

# Frequently-Asked Questions – and their Answers!

## Section Officers Meeting JMM 2018

*What would you like to know about what other Sections are doing?* That was a question on the 2017 Annual Report Form for MAA Sections. The Committee on Sections collected all of those questions and, at the Section Officers Meeting in San Diego, drew questions at random from a hat and read them to the group. Members present whose Sections had experienced some success shared their experiences. Results are below.

Many thanks to the Sections who participated by posing questions and by answering them. Thanks also to Committee members, especially Karen Clark of the New Jersey Section, who furiously wrote down the answers. To find out more about a particular topic, please contact the Section indicated.

**1. Do you use your nonprofit status to seek reduced mailing rates?**

We used to when we sent out a newsletter but no mailed newsletter any more (response from several sections).

**2. How do you draw graduate students to your meetings?**

Intermountain Section - At spring meeting grad students come to give talks on their research.

Rocky Mountain – small stipend, but still doesn't draw students in.

Iowa – start the day with Section NExT focused on graduate students and they stay for the rest of the meeting.

Southwestern – special sessions on papers for graduate students, send notifications to faculty at research institutions encouraging them to send their students.

**3. How do you draw faculty from 2-year colleges to your meetings?**

Southwestern – hold meetings jointly with association for 2 year colleges (regional affiliates of AMATYC).

NJ – included 2 year faculty in Section NExT (one of the 2 codirectors is from a 2 year college), EpaDel has done that too.

Wisconsin – 2 year colleges have a meeting for department chairs held at section meeting.

Golden – meet at a 2 year college every 4 years, try to have a rotation of faculty from 2 year college on board.

**4. How do you draw undergrad students to your meetings?**

Wisconsin – put on a math game show, very popular. Jeopardy style put on by Oshkosh faculty, called Face-Off.

Southeastern – does the same thing, big draw.

NJ – Garden State Undergraduate Math Conference concurrent with MAA conference, contest in the morning. Both team and individual events. Prizes, poster session in the afternoon.

LA, MISS section - Give money. Meeting is Thurs, Fri, Sat mornings. Integration bee. Student competition in teams of four, student paper competition (masters students can participate), financial award, free student luncheon, most students can't stay for Saturday AM. Section offers their own "Departmental memberships" – for \$75 a department can advertise and bring in as many students as they want.

Seaway – Focuses on the entire experience for students, making it interesting and fun. Game show to make it attractive to a wide variety of undergrad students.

Illinois – sessions for undergrad student papers, Friday afternoon there's a written competition followed by pizza party (concurrent with banquet), timed so students can get to after-dinner speaker.

Pacific Northwest – waive registration fee if student is giving a talk, do the same for grad students but it's been less successful.

**5. How do you draw more people of color to your meetings?**

Louisiana Mississippi - Write to HBCUs and offer a free "departmental membership" – free for students, discounted for faculty. Any school that hasn't attended for five years will get the same deal starting this year.

Illinois/Indiana/Michigan - Have tri-section meetings, hold in a place that's convenient for all three.

NJ – Rudy Horne as speaker last year, try to have speakers from underrepresented groups.

**6. We are thinking of starting a Section distinguished lecture series – any advice?**

Louisiana Mississippi – member of Section was former MAA president, raised money (donations from members) to bring in a big speaker. When \$25,000 was raised the Association took over handling the money and interest pays for big speakers. Important to name the talk after a popular speaker.

Intermountain – annual teaching award winner gives a talk. Have a speaker who will go to schools.

**7. How do you handle book sales and how are they doing?**

Kentucky – have a coupon code available for discount on books from MAA, has not been picked up on much.

Michigan – have not sold many books. One book free with every book that they purchase (old stock).

**8. How do you encourage publishers or other exhibitors to come to your meetings?**

EPaDel – exhibitor contacted them. (Hawkes, paid \$250 to exhibit.)

Wisconsin – it's often hard to have an exhibition space that has a draw at the places where the meetings are, not attractive to publishers.

Southwestern – some success with contacting publisher rep. Charges \$150 but they also get publishers to donate coffee/pastry.

Michigan – one person is advertising manager who gets a couple of commercial exhibitors for each Section meeting.

Illinois – book reps supply coffee and donuts. Timing is bad – meeting is end of March but at that point book adoption decisions have already been made

Louisiana Mississippi – one price for them to come and set it up themselves, \$50 more if they just send books and MAA sets it up, keeps the books to give as prizes.

**9. How do you solicit nominations for Section awards?**

Repeated begging!

Rocky Mountain - Two teaching awards, one that goes on as official Haimo nomination, one that's like an Alder Award. Send out signup sheets during section meetings to ask about suggestions for colleagues. Solicit nominees.

Louisiana Mississippi and Allegheny – changed section teaching award nomination to one page, or one email. Made application easier, not as complicated as Haimo.

Rocky Mountain – keep nominations for three years, nominator contacted to see if they want to update the application. Same for Seaway, NJ.

**10. How do you get people to contribute to the Section newsletter?**

Northeastern - When we send out the newsletter, it is mostly put together by editor, exec board.

Kansas – send out a draft to officers and ask for additions, will ask particular people to contribute.

Illinois – encourage all institutions to list new hires to see who is new in the section.

Northeastern – have liaisons, ask for updates from them.

**11. How much do you charge to cover meeting expenses?**

Allegheny Mountain – \$25 for faculty, meals extra (\$20 for dinner, \$10 for breakfast) meeting is Fri/Sat, students always free. Charge extra \$5 for nonmembers.

Several Sections above \$30.

EPaDel – early registration fee is cheaper than onsite registration

**12. How do you get people to attend the business meeting?**

Wisconsin – *Don't* have it at 8AM on Sat AM!

Pacific Northwest – at lunch

Kansas – used to be last thing on Saturday, now it's before lunch on Saturday

LA/Miss - Prizes are given during business meeting (at end of day)

Northeastern – Before after big talk, before lunch

Allegheny Mountain – it's at breakfast, so to get breakfast you have to attend the business meeting.

**13. What do you do for faculty during the student talks?**

Texas – that's when Section NExT is (at the same time), one speaker is supposed to be for students.

Several Sections - Meetings are integrated, should be for both students and faculty.

Wisconsin – parallel talks. At any one time, there are both student and faculty talks.

Ohio – Friday/Sat meetings. In program there's no distinguishing between students and faculty, just "speakers".

Northeastern – There is nothing else scheduled when students present because faculty prefer to go to those talks. Student activity during one or more of the big talks (and business meeting) – math scavenger hunt during business meeting.

**14. We are thinking of hosting a joint meeting with AMATYC. How do we go about doing that?**

*Note: AMATYC regional affiliates are organized by State.*

Southwestern – we have been doing that for many years, we have some overlap in our executive committees. Talk directly to exec committee for regional AMATYC and see how they would like to work with you.

Wisconsin – contact state section, not AMATYC (national). Borders may not be the same for other sections between AMATYC and MAA.

EPaDel – look at whatever host institution would be closest.

Northeastern – Slightly different question: We have had a history of inviting a speaker from the HOM SIGMAA (on the history of mathematics). Opportunity of involving SIGMAAs in Section.

**15. How do you draw faculty from R1 research institutions? Do you?**

Southwestern - Only if their graduate student is speaker.

EPaDel – occasionally host it at an R1 university.

Kansas - every four years hosted at an R1 institution, but even then it's hard to get their faculty to come.

Pacific Northwest – Have held meeting at Oregon State and Montana, try to get faculty involved in the section. (Lucky because Ken Ross is in Section!)

North Central – special session on combinatorics to draw research faculty.

Wisconsin – someone from a small college “adopts” an R1 school and invites faculty.

**16. How do you get people to stay until the end of the conference?**

EPaDel – silent auction begins at the beginning of the day, it ends at the end, people stay to get the books. NJ also.

Pacific Northwest – has done away with banquet – finger food instead, give awards away.

Illinois -- Have plenary speaker be last part of meeting. Also meeting of Section NExT at the end so they will stick around (with consultants).

Northeastern – have contributed papers last, moving it second to last and having good talk at the end helped with that.

**Later discussion of other Big Issues -**

**Room charges, schools making money off of meetings, how to deal with this?**

Insurance.

Had to raise registration fees to offset this.

Now part of meeting handbook – check a year ahead to find out about hidden fees. Many institutions won't charge if math club hosts the meeting.

Provost covered the cost, dean's office helped, important to sell it to the administration that it's important to have meeting at your institutions.

How many Sections have a **service award**? (Many hands raised.)

Do people give **honorariums** to speakers?

Some confusion about whether or not it is allowed (yes, except for MAA Section Visitor, Editor Visitor)

About half of those present do pay honoraria.

Data will be gathered and distributed on these last two questions.