SMI 2009 Exit Survey

We would like your suggestions for improving SMI. Please give us a written summary of your take on the program, and send it to Ken (`kbrown@cornell.edu`). Below is a list of topics on which we would like your comments, but don't feel limited to this list. Tell us anything you think would be useful for improving the program.

Feel free to discuss your opinions with your classmates. We often get better feedback from students when they know what others are thinking, so don't hesitate to contact one another. *Specific constructive criticisms* are extremely helpful. For many questions below a yes/no answer gives us little information, so please expand your response when necessary.

We are interested in everything you have to say, *particularly about the academic aspects of SMI.*

Please return the first part of this survey to Ken and the second part to Ravi. We would like your responses by August 22, 2009.

1. THE PROGRAM AND STAFF

1.1. **Arrangements and facilities.** Were things prior to the program OK? Was the website easy to use, and did it have all the information you needed? If not, how could it be improved? Once you were accepted did you get all the information you needed in a timely fashion? How about the startup of the program?

Were the dorm rooms adequate? Would you recommend that we use Keeton again? Were you happy with dining arrangements? Would you prefer meals in dining halls?

Were facilities in CAM adequate? Did you find CAM students welcoming? Were there enough organized social events? too many? too few?

Was the Seminar Room in Keeton suitable for the study sessions? If not, what kind of arrangement would have been better?

Were you (as a group) as cohesive as you would have liked? If so, what made this happen? If not, what could we do in the future to promote more cohesiveness?

1.2. **Academics.** A feature of SMI that distinguishes it from traditional REUs is the course that is designed to better prepare students for graduate work in mathematics. How did this course compare to courses at your home university? Did you like the format of the course (lectures 5 times a week)? Should homework be due less frequently? more frequently? Were the problems at the appropriate level? Did you find you had enough opportunities to ask questions? Did you get what you expected out of the course? Were the lecture notes useful?

Consider the analogous questions for your projects. Were you given too much independence? too little?

What did you think about the schedule of speakers and their choice of topics? What research interests would you prefer outside speakers have?

1.3. **Staff.** Please give us evaluations of the staff, especially Jason, Matt, Kristine, and Tia. We may consider hiring them in the future, and your input will be helpful. Please be as detailed as possible: For instance, comment about the structure of lectures, project sessions, and problem sessions. Were the people approachable? knowledgeable? effective at their jobs? Did they stimulate your interest?

2

Comments about Denise and Huimei would also be useful.

After you make your detailed remarks about the staff members, please give an overall recommendation as to whether we should hire them again. **Specific comments will not be shared with the staff, but an anonymous summary will be given to them.**

1.4. **Miscellaneous.** Would you recommend that we continue the Hoffman Challenge Course? Bear in mind that while having fun is nice, the goal of Hoffman was to bring people together in order to help achieve our overall academic mission.

Your time was pretty structured. Was it too structured? Was it good to have the schedule the way it was?

The lunches with the mentors were organized very late. Were they useful? Should we have started them from the beginning? Would you have liked to have had more such lunches? Or can you suggest some other way of providing meetings with mentors?

Was it helpful to have alumni (Kevin and Shannon) visit? Should their visit have been more structured? What kinds of organized activities would have been useful

1.5. **Wish list.** What are one or two things you would go back and change about SMI if you could?

2. The director

This part is an evaluation of Ken's role in the program. His job was to "make sure everything ran smoothly". This included the admissions process, the choice of invited speakers, the choice of the daily schedule, the hiring of the staff, and all other administrative aspects of the program. Please send comments on the director to Ravi (ravi@math.cornell.edu) with "SMI director evaluation" in the Subject line. **Specific comments will not be shared with Ken, but an anonymous summary will be given to him.**

HAVE A GREAT YEAR, AND KEEP IN TOUCH