

## **Report on Liaison Breakfast at Joint Mathematics Meetings...Frank Ford**

One benefit of being a liaison is that you get a special breakfast at the Joint Mathematics Meetings. This year, we had a full breakfast including crab. We also got several questions to discuss. I asked Gretchen Brown, Program Coordinator in the Department of Programs and Services at the MAA headquarters in Washington if I could get information to share about the responses. She graciously sent me the following summary of the responses.

**“Question 1: Faculty members have heavy time demands placed on them by all of their teaching, research, and service commitments. What suggestions do you have to help faculty cope with the problem? What can the MAA do to help with this?**

**What suggestions do you have to help faculty cope with the problem?**

Respondents generally felt that setting priorities, effective time management, and learning that it is OK to say “no” sometimes were the best ways to cope with the problem. Specific suggestions included keeping a time log to discuss with your administrator, getting involved with existing faculty professional development programs at your institution or in your areas, and trying to repeat courses taught and maintaining committee membership, especially early in your career. One respondent replied that they are experimenting with a team teaching approach to a large section of calculus with the ultimate goal of reducing the teaching load.

**What can the MAA do to help with this?**

Ten people commented that the MAA’s Project NExT already works to help new faculty members address these issues through talks, workshops, mentoring, and listserv discussions. It was suggested that the NExT model be expanded or its use of forums be copied for discussion on dealing with the time demands.

Several other people also suggested establishing listservs and web boards, making them content oriented or for issues specific to the distinct career levels or institutional type.

Many people suggested offering sessions, either at the meetings or in an on-line format as a way to share ideas, hear success stories and learn how to implement the same strategies, and to get advice on how to manage the competing time demands. An experienced faculty member suggested a workshop entitled “No Is Not a 4-Letter Word”.

The most frequent suggestions for the MAA to help you deal with this issue focused on conducting a time-on-task survey of mathematics faculty with a follow up on expectations by department heads and other administrators. It was suggested that such a survey would help the MAA ultimately issue guidelines and recommendations (similar to the CUPM Guidelines) on teaching loads, research expectations, service commitments for the different stages of a career and at the various types of institutions. The information should then be printed and sent to all mathematics departments and be made available on the website. Any publication should include examples of departments and programs already meeting those guidelines and the strategies they use.

Other suggestions in a similar theme included providing guidance on mentoring programs, making a comprehensive list of resources addressing these concerns as well as other curricular materials, and provide reviews and commentaries. You would also like to see more information regarding grant and other funding opportunities, especially for early career level faculty. Recognition for service activities, including sending letters to administrators for faculty presenting at meetings, and for research with students was also suggested.”