

Minutes of SIGMAA-MCST, Business Meeting 8:00 to 10:00 PM, August 3, 2012

Members Present: Steve Dunbar, Tatiana Shubin, Jim Tanton, Amanda Serenevy, Sam Vandervelde, Diana White, Brandy Wieggers, Josh Zucker

Sam and several others felt that the Contributed Paper Session on August 2nd went very well and several people asked whether we could have a CPS again in the future. Several people commented that the talks about how Math Circles are formed are less interesting and useful. Tatiana was concerned that some new contributors may need an opportunity to talk in order to obtain travel support. Sam said that people giving general talks can still submit to a general session, and so we don't need to worry about being more selective. Brandy suggested grouping them into a panel. Diana and Josh suggested having more experienced people give overviews of how to run a Math Circle. Sam suggested planning to use the last talk of the day to have a panel discussion about how to start a math circle. Diana would prefer to have the last talk of the day as a panel discussion addressing deeper issues of running a math circle.

We talked briefly about whether the demo sessions on August 4th were all set and whether prizes for student participants had been arranged. Brandy had gathered some items, Steve and Tatiana had items for the Wrangle students, and Jim Tanton contributed books to give away.

Steve mentioned that if we send him three sentences and a link about Math Circles, he can insert them into emails sent out to AMC teachers and/or to AMC students and parents.

Sam wanted us to discuss what we feel is the purpose of the SIGMAA and how it has evolved. Josh mentioned that there are two primary audiences: people we would like to encourage to start math circles and people who have already started one. Each of those groups need ideas for logistics, networking opportunities, and ideas for topics. We wondered whether we should focus more on newcomers or current members. Tatiana felt that the demo circles do a good job of welcoming newcomers. Josh concurred that demo sessions are primarily directed at newcomers and suggested that we consider the contributed paper sessions and poster/activity sessions to be directed primarily at current members of the math circle community.

Brandy said that Maria Droujkova mentioned that she would like to see us become a true community of practice, rather than just acknowledging that we are all leading math circles. Steve and Tatiana both advocate for about 70% of what we do being discussion of math and exposure to possible topics, and about 30% being focused on logistics, networking, and other meta topics. Tatiana mentioned that it is difficult to find time to work collaboratively on Math Circle curriculum development during a national meeting, and so this should either be done during a mini-course or during separate workshops.

Tatiana proposed a mini-course in January 2014 for teachers' circle workshops that would be primarily intended as a follow-up for people who participated in a summer teachers' circle workshop. It would be helpful to allow participants to work on building content ideas for sessions during that mini-course.

Josh thinks we should try to get another invited talk about Math Circles focusing more on the idea that Math Circles can be for all kinds of kids, rather than just elite students. Tatiana said we should find out which committee selects speakers and get that to happen. Josh suggested that we consider approaching AMTE and run a Teachers' Circle Session there. Amanda mentioned that Lauren Riva would like to help establish that link.

Brandy mentioned that we need to come up with some sort of stance about how we can support the Common Core State Standards (or whether we as a community are focused on that).

Sam suggested that our SIGMAA should definitely support initiatives to reach out to broader audiences such as an invited talk or such as approaching NCTM

Sam proposed that we create a tentative four year plan for sessions at meetings so we don't need to reinvent the wheel every time. There was some debate about whether demo circles are worth the trouble.

Diana mentioned that there are some leadership and capacity building training that we are not providing for our community and need to do. Brandy suggested bringing in outside people to help with advice about logistical and organizational issues.

Diana and Jim submitted proposals to NCTM for a 90-minute Gallery workshop (demo session) and a 30-minute Burst session (on interesting ways to teach quadratics). They will hear this fall about whether they were accepted. Steve mentioned that if we want a booth we would need to submit a proposal this fall. The group seemed to agree that it might be too expensive at this time to have a formal booth.

Sessions currently planned for Joint Math Meetings 2013 are:

- Mini-course on How to run a Math Circle for Kids
- 2 demo circles – one for adults, one for kids.
- Math Wrangle
- Poster/Activity session

There is a deadline for MathFest 2013 sessions coming up in October 2012. At Math Fests, we would like to have the following sessions:

- Contributed Paper Session followed by a dinner
- NAMC booth

- ?? 2 Demo Circles – one for adults, and one for kids (or undergraduates if we are desperate). We should remember to start quite early (right after previous Math Fest) to look for kids for the following year.

- Math Wrangle

At Joint Math Meetings, we would like to have the following sessions:

- Poster/Activity Session and/or Panel Discussion
- Mini-course every 2 or 3 years on How to Run a Circle
- 2 Demo Circles – one for adults, and one for kids (or undergraduates if we are desperate). We should remember to start quite early (right after previous Math Fest) to look for kids for the following year.
- Informal social event off-site
- Math Wrangle

The slate of officers for this fall's elections will be:

- Paul Zeitz, chair
- Phil Yasskin, program coordinator
- Ed Keppelmann, news/web coordinator

Sam mentioned the following action items before January:

- Sam will write a SIGMAA newsletter in the next couple weeks
- Jim will submit the slate of candidates along with any other people who want to run
- Ed will put both newsletters on the web site
- Sam will put in requests for events at upcoming meetings
- Amanda will contact Art of Problem solving to arrange middle school and high school kids for the Wrangle and the demo session at Joint Math Meetings in 2013 (San Diego)
- Tatiana and Steve will help find middle school and high school kids for Math Fest near Hartford Connecticut
- Amanda and Diana are going to work on a statement about how Math Circles support the Common Core State Standards. (About a paragraph.)
- Tatiana is going to work on getting Jim Tanton invited to give an invited address at a MathFest event.