

At the end of the semester I ask each student to determine whether or not the points accumulated on her *List of Grievances and Special Requests* are enough to result in a higher letter grade (this information is available via the course website). I then collect the *List* from those students who feel they need the extra points.

Since I teach at an institution where students care deeply about earning top grades, the *List* policy saves me a lot of time hearing excuses and complaints (whether significant or petty), and managing the adjustments they require. Students share the inconvenience created by their grievances and special requests, and feel that their concerns are taken seriously and acted upon. Having students grade their own work also provides the side benefit of making them more tolerant of mistakes made by the paper graders since they experience the difficulty of evaluating their own work by means of the grading rubric and the solutions manual.

Time Spent: One hour at the end of the semester updating the grade book.

Time Saved: One hour per week of grading, recording, and emailing/meeting with students to evaluate excuses and complaints. 🍷

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Teaching Time Savers are articles designed to share easy-to-implement activities for streamlining the day-to-day tasks of faculty members everywhere. If you would like to share your favorite time savers with the readers of MAA FOCUS, then send a separate email description of each activity to Michael Orrison at orrison@hmc.edu. Make sure to include a comment on “time spent” and “time saved” for each activity, and to include pictures and/or figures if at all possible.

Aparna Higgins to Become Director of Project NExT

Aparna Higgins will be the new director of MAA’s Project NExT in August 2009, replacing T. Christine Stevens. After fifteen years on the job, Chris Stevens decided that it was time to pass the baton and asked that she be allowed to step down. The Board of Governors acknowledged Stevens’ amazing work over the last 15 years and voted to appoint Higgins to a five-year term beginning on August 16, 2009.

Higgins has been deeply involved with Project NExT for many years now, which makes her a natural choice for Stevens’ successor. Supporting her on the job will be Joseph Gallian, Gavin Larose, and Judith Covington.

Project NExT (New Experiences in Teaching) is the MAA’s professional development project for new and recent PhDs in the mathematical sciences. Over the span of a couple of years, NExT Fellows receive intensive guidance and support as they start their careers as professional mathematicians, with workshops and sessions on how to manage the complex blend of research, teaching, and service that make up the everyday life of college and university faculty. Fellows then remain connected with their mentors and which each other, providing them a network of professional connections that will last for many years. There are 1085 current and past Fellows, and 80 new Fellows are accepted every year. Many NExT Fellows are now among the leaders of the profession and of the MAA.

For more information on Project NExT and the many other professional development activities of the MAA, visit <http://www.maa.org> and click on the “Professional Development” tab. 🍷



Aparna Higgins will take over as the NExT director for Project NExT. Photograph by Fernando Gouvêa.