

COMMITTEE ON THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM IN MATHEMATICS

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Chairman
Department of Mathematics

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to acquaint you with some recent developments concerning the MAA's Committee on the Undergraduate Program in Mathematics (CUPM).

As you may recall, two questions dealing with CUPM appeared on the recent survey conducted by the MAA. A total of 6,748 members returned the questionnaire; the table below indicates the number of responses to Questions 28 and 29 which were received from persons in each of several categories:

- A Total number of responses
- B Responses from universities offering the Ph.D. degree
- C Responses from universities and four-year colleges not offering the Ph.D. degree
- D Responses from two-year colleges

28. Check the phrase which best expresses your opinion of the effect which the work of the Committee on the Undergraduate Program in Mathematics (CUPM) has had on collegiate mathematics.

	A	B	C	D
Strongly beneficial	1726	343	886	144
Moderately beneficial	2903	806	1165	250
Negligible	355	122	106	30
Adverse	173	66	60	12
No opinion	1337	252	161	40
No response	254	58	45	11

29. How has the work of CUPM affected you in your professional life?

Has helped a great deal	1082	172	636	123
Has been moderately helpful	2365	587	1143	229
Has had little effect	1546	508	450	96
Has had an adverse effect	68	18	28	7
Has been largely unrelated to my professional life	1359	276	112	22
No response	328	86	54	10

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Despite the regard for CUPM expressed by the MAA membership in its response to the survey, it seems almost certain that CUPM will cease to function in its present form after July 1, 1972. This is due to a decision made at the highest level of the National Science Foundation which involves the withdrawal of NSF support for college commissions in all of the disciplines. Representatives of both the MAA and CUPM met several times with officials of the NSF to try to have this policy reversed, but all attempts to accomplish a change have been unsuccessful.

The decision regarding CUPM is only one of many recent NSF steps which, in my opinion, adversely affect science education in our country; unfortunately, the prospects of changing NSF decisions are somewhat remote. To my knowledge, the only situation in which such a reversal was effected was that of the proposed phasing-out of the High School Summer Research Program. This program was reinstated after many people across the country wrote to their representatives and senators, protesting the NSF action (cf. Science, May 21, 1971, pp. 828-829). Failing some such development, CUPM's work in its present form seems doomed to cease. Although several CUPM proposals are presently before the NSF, the Foundation has indicated that it will at best be able to fund only a small number of these. In any event, the specific nature of the proposed projects will preclude CUPM's operating on the broad scale which in past years has enabled it to respond so readily to many needs and problems of the mathematical community.

Attached to this letter is a description of some of the publications which have resulted from CUPM activities during the past several years.

I feel very unhappy about the rapidly approaching demise of CUPM and am especially saddened because I can see no other forum in which mathematics faculties from institutions representing all parts of the spectrum can meet, interact, and exchange ideas.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alex Rosenberg". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Alex Rosenberg

AR/kbm
Enclosure