

Alberta Topology Seminar

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This 2-day workshop should be considered within the wider context of the Alberta Topology Seminar (ATS). The ATS is an Alberta based regional effort to strengthen the research environment and to foster research activities of mathematicians working in Topology as well as in its interfaces with Algebra, Analysis, Geometry, and Theoretical Physics. Participants come primarily from the Alberta universities, but also from neighbouring provinces and states. The driving force behind this broad endeavour is the basic fact that research thrives in a climate of rich and multidirectional interaction, generating critical mass for discovery amongst the participants in as many ways as possible. The challenge then is to achieve amongst the participants a level of breadth of expertise and familiarity with each other's works to allow such interaction to take place. Towards this end we have had 12 ATS-meetings during the last year with talks comprising a mix of background building educational presentations, as well as conference style presentations about recent discoveries.

Within this context the 2-day workshop we had at BIRS was by far the most important, extensive, and beneficial ATS meeting held to date. The twenty participants formed a healthy mix of established and junior researchers, as well as graduate students representing the Universities of Alberta, Calgary, Lethbridge, and Oregon. We had twelve talks (7 on the first day, 5 on the second) spanning areas that include low dimensional and transformation group topology, representation theory, algebraic geometry, noncommutative geometry, etc. For details, see

<http://www.ualberta.ca/dept/math/gauss/AAGT/Topology/BIRS2004.htm>

Perhaps contrasting a bit those workshops whose participants come together because they share a common focus, the ultimate significance of this ATS will be measured by the extent to which its very diverse group of participants learn to share and amplify each other's expertise. A number of unexpected exchanges took place which appear very promising in this regard. While the germination of ideas between specialists in neighbouring, but different, fields requires time to nurture, we are quite optimistic that this 2-day workshop will turn out to play a key role towards obtaining tangible results within the near to mid-range future.

The ATS meeting at BIRS also provided an opportunity for the organizers to plan future events for the coming year; for evolving details please consult the above web address.

Finally we wish to express our gratitude to BIRS for hosting this meeting in such a relaxed setting amidst the spectacular scenery of the Canadian Rockies. There was also great praise among the participants for the BIRS facilities, in particular for the excellent computer access available in each room.