



MATH ALLIANCE RESEARCH STUDY

Field of Dreams 2013 Data Summary

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The Field of Dreams conference is held annually in the fall and brings together undergraduate students interested in mathematics, graduate students looking to learn more about mathematics careers, industry representatives interested in recruiting young talent, and faculty mentors and graduate program leaders interested in diversifying the mathematical and statistical fields. This conference offers a unique opportunity for students and faculty to meet and discuss strategies for being successful in mathematics without the pressure of having to perform mathematics. At the conference the directors highlight the importance of personal relationships in mathematics and discuss how to cultivate those connections.

In 2013 this conference was held in Phoenix, Arizona between November 1st and November 3rd. Around 75 faculty and 190 students attended the conference, making it the biggest Field of Dreams yet. Although short, the 2013 conference packed a lot in, running concurrent sessions for mentors, graduate students, postdoctoral scholars on the academic job market, and undergraduate students. In addition, students were expected to meet with their mentor at least once during the conference and seniors were asked to prepare graduate school application materials that were then reviewed by a group of faculty mentors.

During the conference the MARS research team observed sessions, held informal conversations with different interested people, conducted focus group with mentors and students, and debriefed regularly as a group in order to capture the patterns and impressions that emerged too quickly to record into paper based notes. A brief survey was distributed on Saturday that asked the attendees to think about and record their thoughts on topics our team wanted further clarification on. We also had a chance to promote our work--the Field of Dreams team provided time for a quick presentation on our work to the Field of Dreams attendees, which resulted in several new connections being made. The table at the end of this document itemizes the different data collections that were done at the Field of Dreams and summarizes what has been done with that information to date.

Data Collection Element

Stage of Analysis

<i>Observations of Field of Dreams</i> Almost every session and event was attended by at least one MARS research team member	The notes have been compiled. The audio recordings of the researcher debriefs are currently being transcribed.
<i>Student Focus Groups</i> Three were held on Friday evening and two on Saturday afternoon. A total of thirty students participated.	Audio files of the recorded sessions are currently being transcribed. This stage should be complete by the end of February 2014.
<i>Faculty Mentor Focus Groups</i> Two were held on Friday evening and one on Saturday afternoon. A total of fifteen faculty participated.	Audio files of the recorded sessions are currently being transcribed. This stage should be complete by the end of February 2014.
<i>Brief Survey</i> A total of 225 responses were received.	The responses have been scanned and are currently being transcribed.

