Steven Clontz

Service Statement

My service during my first two years at South has been dedicated to using my unique talents to better connect my department with our community through outreach, and to support both the students we serve from outside departments and our own majors outside my assigned teaching.

I have served on our departmental outreach committee since the beginning of my appointment, and now serve as chair. Reportedly, this committee had been mostly dormant in the few years prior to my arrival, other than an occassional visit to a local high school. Bringing my expertise in developing fun mathematical experiences for grade school students as director of Mathematical Puzzle Programs, our department now hosts one of the largest MaPP Challenge events in the country, serving about 70 students from 7 local high schools, in addition to bringing in students from Bessemer Academy near Birmingham.

My work representing our university has taken me to several high schools to give talks and mathematical puzzle exhibitions, including the Alabama School of Math and Science in Mobile and Loveless Academy Magnet Program in Montgomery. My work in mathematics outreach has also been featured by the National Museum of Mathematics in New York City. I also have contributed to the Mobile Math Circle as a speaker and volunteer, and will chaperone four top local high school students as they attend the Julie Robinson Mathematics Festival at UC-Berkeley in November 2018.

I also have served on our departmental student affairs committee for all three years of my appointment, including one year as chair. The year before my arrival, the student mathematics/statistics club had fallen dormant, so a large portion of my work has been to revive this organization by supporting a new generation of student leaders as their faculty advisor. A vibrant math/stat club gives our majors and other math enthusiasts from other STEM majors a community of peer support as they progress through their undergraduate programs and look ahead to careers and graduate schools. These students also are exposed to mathematical ideas that cannot be covered in the coursework required in a four-year curriculum, expanding their appreciation of the field and helping them connect their academic work to applications in research and industry.

While I have not yet had the opportunity to serve on any college or university committees, I have collaborated with colleagues across the university on various projects. Particular examples are my work with writing grants with the Innovations in Learning Center and TeamUSA, and organizing workshops with the Department of Leadership and Teacher Education for local middle school mathematics teachers.