



February 15, 2013

Dr. Frank Serio, Department Head
Department of Mathematics
Northwestern State University of Louisiana
153 Kyser Hall
Natchitoches, LA 71497

Professor Serio,

I wanted to thank you for your participation for our National Science Foundation grant (NSF DUE-1020161). Your feedback has helped us improve our product so that it might be more useful for mathematics departments across the country.

I also wanted to share with you how delighted I was to hear about your recent enrollment trends. I understand that over the past two years your program has experienced a 22% growth in enrollment. That is fantastic! As our government leaders have recently acknowledged, we simply must engage more students of higher education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM disciplines). However, in these tough economic times, it seems that disciplines such as mathematics, where though we service large numbers of service courses we are only able to maintain a small number of majors, are often easy targets for cost savings measures since the major is viewed as not cost efficient. Nevertheless, you and I know that the quality of our service courses is directly related to the quality of our faculty, and that is dependent on the opportunities we are able to offer students with an interest in more upper level mathematics.

On a related note, my own department is having an external review this semester and in preparation for that I have spent a good bit of time viewing mathematics departmental websites, looking at curriculum for the mathematics major in all its varied forms as well as other information that colleges provide for their students. Just last night I visited your department's site and must say that it looks great! I remember when I did an external review of your department in 2003 that the main thing I recommended you address was the availability of information to your majors online. Clearly, you took that recommendation to heart. Your departmental website is a great student resource. At a time when budgets are being slashed and more and more work seems to be added to our already full plates, it is clear that student centeredness is still paramount at NSU!

1701 NORTH STATE ST.

JACKSON • MS • 39210

(601) 974 • 1000

Additionally, I continue to be impressed with the performance of your mathematics majors at the Louisiana – Mississippi meetings of the MAA. We have some very good mathematics programs in Mississippi and Louisiana and the performance of the student teams you enter in the student competitions, as well as the individual presentations made by the mathematics students at Northwestern are consistently outstanding. Indeed, your mathematics majors perform at or above the level of those from schools with graduate programs in mathematics. That you are providing this sort of mentorship for you students at a public four year institution is really impressive. Obviously you and your team are doing a fantastic job developing the next generation of mathematicians.

In closing I just wanted to let you know that you and your department are valued contributors to mathematics education in our region, and I very much appreciate the good work you and your colleagues are doing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Connie M. Campbell', written in a cursive style.

Connie M. Campbell, Ph.D.
Professor of Mathematics
Millsaps College
Jackson, MS 39210