

Bill Hawkins comments on the 1988
report recommendations

Recommendations
Report of the Task Force on Minorities in Mathematics
The Mathematical Association of America
November 1988

Question 1. How can existing MAA functions, activities, and programs be strengthened in ways that will generate greater minority participation, both from students and faculty?

Recommendation 1

National and sectional program committees should include MAA members from minority groups and institutions with large minority populations.

To my knowledge, no particular effort has been made to monitor the program committees. There have been minority members on occasion.

Recommendation 2

National and sectional program committees should highlight the contributions of minority mathematicians by inviting them to take active roles in meetings. Minority mathematicians should be invited to give addresses, to participate on panels and to present contributed papers.

Minority mathematicians have been invited to give addresses, participate on panels, and present contributed papers. There was more emphasis on this in the early years of SUMMA. The numbers vary from year to year.

Recommendation 3

The MAA should undertake and support endeavors that bring recent Ph.D.'s from minority groups into active participation with the mathematical community as soon as possible.

Project NEXt has had minority participants and continues to seek them.

Recommendation 4

All MAA search committees for executive level positions should have at least one minority member.

I don't know whether this has occurred or not.

Recommendation 5

The MAA should establish a National Meeting Assistance Fund to support minority students' attendance at national meetings. Outside funding should be sought for this fund.

MAA has funding from NSF to support student travel to the Joint Meetings and Summer MathFest; Betty Mayfield is the contact person.

Sections should seek funding from local regional corporations and foundations to assist with travel to Section meetings.

I don't know about comparable Section level activities.

Recommendation 6

The Committee on Sections should make a concerted effort to encourage Sections to negotiate with historically black colleges/universities and in colleges with large minority enrollments to host Section meetings.

I don't know whether this has occurred but I know that faculty from minority institutions have been invited in the past.

Recommendation 7

Sessions should be held at national meetings to disseminate information about 1) successful intervention programs aimed at improving mathematics education for minorities which are faculty based; 2) consultant services to assist in implementation, evaluation and follow-up activities for new intervention programs; and 3) funding possibilities for these programs.

Such sessions have occurred at national meetings, especially concerning undergraduate research.

Question 2. How can the MAA broaden the scope of existing programs to make them more useful to members interested in the problem of underrepresentation among minorities in mathematics?

Recommendation 8

The MAA should retain BAM as an ongoing program and make every attempt to strengthen it.

BAM was discontinued. Perhaps we can consider it replaced by CPM and the Office of Minority Participation.

Recommendation 9

The MA should assist other minority groups in establishing similar programs.

Recommendation 10

To promote the full inclusion of minorities in the Association's activities, there should be minority representation on major MAA committees, for example, CUPM, CTUM, the new Committee on Awards, and journal editorial committees.

This has occurred to varying degrees. Wade Ellis has served on CUPM and as Treasurer of IMO 2001, Jackie Giles-Giron on the Professional Development Committee, and Genevieve Knight on CTUM. Karen Ivy is now on CTUM; Minerva Cordero on CRAFTY; Nkechi Agwu on the Centennial History Subcommittee of the Centennial Planning Committee; Wade Ellis, Bill Velez, and Bill Hawkins on the College Board – MAA Mutual Concerns Committee; Dawn Lott on CUPM; Sylvia Bozeman on the Committee on Consultants; Bill Velez on the Committee on Early Career Mathematicians; Hortensia Soto-Johnson on the Committee on Minicourses; Mark Korlie on the Committee on Panel Selection; Jose Giraldo on the Committee on Sessions of Contributed Papers; Ximena Catapillan on the Committee on Travel Study Programs; Maria Villalobos on the Committee on the Participation of Women; Genevieve Knight on the Council on Meetings and Professional Development; Wade Ellis and Bob Megginson on the Council on Prizes and Awards; Camille McKayle on the Council on the Profession; Wade Ellis on the Haimo Awards for Distinguished Teaching; Wade Ellis on the Membership Committee; Ray Johnson and Bill Velez on the Science Policy Committee; Camille McKayle on the Task Force on e-Communities; and Troy Banks, Minerva Cordero, James Epperson, Dawit Haile, Bill Hawkins, Karen Ivy, Camille McKayle, and Bob Megginson on CMPM.

Recommendation 11

Nominating committees, at both the sectional and national level, should seek minority candidates for offices in the Association.

This has occurred: Bob Megginson has been a candidate for President and I was a candidate for 2nd Vice President. Wade Ellis as 2nd Vice President is the only successful candidate. Hortensia Soto-Johnson, Sylvia Bozeman, and Mark Korlie have been elected Section Governors from the Rocky Mountain, Southeastern, and New Jersey Sections, respectively. The minorities who serve as Governors representing Minority Interests are selected by the Board itself.

Recommendation 12

CUPM, CTUM and the American Mathematical Association of Two-year Colleges (AMATYC) should join efforts to develop curriculum and teaching strategies for the first two years of college mathematics to enhance development of minority students with mathematical potential.

I am unaware of any efforts in this direction.

Question 3. What can be done to make the MAA membership aware of the professional status of minorities in mathematics?

Recommendation 13

The MAA should create an appropriate outlet in its periodicals for articles about the profession of mathematics, including the nature, origin, and solution of problems faced by minorities.

An article on Elbert Frank Cox appeared in the Monthly and some articles have appeared over the years in FOCUS but not many lately.

Recommendation 14

Editors of MAA journals should be encouraged to give due consideration to minority mathematicians when selecting associate editors and referees, and when soliciting articles and book reviews.

I believe David Scott once served on a journal editorial committee. I am not aware of any minority associate editors or referees.

Recommendation 15

The Visiting Lecturers Committee should make a conscious effort to recruit minority speakers.

I am not sure this committee still exists. As in Recommendation 2, this does occur but not evenly. Robert Bell from AT&T gave an MAA Invited Address in New Orleans.

Recommendation 16

Both minority and majority mathematicians who are knowledgeable about successful intervention programs should be included in the MAA's Consultant Program.

I am not sure about the direct implementation of this recommendation but SUMMA staff gave numerous Section workshops about intervention programs and held networking conferences for program directors.

Recommendation 17

The MAA should award recognition to individuals for outstanding efforts in improving the mathematics education of minorities and increasing minority participation in mathematics.

I don't think any formal award exists but Dr. Clarence Stevens was recognized by Len Gillman in his retiring Presidential Address. He and Bob Megginson have received the Gung-Hu Award.

Recommendation 18

Faculty members, competition directors, and the MAA Committee on the American Mathematics Competitions should be encouraged to develop strategies for significantly increasing the participation by minority students in the competitions.

At the Minority Chairs Breakfast in New Orleans, Steve Dunbar was lauded by Wade Ellis for collecting demographic data on the AMC participants. This was not being done in the past although gender data has been collected for several years.

Recommendation 19

Mini-courses on successful intervention programs should be a regular feature at national and sectional meetings.

While I am not sure mini-courses were ever offered, numerous SUMMA sessions have been held since the early 1990s. The emphasis was on intervention programs for many years. As funding for pre-college programs waned, the sessions transitioned to a focus on undergraduate research.

Recommendation 20

MAA should create a structure for mathematicians who are interested in in-service teacher training. This structure should help them design, implement, and seek funding for workshops for pre-college teachers who work in areas with large minority student populations.

The P-MET program seemed to concentrate on pre-service and in-service teacher training. I don't believe there was an emphasis on areas with large minority populations.

Question 4. What is the appropriate role for the MAA to play in educational collaborative endeavors for minorities?

Recommendation 21

The MAA should expand its collaborative efforts in minority affairs and take a stronger leadership role in fostering and promoting collaborations within the mathematical community.

At one point, discussions were underway with AMS and NCTM about a Joint Office of Minority Participation. We reached the point of discussing a possible director but did not succeed in bringing the Office to fruition.

Recommendation 22

MAA should take the lead in assisting NCTM, NAM, AMS, SIAM, and the Society of Mathematics State Supervisors in identifying and placing retired mathematicians who want to volunteer their services to predominantly minority pre-college schools.

I don't think this was ever implemented.

Recommendation 23

MAA should initiate discussions and dialogue with the Ford Foundation Urban Mathematics, NAM, NCTM, AMATYC, and state mathematics supervisors to promote and further their common interest in mathematics education, especially as it pertains to minority students.

I am not aware of any such discussions. Johnny Houston of NAM was invited to submit his manuscript on minority mathematicians to MAA for publication with some left-over Sloan Foundation funds but never did. The excess funds were returned to Sloan.

Recommendation 24

MAA and NCTM should cooperate with state supervisors for mathematics to design mathematics education programs for kindergarten through junior high school in which college faculty can participate.

I know of no formal cooperation in this area.

Recommendation 25

MAA, AMATYC, and NCTM should construct a program whereby four-year institutions can attract minority students from two-year colleges to the four-year colleges' mathematics teacher education programs.

We did get NSF funding for a project to publish materials on attracting minorities into teaching secondary mathematics.

Recommendation 26

MAA Sections, NCTM Sections, NAM, and other organizations should work with local minority organizations and churches to bring mathematics to minority youth and their parents.

I don't know that anything was done about this.

Question 5. How can the MAA make best use of its relationships with other professional associations and individuals and organizations in the government and private sector to foster collaborative projects to increase minority participation in mathematics?

Recommendation 27

The MAA should collaborate with other professional organizations to develop standards for intervention programs and a procedure for disseminating information about creative and successful programs to interested individuals.

The AMS has gotten interested in pre-college programs for gifted math students and lists them on its website. The MAA does something similar on its website under the heading of Student Chapters.

Recommendation 28

The MAA and the Mathematical Sciences Education Board (MSEB) should collaborate in developing projects on minorities and mathematics.

This took place at one point in time during the life of MSEB when the late Ken Hoffman was over MSEB and they moved at least one such program, AIMM (Alliance to Involve Minorities in Mathematics), into MAA Headquarters under the direction of my former colleague, Beverly Anderson.

Recommendation 29

The MAA should initiate discussions with JPBM, through its Office of Government and Public Affairs (OGPA), as to how it can address minority concerns.

I believe JPBM has been restructured over the years and now focuses much of its attention on Math Awareness Month.

Recommendation 30

At national meetings of departments of mathematics chairmen organized by JPBM, MAA should present effective and replicative programs for mainstreaming minority students into mathematics-based majors.

This has happened a lot at the Joint Meetings and Mathfest both through the efforts of SUMMA and others. Workshops, panels, and minicourses have been held over the years that emphasized topics such as dissemination of the Emerging Scholars Program of Uri Treisman, pre-college programs for minority/non-minority students, undergraduate research for minority/non-minority students, and recruitment/nurturing of minority graduate students.

Recommendation 31

The MAA should form a consortium of universities, government laboratories and professional organizations to develop a program for the support of minority graduate students.

SUMMA did a survey of minority graduate students in 1996-97 and disseminated the results to mathematics departments. I don't know of any further MAA efforts in that direction.

Question 6. What kinds of intervention programs can the MAA undertake in the future to assert and secure a leadership role in the advancement of minorities in mathematics?

Recommendation 32

Special articulation programs in mathematics should be developed between colleges and high schools to aid minority students interested in majoring in mathematics-related disciplines.

We now have the Tensor-SUMMA Program for encouraging minority pre-college and beginning college students in mathematics but I am not sure that is what is meant here.

Recommendation 33

The MAA should inform its Sections that it is willing facilitate the creation of a network of undergraduate research programs designed by MAA members with the purpose of preparing a cadre of minority students for graduate programs in mathematics.

We have not focused specifically on the Sections but NREUP works directly on this issue. MAA members are informed annually of the grant opportunities.

Recommendation 34

MAA, AMS, and SIAM should work jointly with graduate departments of mathematics at institutions with minority enrolments of 50 percent or more to develop research centers of excellence.

Not done.

Question 7. How can the MAA serve as a resource for those interested in learning about successful intervention programs for minority students?

Recommendation 35

The MAA should establish a clearinghouse of information about intervention programs for minorities and coordinate the dissemination of information about successful intervention projects or projects that are transportable to institutions with large minority populations.

As long as there were funding sources for intervention programs at NSF and we had grants for staff support, this was an enormous part of SUMMA activities that included small grants for project design, proposal writing workshops in the Sections, a SUMMA Consortium of Intervention Projects that held national meetings, and a published directory of intervention projects.

Recommendation 36

The MAA should publicize its willingness to receive, review, endorse and assist in the preparation and administration of proposals for projects by minority mathematicians or for minority students.

We did it for 6-7 years.

Recommendation 37

A nationwide network of minority mathematicians and computer scientists should be organized to serve as mentors for minority students.

That was part of the SUMMA Consortium.

Question 8. How can the MAA work with individuals in the government and the private sector to improve the mathematics skills of U. S. citizens and help provide skilled workers for the marketplace.

Recommendation 38

The MAA should work with the offices of the chiefs of staff of the armed forces and personnel office representatives from industry to develop a consortium aimed at initiating new programs to bring the mathematical skills of servicemen and industrial workers to a level necessary to fill available and future jobs.

Not done as far as I know.

Recommendation 39

The MAA should help initiate a national program in the mathematical sciences similar to the Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) Program of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences.

We tried to do this but NSF basically got out of the pre-college intervention program business when it killed Summer Science Camps and reorganized the Young Scholars Program. They do have the CSEMS program for STEM scholarships.

Recommendation 40

The MAA should enter into discussions with NCTM, AMATYC, and ACM to determine what, if any, mathematics education research might be undertaken at the elementary, secondary, and collegiate levels to enhance our knowledge of how mathematics education for minorities might be improved.

A lot of research goes on in math education but I don't know how much focuses on minorities. There are many SIGMAAs but I am not aware of one focused on increasing minority participation although there are people (minority and non-minority) who are deeply interested in this.

Recommendation 41

MAA, in cooperation with SIAM and ORSA, should begin discussion as soon as possible about how professional associations might assist colleges and universities to provide U.S. business and industry with a skilled workforce.

This may be taking place but I have no specific knowledge of it.

Recommendation 42

The MAA should develop a "link-strategy model" for an integrated primary, secondary and post-secondary program to improve the mathematical skills of minorities.

Not done to my knowledge.