring in mathematics or engineering majors prepare for the transition to 300- to 400-level mathematics courses taught at universities.

The course is designed after Portland State University's Larsen's Math-344 group theory curriculum. Larsen is Yannotta's PhD adviser, and he leapt at the chance to pursue both his goals and Yannotta's.

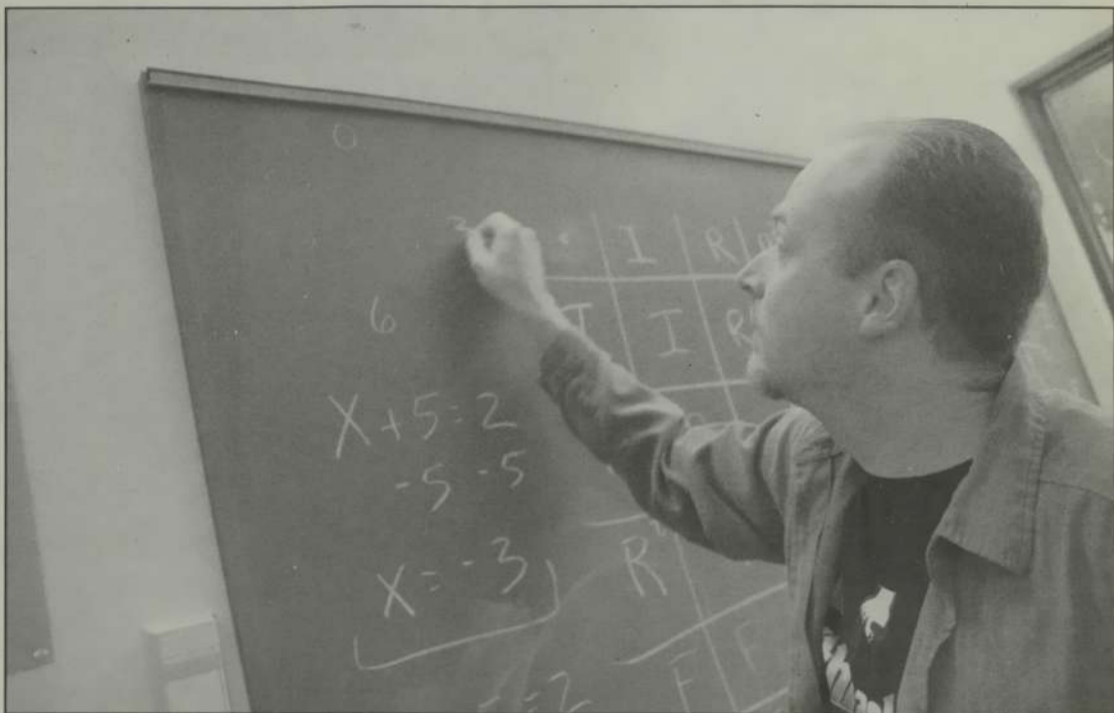
"I saw an opportunity for me to adapt this curriculum for community college students in a way that was consistent with my larger goal of supporting transfer students. In general, there is very little research in mathematics on community college students, so by studying this implementation, it was a win-win for both of us," said Yannotta in an e-mail. "Larsen consulted with me weekly the first time I implemented the curriculum and I interviewed Bruce as well. He has offered suggestions throughout the entire lifespan of the grant, but ultimately, he has encouraged us to adapt the curriculum to what we deem appropriate."

According to Simmons, this course will primarily benefit the math and engineering majors on campus who already know high level math.

"This is a kind of course that is offered at probably only a few four-year institutions and not many two-year colleges," said Simmons. "A lot of students who are majoring in the science technology and engineering are required to take one or two 300- to 400-level classes, and often a rough transition."

According to Simmons, the 300- to 400-level math courses are more proof based and theoretical and the assignments and graded work are very different than the level that is taught at most two-year institutions.

Previously this class's material has been taught by other instructors over the past few years as Math-299 at a slow pace to give students a feel for the material. Two years ago it was taught ... 'Let's do half a term



Nathan Sturgess Clackamas Print

Mark Yannotta, a math instructor at Clackamas Community College, has been working toward getting a math grant for some time now. He wants students at Clackamas to be able to work at a higher math level.

of Math-344 at a slower pace to get people acclimated.' Last year we started to dovetail additional material on how to do proofs and number theory," said Simmons.

"We have run this course in various forms at CCC since 2005. We have presented our work at our state conferences and other community college instructors have been very supportive of our efforts; however, no school has actually produced a course like this mainly because they don't think they will get enough students to make the class run on a consistent basis," stated Yannotta.

This course does not align with any required courses at other schools so this course will be considered an elective, according to Yannotta. But because of the 30 to 40 percent content overlap between this class and PSU's Math-344, Yannotta has received positive feedback from previous students that have taken the course that it helped them adjust to the university level math.

According to Dean of Curriculum, Planning and

Research Steffen Moller, Yannotta, Simmons or whoever will be the representative from the math department will have to present the details of the course such as what the objectives are, why the department wants to offer this course and what students are expected to get out of the course to name a few of the requirements.

And so Yannotta and Simmons still have work to do before they present the course design to the college.

"We need to make one more pass at revising the curriculum this spring and then present it to the college's curriculum committee early next fall," stated Yannotta. "While Larsen's curriculum forms the basis of the class, Bruce and I have adapted and supplemented some of it to better fit the needs of our students. Our class does not go as far into group theory as Math-344, but we go deeper, because we can go slower and we are not required to 'get through' a prescribed list of topics."

## ASG: Romance creates credibility issue in student government office

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There is no official rule either," Fava said.

Andy Brown, the adviser to Fava, also backs Fava's comment on the rules to in-office. "There aren't any," she said. "We've had, historically, folks who have dated and have been officers and/or officials."

Fava explained that she had to do with Briare's election to office and that the decision was actually made by a panel of officials on a panel. It was on the ASG panel elected Briare, but it was a unanimous decision from everyone. Fava also stressed that she had not been seeing Briare before or during the election process.

"No, I was not dating Briare during that process. As I've said before, my role on student government has been my life for years now, and I won't be put that at risk in any shape or form," Fava said.

Others disagree, saying the relationship was, indeed, a conflict. Recently the members of the ASG were made aware of the relationship between Fava (president) and Sean (vice president), which led back to the hiring process. Han, an ASG member who recently resigned in

a letter to *The Clackamas Print*. (See Letter to the Editor for the full letter.)

Briare explained that he and Fava started a personal relationship during the winter break after his election.

David Kinsella, Political Science Chairman of the Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University, said that there may be a conflict of interest if Briare didn't qualify and Fava made an exception for him.

"It seems that the issue is straightforward," Kinsella stated in an e-mail. "If the constitution specifies qualifications for office holders, including vice president, and if Mr. Briare does not meet those qualifications, then he should not have been permitted to run for office. Public vote, non-public vote; tell the students, don't tell the students - all of that is immaterial. A person should not stand for election if she/he is not qualified to hold the office."

"The question of a conflict of interest is therefore mute. Either the rules were followed, or they were not. Now, if ... Ms. Fava, the president, (has) the authority to make an exception to the election rules, and in fact did so in order to make the candidacy of Mr. Briare viable, then indeed (her) personal relationship with Mr. Briare would

create a conflict of interest," stated Kinsella.

When Briare was first elected to his new position, there was already debate about his qualifications as he had not yet been on ASG for two terms as stated in ASG's constitution whereas his opponent, Sage Losh, had been on the team for over a year.

Briare said he still believes he can do the job because, "It (the relationship) hasn't affected my work at all," he said. "When we're here in the office, it's office time. My personal life, and her personal life have nothing to do with the office."

"The reason I stepped up to this position is because I thought it would be for the benefit of the team," he said. "Even though I have only been here for a short period of time, I'm a team player, and the team has always come first for me. This is my personal life and it has nothing to do with the team. Just because we work in the same office it doesn't change where my focus is. When I'm here, I'm giving a 110 percent to the team; (I'm)

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