David McMorris

Contact Information

Department of Mathematics
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Research Interests

Mathematical biology and scientific computing, applications of control theory to plant life history and ecology.

Education

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Ph.D. in Mathematics — August 2020
Advisor: Glenn Ledder
Dissertation: *Optimal Allocation of Two Resources in Annual Plants*

M.S. in Mathematics — May 2016

Hope College

B.S. in Mathematics — May 2014
Magna Cum Laude
Advisor: Brian Yurk

Appointments

Part-Time Lecturer, Christopher Newport University — August 2025 - present

Adjunct, Christopher Newport University — August 2021 - May 2025

Graduate Teaching Assistant, UNL — 2014 - 2020

Teaching Experience

Instructor of Record

Christopher Newport University

Math 115: Contemporary Mathematics — Fall 2023, Spring 2024

Math 125: Elementary Statistics — Fall 2022, 2023, 2024, Spring 2024, 2025

Math 130: Advanced Algebra & Trigonometry — Spring 2022, 2023, Fall 2023, 2024

Math 135: Calculus for Business and Social Sciences — Fall 2021, Spring 2022

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Math 101: College Algebra — Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Summer 2016

Math 103: College Algebra & Trigonometry — Fall 2016, 2017
Part of the WHT Scholars Learning Community for first-generation students

Math 104: Applied Calculus — Fall 2019
Large lecture format (∼110 students)

Math 106: Calculus I — Fall 2018
Part of the WHT Scholars Learning Community for first-generation students

Math 203: Contemporary Mathematics — Spring 2018

Math 301: Geometry Matters — Summer 2017
A course for pre-service elementary teachers

Math 302: Math Modeling — Spring 2017, 2019, 2020
A course for pre-service elementary teachers

Teaching Assistant

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Math 106: Calculus I Recitation — Fall 2014, Summer 2015
Math 107: Calculus II Recitation — Spring 2015

Qualifying Exam Workshops

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Organized workshops for first-year graduate students preparing for qualifying exams
PDE and Applied Math Workshop — May 2018
ODE and Applied Math Workshop — May 2017

Grader

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Math 104: Applied Calculus — Spring 2015
Math 489/889: Stochastic Processes — Fall 2018
Math 831: Partial Differential Equations — Fall 2017
Math 842: Methods in Applied Mathematics — Fall 2016

Peer-Reviewed Publications

1. **D. McMorris** and G. Ledder, Optimal allocation of two resources in annual plants. *Mathematical Biosciences and Engineering*, **22(6)** (2025), 1464-1516.
2. **D. McMorris**, P. Pearson, and B. Yurk, A modified wavelet method for identifying transient features in time signals with applications to bean beetle maturation. *Involve, a Journal of Mathematics*, **10(1)** (2016), 21-42.

Other Publications

1. **D. McMorris**, Book Review: Matrix Models for Population, Disease, and Evolutionary Dynamics. *The UMAP Journal*, **46(1)** (2025), 90-92.
2. E. Marland, A. Baldwin, A. Beecher, J. D'Andrea, K. Erickson, K. Hartling, **D. McMorris**, V. Mendiratta, A. N. Okine, and K. Pinzon, Judges' Commentary: Sustainability in Property Insurance. *The UMAP Journal*, **45(3)** (2024), 259-278.
3. A. Baldwin, K. Blyman, J. D'Andrea, W. Hamilton, K. Hartling, M. J. Hartman, **D. McMorris**, V. Mendiratta, M. Meyer, and K. Pinzon, Judges' Commentary: Light Pollution. *The UMAP Journal*, **44(3)** (2023), 253-278.

Presentations

† denotes invited talk

Optimal Allocation of Two Resources in Annual Plants
(50 min)
UNL, Dissertation Defense — July 2020

† Plant Life History and Optimal Control
(20 min)
Nebraska Wesleyan University Math Club — November 2019

† Investigating Plant Growth Through Mathematical Biology
(50 min)
Nebraska Wesleyan University STEM Seminar — March 2019

† Using Optimal Control Theory to Model Resource Allocation in Annual Plants
(50 min)
Creighton University Department of Mathematics Colloquium November 2018

An Optimal Control Approach to Resource Allocation in Annual Plants
(50 min)
UNL MathBio Seminar October 2018

An Application of Optimal Control to Resource Allocation in Annual Plants
(20 min)
Midwest Mathematical Biology Conference, UW - La Crosse May 2018

† Optimal Control Theory and Math Biology
(10 min)
Nebraska Wesleyan University Math Club October 2017

Modified Wavelet Methods for Identifying Transitions in Bean Beetle Maturation
(Poster)
Hope College Celebration of Undergraduate Research April 2014
Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition Awards Day March 2014

Identifying Transitions in Bean Beetle Maturation Using Modified Wavelet Methods
(15 min)
Hope College Mathematics Department Colloquium October 2013
Midstates Consortium for Math and Science Undergraduate Research
Symposium, University of Chicago October 2013

Research Experience

University of Nebraska-Lincoln 2016 - 2020
Dissertation Research; Advisor: Glenn Ledder
Optimal control theoretical approach to resource allocation in annual plants

- Developed a two-resource model for resource allocation in annual plants.
- Used optimal control theory to determine the growth trajectory that maximizes fruit production over the course of a growing season.
- Implemented numerical methods to simulate the model in MATLAB.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Summer 2018
Graduate Research Assistant; Advisor: Adam Larios
Regularity of solutions to fractional Benjamin-Bona-Mahony equation

- Used numerical techniques to investigate the effects of incorporating a fractional differential operator on the smoothness of solutions to the BBM equation.

Hope College 2013-2014
Undergraduate Research Assistant; Advisor: Brian Yurk
Studied effects of climate change on growth of embryonic *Callosobruchus maculatus*

- Developed and implemented laboratory protocol for exposing embryos to varying environmental conditions and collecting data via digital microscopy.
- Employed a modified wavelet image processing algorithm with R and Java to examine effects of climate variation on the timing of key transition points in embryonic development.

Honors and Awards

Parents' Recognition Award, UNL 2017
Nominated by parents for making a difference in the lives of their students.

Outstanding Qualifying Exam, UNL 2015

Othmer Fellowship, UNL 2014
Merit-based three-year fellowship awarded to incoming graduate students.

Albert E. Lampen Mathematics Prize, Hope College 2014
Awarded annually to two graduating seniors in mathematics.

Member of Phi Beta Kappa inducted 2014

Member Pi Mu Epsilon, Michigan Delta chapter inducted 2014

John H. Kleinheksel Mathematics Award, Hope College 2012
Awarded annually to select sophomore-level mathematics majors.

Presidential Scholarship, Hope College 2010
Merit-based scholarship at Hope College

Service

MCM/ICM, Consortium for Mathematics and Its Applications Since 2021
The Mathematical Contest in Modeling and Interdisciplinary Contest in Modeling are international modeling contests each spring which challenge students to engage with open-ended problems and write detailed reports of their work. I have been a first-round judge for either the ICM or MCM since 2021, and have served on a panel of final judges to identify Finalist and Outstanding papers for the ICM since 2023.

Referee, Letters in Biomathematics 2021 - 2023

New Student Enrollment, UNL Summer 2019, 2020
Worked with academic advisors and incoming freshmen to determine their math placement based on their backgrounds and major requirements.

Nebraska Conference for Undergraduate Women in Mathematics,
Department of Mathematics, UNL January 2019, 2020
NCUWM is an annual conference open to undergraduate women mathematicians. I volunteered to assemble informational packets and register conference attendees.

Dean Search, College of Arts and Sciences, UNL January 2019
Served on a panel of 10 students who met with and evaluated each candidate.

Math Day, Department of Mathematics, UNL November 2014 - 2019
Proctored/coordinated throughout a day of high school mathematics competitions for approximately 1400 students across Nebraska.