

Governor's Report – Fall 2015

I attended the Board of Governor's meeting on August 4, 2015 at MathFest in Washington, D. C. There were two major items to report upon that were discussed at the meeting 1) the continuing budget deficit, and 2) the plan to change the governance structure of the MAA.

The Budget Deficit

The MAA has been running an operating deficit for the past ten years, usually to more than \$200,000 per year. At MathFest in 2012, the board of governors approved a plan to remedy the situation. Several changes have been made in the operation of the MAA pursuant to that plan. The operation of the AMC (American Math Competition) has been moved from being outsourced to being managed by the MAA itself. After the changeover costs, this change has helped decrease the deficit. The MAA is aggressively pursuing funds from many more outside sources than previously. The staff in Washington has been reduced in size and has been focused on reducing the deficit through expanding the publication of MAA books and on increasing the membership of the organization.

The range of the recent deficits is given below:

2014 - \$585,000

2015 - \$98,000

2016 - \$47,000 (projected)

This looks good but one must factor in a gift of \$750,000 from the Simon Foundation for the three year period 2014-2016.

The Governance Structure of the MAA

The Board of Governors (BOG) of the MAA, a group of about 40 members (counting section governors and at-large governors) is the body with ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the organization. Since the BOG meets twice a year and must approve all major decisions of the MAA, it is sometimes difficult for the staff of the MAA to respond quickly to the changing environment for non-profit organizations. Also the twice yearly meetings of the board (which are attended by most of the staff of the MAA also) are rather expensive to hold. At JMM in San Antonio, the BOG charged a small task force with developing some alternative forms of governance for the organization, forms that would be less expensive, and more agile. Three models of governance were presented at MathFest, with the clear indication that the models were to illustrate the range of options rather than to be the choices before the BOG. The three models were:

Model I

Small Board with 15 voting members, no larger advisory body

Membership of the Board

1. President, elected as now, serving on the Board for four years (one as President - Elect, two as President, one as Past- President). The President serves as Chair of the Board.
2. Nine Directors, elected to three - year terms, with three Directors elected annually through a general election.
3. Additional members include a Secretary, Treasurer, and Associate Treasurer, with these members elected on a staggered basis by the Board to three – year terms.
4. With the exception of the President, who is limited to a single term, all other members of the Board may be elected to at most three consecutive terms.
5. The Board would elect an Associate Secretary to oversee the scientific program of MAA national meetings. As is currently the case, the Associate Secretary would be a voting member of the board.

Model II

Small Board with 8 voting members, and a larger advisory body (an Assembly) drawn from existing constituencies.

Membership of the Board

1. President, elected as now, serving on the Board for four years (one as President - Elect, two as President, one as Past - President). The President serves as Chair of the Board.
2. Three Directors, elected to three - year terms, with one Director elected annually from the Assembly.
3. Additional members include a Secretary, Treasurer, and Associate Treasurer, with these members elected on a staggered basis by the Board to three - year terms.
4. With the exception of the President, who is limited to a single term, all other members of the Board may be elected to at most three consecutive terms.
5. The Board would elect an Associate Secretary to oversee the scientific program of MAA national meetings.
However, the Associate Secretary would not be a voting member of the board.

The Assembly and its duties

1. Members of the Assembly would be drawn primarily on ex officio basis from the volunteer leadership of SIGMAAs, Council chairs, chair of the Committee on Sections, regional representatives, and other identified constituencies.
2. The Assembly will convene at an annual meeting at least once a year.
3. The Assembly serves to train leaders, test policy ideas, articulate membership concerns, and respond to strategic proposals. The Assembly will be the primary source for task force leadership of the association.
4. The Assembly might take a role in selection of, e.g., the Board Secretary, as well as identifying members of particular constituencies to serve on the Assembly.

Model III

Small Board with 12 voting members, and a larger advisory body (an Assembly) elected by Sections.

Membership of the Board

1. President, elected as now, serving on the Board for four years (one as President- Elect, two as President, one as Past - President). The President serves as Chair of the Board.
2. Three Directors, elected to three - year terms, with one Director elected annually through a general election.
3. Three council chairs, selected by the Board for staggered three - year terms.
4. Additional members include a Secretary, Treasurer, and Associate Treasurer, with these members elected on a staggered basis by the Board to three - year terms.
5. The Chair of the Assembly serves ex- officio.
6. With the exception of the President, who is limited to a single term, all other members of the Board may be elected to at most three consecutive terms.
7. The Board would elect an Associate Secretary to oversee the scientific program of MAA national meetings. However, the Associate Secretary would not be a voting member of the board.

The Assembly and its duties

1. The Assembly consists of 29 members, one elected from each section. It forms the primary mechanism for communication between the sections themselves and between sections and the Association.
2. The Assembly will convene at the two annual meetings of the Association.

3. The Assembly serves to train leaders, test policy ideas, articulate membership concerns, and respond to strategic proposals. The Assembly will be the primary source for task force leadership of the association.

The BOG considered the three models, first in small groups and then in the full body. The board came to a consensus that model 3 was preferable with some support for model 1. It was the general opinion that model 2 was not representative enough of the various constituencies of the MAA. Taking this discussion under consideration, the task force will present a plan for adoption at JMM at Seattle. If the BOG accepts the plan put forward by the task force, then the plan will be put forward for adoption by the entire membership of the MAA through voting.

The BOG meeting at JMM in Seattle should be very interesting.

Respectfully submitted by Gary Towsley, Seaway Governor 2012-2105.