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▲ Jeannelle Green, Gabriel Palacios, Noe Reyes and Moises Reyes

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BERRIEN SPRINGS, Mich.—Two groups of Andrews students received awards at the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) national MathFest conference from Aug. 4–7, 2021, for outstanding student presentations. The conference, which was held virtually this year due to COVID–19, allowed over 1,000 professional mathematicians and students to present the latest in mathematical research and attend workshops.

Mathematics majors Noe Reyes, Jeannelle Green, Moises Reyes and Gabriel Palacios were invited to speak at the conference, based on exceptional performances in their courses and an interest in research. The group presented their research, which was guided by Anthony Bosman, PhD, assistant professor of mathematics, during a presentation titled “On the Delta-unlinking Number.” The presentation

earned an award and the group went on to present their research at the Young Mathematicians Conference.

“Research is born out of intellectual curiosity,” shares Bosman. “I encourage students to engage in their classes by digging deeper and asking ‘why’ and ‘what if?’ questions.”

Noe, Jeannelle, Moises and Gabriel participated in an NSF-funded summer research experienced under Bosman’s direction this past summer. “During the 8-week program, they studied the delta move in knot theory, a way of transforming one knot or link into another,” Bosman explains. “They proved several original results and determined the exact number of delta moves needed to reduce a family of links into the trivial link.”

The students chronicled their results into a paper for publication and have been presenting their findings at a number of national conferences, including MathFest, where Noe shared the group’s findings. Following the conference, the MAA announced that the Andrews

University team had been awarded an outstanding student presentation award.

Senior mathematics major and student presenter Jonathan Homan also won an award for his presentation on “Strong Fusion Pretzel Links,” his J.N. Andrews Honors capstone project on which he worked under the mentorship of Bosman. Homan presented at the Pi Mu Epsilon national meeting as the representative for the Andrews University chapter of Pi Mu Epsilon.

On the last day of MathFest, Jonathan was notified that he was one of the Pi Mu Epsilon winners chosen for the quality of his research presentation.

“From over 100 student presentations, a couple dozen were selected for awards. For both of our Andrews presenters to receive this national recognition affirms the exceptional work that students and faculty on our campus are engaged in,” shares Bosman. “Such national conferences are a wonderful way for us to introduce students to the wider world of academic research. For them to present their own work and be recognized encourages our students to persist in the mathematical sciences and helps them stand out when they apply to top graduate programs.”

Yun Myung Oh, professor of Mathematics, other Andrews faculty members and mathematicians from across the country gave presentations about the various scientific career opportunities for students to pursue.

Bosman says that students should talk with faculty to learn more about the many undergraduate research opportunities available to them. “Expert faculty researchers who are eager to mentor undergraduates is a distinctive strength of Andrews University that students should know about and take advantage of,” he says. ■

Moriah McDonald, University Communication student writer