Mathematics at FAU

Overview

All students entering FAU must take university-level mathematics courses. This has been a source of anxiety for many. Fortunately, we have in the past several years developed a student-oriented approach that will benefit students and enable them to succeed. Student success is our objective.

Mathematics Course Placement

The first thing is to ensure that students are in the proper course. We require a placement test (http://www.fau.edu/mathplacement/) and have developed placement policies that encourage student success. It is important that students taking the placement test realize that its purpose is to let the student know if his/her mathematics skills are at a level conducive to success in a course, although skills alone are not a guarantee for success.

Course Structure

Our lower-division mathematics courses are structured so that the student knows very early in the term what is expected in the way of homework, attendance, performance on quizzes, and exams. This is all documented within the first week. The student needs to do the required work in order to succeed in the course. Many courses use on-line material, and the student is expected to enroll in that material by the first day of class.

Learn by Doing

Some of the lower-division courses have allocated time in the classroom or in an "extended classroom" where exercises (usually homework problems) can be worked. Attendance in "extended classroom" sessions as well as completion of assigned homework is required for students to take examinations. Why have we done this? Our results indicate that performance improves considerably when students are required to attend these "extended classroom" sessions and complete homework assignments. (There is a growing body of evidence that you learn mathematics by doing mathematics.) The number of hours that a student is required to spend in the "extended classroom" is discussed during the first class period. There are no exceptions.

Immediate Help

Why is the "extended classroom" successful? We schedule Peer Tutors, Graduate Teaching Assistants, and Faculty in the room to work with the students. We stress active learning and, after helping a student, we encourage him/her to explain how to solve a similar problem. Students understand a problem if they can explain it!

Outreach

We also have a number of other helpful facilities at FAU. The Mathematics Learning Center (MLC) is housed in the General Classroom South building (GS), where tutoring in all undergraduate mathematics courses is available. (Schedules are posted at http://www.math.fau.edu/MLC/) The MLC has been certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) for all three levels: Level I Certified Tutor, Level II Advanced Certified Tutor and Level III Master Certified Tutor.

Formal review sessions are popular and are scheduled in lower-division courses before midterm and final examinations. In addition, we offer one-on-one tutoring for any course in mathematics. You just need to ask (mlc@sci.fau.edu), and an appointment will be arranged.

Special Offering for Remote Tutoring

In conjunction with the Center for eLearning (CeL), we are pleased to offer students special tutoring opportunities available remotely using Blackboard Collaborate. Group sessions and reviews will be arranged at set times for selected courses, while individual (one-on-one) tutoring sessions can be arranged by request (mlc@sci.fau.edu). Specific information is posted at http://www.math.fau.edu/MLC/remote.

What Else is Available?

FAU also has a Supplemental Instruction Program (http://www.fau.edu/si), Learning Communities (http://www.fau.edu/learningcommunity), tutoring for Student Athletes (http://www.fausports.com/school-bio/fau-acad-center.html), and tutoring for Engineering students offered in the Engineering Building (http://www.eng.fau.edu/tutoring-information). You need to take advantage of what is available!