

Just How Bad Is That Gerrymander: Using Computers to Assess How Typical a Redistricting Is

What: **Bi-State Colloquium**

When: **Wednesday, April 4, 4pm**

Where: **Loras College, Hennessy 350**

Who: **Matt Rissler**

After a map is drawn, it often falls to the courts to decide if it is excessively gerrymandered. To assess the excessiveness, one must first have an idea of how a “typical” redistricting would look. One method would be to compare the map to the distribution of all possible maps for several metrics: demographic measures, geometric measures, and political measures. However, due to the nature of the problem the space of possible maps is extremely large, so it is nigh impossible to enumerate all possible maps, or even all feasible maps. Several computational methods to explore the space of possible redistricting maps will be discussed.

Matt Rissler is an Associate Professor of Mathematics at Loras College. During his tenure, he has taught in five disciplines: math, computer science, physics, engineering, and business analytics. In his “spare” time, he thinks about ranking sports teams, heating his house with renewable resources like junk mail and the wood in his backyard, and how to get his two children to sleep through the night.