

Women in Mathematics: Career Day at Virginia Tech

Virginia Tech faculty, students, and alumnae will join approximately 250 sixth graders on Friday, November 20, for an intergenerational, multimedia, mathematical celebration.

The sixth graders have been invited from over twenty schools, including Auburn Middle School, Bedford Elementary School, Belle Heth Elementary School, Blacksburg Middle School, Blacksburg New School, Check Elementary School, Christiansburg Middle School, Craig County Middle School, Dublin Middle School, Eastern Elementary/Middle School, Floyd Elementary School, Gretna Middle School, Indian Valley Elementary School, Macy McClaugherty Elementary/Middle School, Narrows Elementary/Middle School, Pathway Christian Academy, Pulaski Middle School, Roanoke City Schools, Shawsville Middle School, Tall Oaks Montessori School, and Willis Elementary School.

The fifteenth annual Women in Mathematics: Career Day at Virginia Tech will begin at 9:30 a.m. with a welcome session at the Math Emporium on University City Boulevard in Blacksburg featuring Dr. Peter Haskell, head of the Department of Mathematics, and Dr. Bevlee Watford, director of the Center for the Enhancement of Engineering Diversity and the associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech. From 9:50 a.m. to 11:05 a.m., students will participate in two thirty-five minute sessions (described below) and then break for a pizza lunch. From 11:40 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., students will participate in the final session. A short survey will be completed, and then the sixth graders will depart.

The three sessions are as follows:

- “Math and Computer Graphics,” led by Margaret McQuain and Deborah Smith, will provide hands-on activities to investigate computer graphics in such varied fields as science, art, and electronics.
- “Explorations of Math and Art through Tessellations,” facilitated by Anderson Norton and Virginia Tech mathematics education majors, will enable students to create their own tessellation designs on the computer.
- The panel discussion on educational and career opportunities in mathematics, facilitated by Jessica Kline, will include two Virginia Tech alumnae. Descriptions follow:

- ***Carrie Kilareski*** graduated from Virginia Tech in May 1999 with a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics and a minor in leadership and was commissioned as an officer in the United States Air Force. While in the Air Force, her duties in space operations included Space Surveillance and Missile Warning Crew Commander and Evaluator; Chief, Treaty Compliance Officer; Wing Operations Security Officer; and Assistant Chief, Crisis Action Team (battle staff). Carrie was responsible for completing the dismantlement of missiles under a treaty and leading four treaty inspections with the Russians at her base. In 2003, Carrie earned her Master of Science degree in space studies from the University of North Dakota and honorably separated from the Air Force as a captain. Currently, she is a stay at home mom to two children.
- ***Destiny Leahy*** graduated summa cum laude from Virginia Tech in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics and a minor in statistics. Destiny began working as an actuarial analyst for Mercer, where she had interned the summer before her senior year. She has passed several actuarial exams to meet the requirements for becoming a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries. Destiny works in the retirement business at Mercer, where she helps clients comply with federal regulations regarding their pension plans. She uses probability, time value of money, critical thinking, and technical writing on a daily basis.

Career Day activities are sponsored by the Department of Mathematics. Cosponsors include the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, the College of Science, the Center for the Enhancement of Engineering Diversity, the Women's Center at Virginia Tech, Montgomery County NOW, the Math Club, and Womanspace. Individuals also have contributed financially to Career Day.

For more information, please contact Susan Anderson (phone 540-231-8041, e-mail anderson@math.vt.edu, or mail c/o Mathematics Department 0123, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061). Anyone with a disability who desires any assistance, services, or other accommodations to participate in this activity can contact Ms. Anderson at least one week prior to the event.