Strategic planning. Core math-Senior appointments

These notes reflect the discussion held on Thursday, January 26 in the Core Mathematics subcommittee meeting on senior hiring.

Why?

Why do we need high-profile senior appointments in the mathematics department?

- (Visibility) Mathematics departments are identified with their best faculty.
- Faculty with high research profiles improve the research of the existing faculty:
  - Excellent researchers create higher expectations and more opportunities for current faculty and students.
  - Researchers at a very high level provide broad perspectives across mathematical disciplines.
  - These researchers are not bound by traditional barriers between areas, and can spark interactions and new perspectives.
- Excellent faculty improve
  - the chances to attract excellent hires in the future,
  - the chances to attract excellent post-doctoral faculty. A successful post-doctoral program carries the name and the strength of our department into the world.
  - the chances to attract excellent graduate students. Excellent graduate students have a long term impact on the quality and propagation of the research in the mathematics department.
- Targeted senior appointments will allow us to maintain and enhance traditional strengths in certain areas with gaps between retiring stars and thriving younger faculty (include demographics).

Remark:

We have examples in our own department to illustrate the wide ranging effects which targeted senior hires can have on all aspects of our enterprise.
How?

How can the mathematics department attract senior researchers of very high quality?

- These senior researchers have to be identified actively. A long range plan is necessary to attract them to the mathematics department at UIUC.
- The following tools can be used to attract exceptional candidates:
  - Cluster of two senior leaders in adjacent fields.
  - Flexibility with respect to dual career issues.
  - Allowing concrete influence on future hiring decisions. Indeed, some leaders might be interested in building schools or attracting leaders in complementing areas.
  - The size and structure of our department and the campus provides a good infrastructure for developing connections between different areas of mathematics and applied mathematics.
- Secure and continuous support for these appointments is important. Finding candidates of this caliber might require many attempts. It is not appropriate to compromise quality in order to fit such an appointment into a certain time frame.
- A mathematics strategic hiring committee could be created to do the long range work necessary to identify and attract candidates at the appropriate level.
- Targeted excellence hires (at a level less than the chaired level) continues to be an extremely effective way to improve our programs. (Should this be included?)

What?

This candidate should

- have an outstanding international reputation,
- be of interest to many areas in our department
- be willing to communicate and interact with a broad range of faculty in the department and the campus,
- see the appointment at the UI as an opportunity to build and enhance all areas of the mathematical enterprise here.
- represent mathematics and, in certain cases, improve the connections to other departments on the campus.

Who?

Concrete names have been discussed in the meeting which serve as models for possible candidates.

Shall we include case studies?