

Governor's Report – October 5, 2013

This report will be rather brief. While the agenda for the Board of Governor's meeting at Mathfest at Hartford, Connecticut was only a little short of 200 pages, there was little discussion or debate over any item except one. The significant decline in membership in the MAA was described in detail to the board. The decline has occurred over the last decade with fairly sharp drops in 2004 and 2009. The evidence points to two causes – the economic collapse in 2008-9 and the decline in the number of tenure track positions at colleges and universities over the period. In fact, the decline in membership mirrors the decline in tenurable positions fairly precisely. . The decline is not limited to Mathematics but has been seen in most other professional societies. The discussion then moved to solutions to the problem. No quick fixes were suggested by anyone. The ensuing discussion looked at the value of MAA membership to individuals. Are there ways to increase its value? Other forms and levels of membership were suggested but it was noted that MAA had just shrunk the categories of membership from over 100 to just 5. While no final conclusions were reached, the seriousness of the problem was apparent to all the governors.