



# CSU Bakersfield

School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering

Department of Mathematics

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October 16, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I have recently been asked about the “purpose” of the CSUB Master’s Degree program in Mathematics. Hopefully, by writing this letter I can clarify some misconceptions.

Formally, the graduates of the program earned a degree with the title: Master of Arts in the Teaching of Mathematics. The program was designed to accommodate students who were themselves already teaching Mathematics in high school. Many of these students did not have an undergraduate degree in Mathematics, but had become high school math teachers via some other path. Therefore some of the CSUB Master’s program classes reviewed material that is often covered in the more advanced classes of a standard Mathematics Bachelor’s Degree and consequently did not cover some material that would be considered standard in most Master of Science in Mathematics programs (in order to keep it possible to finish the program in the standard 2 year period). Nonetheless, almost all the courses concentrated on mathematical content. So, despite having the word “teaching” in the title of the degree, it should not be interpreted to be a degree in mathematics education.

But because of the above, the degree should also not to be construed as equivalent to an MS in Mathematics. Actually, the CSU Chancellor’s Office, at the time, did not want CSUB to develop such a program since they felt that we would then draw students away from the existing programs in the “nearby” CSU campuses at Northridge, San Luis Obispo, and Fresno. So, the purpose of the CSUB Master’s in Mathematics was two (or more) – fold. The program was for students who wanted to study advanced mathematics but could not leave the Bakersfield area; it also filled in gaps in the knowledge of secondary mathematics teachers who did not have an undergraduate degree in mathematics, bringing them up to, and past, the level of a teacher who “only” had a standard Bachelor’s degree in Mathematics.

The people who earned their Masters of Arts in the Teaching of Mathematics should therefore be considered fully qualified to teach all math classes through the high school level.

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