



Nashville, September 16th, 2011

Dear Prospective Graduate Student,

I would like to introduce you to the graduate program in mathematics at Vanderbilt University and describe some of the benefits afforded to our graduate students.

The latest and perhaps most exciting news is that our Ph.D. program received a very favorable evaluation in the latest report on U.S. graduate programs in mathematics from the National Research Council (NRC). Unlike previously published NRC rankings, the new report offers "ranges of rankings" for each program rather than a single number. These ranges are computed using statistical analyses of the raw data collected. One of these rankings places us between the top 9% and 24% of the 127 Ph.D. programs surveyed. I invite you to read more about these results on the reverse side of this letter. Our presence in the top tier of departments is a testament to the vibrant research and teaching community that is thriving at Vanderbilt University. Our department enjoys an invigorating research and learning environment due to a superb roster of faculty, students and visitors from around the world.

There are nearly fifty full-time faculty and just forty graduate students in our department, providing an excellent student to faculty ratio. Our faculty includes two Fields Medalists and other world-renowned researchers, leading first-rate research groups in non-commutative geometry and operator algebras, approximation theory, algebra and topology, bio-mathematics, graph theory and combinatorics, and others. You can find a complete list of our faculty along with their research areas in the attached information sheet and also at www.math.vanderbilt.edu. Beyond the mathematics department, Vanderbilt University has a wide range of research programs providing the opportunity to get to know, and collaborate with, students and faculty in other departments.

Students who are accepted into Vanderbilt's mathematics program receive a tuition waiver, health insurance, and a teaching assistant position currently providing an annual stipend of \$21,200 yearly (we expect an increase for the upcoming year). Exceptional students will be considered for an honor scholarship which provides up to \$10,000 above and beyond the standard stipend. The following website gives more information about our graduate program: www.math.vanderbilt.edu/graduate.html.

Applying to Vanderbilt's graduate programs is done through the free online system located at: www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/applications_and_information. We require that you take the general GRE and GRE math subject tests. Information about the GRE exams can be found on the web at www.gre.org. The deadline for the applications for the 2012/2013 academic year is January 1st, 2012.

Vanderbilt University is located in the flourishing city of Nashville, Tennessee. Nashville, also known as Music City, is home to a large number of museums, theaters, symphony, the famous Grand Ole Opry, public libraries, restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores, two major league sports teams, and an extraordinary amount and diversity of live music. In a recent ranking of college towns, see www.livability.com/top-10-college-towns, Nashville was rated no. 4 nationwide.

I hope you will take a moment to look at and consider our program. For further information, please visit our website www.math.vanderbilt.edu/graduate.html. If you have any questions not addressed there, please contact us at mathgrad@vanderbilt.edu.

Sincerely,

Mike Neamtu

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**New NRC Report:
Ranking of Vanderbilt Mathematics Graduate Program Improves Dramatically**

A new report from the National Research Council (NRC) that offers insights into the quality of doctoral programs in mathematics at research universities in the United States rates the Vanderbilt mathematics program very highly. Released in September 2010, the new report no longer provides a definite ranking of programs, but a closer analysis of the data places our program at number 16 in the so-called S ranking, and at number 31 in the R ranking. Thus, in both of these rankings, our department fares dramatically better than in the 1995 NRC ranking, which placed us at number 84.

Given that graduate education is a top priority for Vanderbilt, this steep ascent by our department is hardly surprising. "For the last decade, Vanderbilt has been devoting increasing attention and resources to its Ph.D. programs throughout the entire campus," says Dennis Hall, vice provost for research and dean of the Graduate School. "All of that effort and emphasis has placed graduate education at Vanderbilt on a steep upward trajectory."

Mathematics department chair Dietmar Bisch adds, "Our department scored highly in several categories that indicate the high quality of our faculty, including percentage of faculty with research grants and publications per faculty. It is exciting for us to receive this recognition in one of the most anticipated evaluations of Ph.D. programs in mathematics."

The latest NRC report is based on data collected from 127 Ph.D. programs in mathematics during the 2005-2006 academic year. The data was gathered on 20 key characteristics identified by the NRC as indicative of the quality of Ph.D. programs.

The report provided two overall rankings, the S (survey-based) ranking and the R (regression analysis-based) ranking, to illustrate how the data collected can be interpreted. For each ranking two numerical values were computed through a statistical analysis that is explained in detail in the full report. In the "S ranking," these computations resulted in numbers between 11 and 31 for our program. This places us somewhere between the top 9% and the top 24% of the 127 departments ranked. In the so-called R ranking, a different way of computing weights for the NRC criteria, these two numbers were 17 and 48.

The entire NRC data set can be downloaded from the website <http://www.nap.edu/rdp/>. Alternatively, a sortable list of the NRC rankings is available at: <http://chronicle.com/article/NRC-Rankings-Overview-/124743/>.