

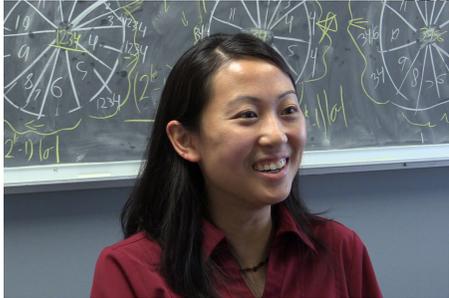
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Q&A with Texas A&M Mathematician Anne Shiu

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Mar 30, 2016

"Math is not a dead subject. There are a lot of new and interesting questions, and opportunities for students to jump in and start working on them."

- **Dr. Anne Shiu, Texas A&M mathematician**

COLLEGE STATION -- --

In celebration of Student Research Week (<http://srw.tamu.edu/>) (March 28-April 1) at Texas A&M University, the College of Science is taking five with five different people involved in various aspects and stages of innovative research at Texas A&M and beyond. Today's segment features Texas A&M mathematician Anne Shiu (<http://www.math.tamu.edu/directory/formalpg.php?user=annejls>).

Shiu joined the Texas A&M faculty in 2014 as an assistant professor. She received her Ph.D. in mathematics with an emphasis in genomic and computational biology from the University of California, Berkeley in 2010. Her research is focused on mathematical biology and algebraic geometry.

We caught up with Shiu to find out what led her to Texas A&M and get her thoughts on the scope of mathematics' influence across multiple fields of science and related disciplines.

What brought you to the Texas A&M College of Science?

“The research level is high here, both within the department and within the college. It makes for an exciting environment where everybody is interested in pursuing research, individually and collaboratively. I think it’s important for a strong department at a strong university to have this at a very high level. You don’t see this at all universities.”

Mathematics is a multifaceted field in that it often contributes to many other areas of science. In what types of research collaborations have you been involved?

“The math department in particular has strengths in both math-biology, which is my area, as well as algebra, which is my background, so there are a lot of people I can talk to. In addition, we have a strong group in biology — in circadian clocks, for example — and there are also people in chemistry I’ve been talking to, so I feel like I’m connected to many different departments within the college, and I have had the opportunity to start several collaborations.”

Based on your personal experiences, what is the research culture like at Texas A&M?

“Overall, it’s a really supportive environment. The expectations are high, and your colleagues are excellent. In some sense, it’s intimidating, but on the other hand, it’s an opportunity to really build your career, build your research and collaborate with other people. There are a lot of opportunities to involve undergraduates if you would like. I feel I’ve been given a lot of research opportunities, and it’s been quite nice.”

How often do you get to introduce your research to the classroom?

“One class I’ve taught, for example, is calculus for biology, which is a new course developed in the past five-to-10 years. It’s a class just for biology majors; they are now required to take both first and second semesters of

calculus. It’s quite nice, because I have the opportunity to share with them applications of mathematics to biology and get some of them interested in finding out why math can be very useful.

“I’ve also taught some advanced classes and, again, it’s a lot of fun to share topics that are closer to my own research with them. Some of those students are interested in graduate school, and it’s nice to help them look ahead to the opportunities they can have and the research problems that are still out there.”

What do you enjoy most about teaching, specifically regarding the one thing you think students should grasp when it comes to the subject of mathematical research?

“I like to interact with the students a lot. It’s nice to be able to think and reflect on what helps them learn.

“Math is not a dead subject. There are a lot of new and interesting questions, and opportunities for students to jump in and start working on them.”

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Now in its 19th year, Student Research Week is a friendly competition that highlights both undergraduate and graduate research at Texas A&M, one of the country’s top research universities. The weeklong celebration fosters an environment for students, faculty and administrators to learn about student research at Texas A&M and also gives students an opportunity to win numerous awards and cash prizes. To learn more about the week’s schedule and specific events, go to <http://srw.tamu.edu/> (<http://srw.tamu.edu/>).

For more information about research within the College of Science, go to <https://science.tamu.edu/research/> (<https://science.tamu.edu/research/>).

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