

The Crisis in College Calculus!

From Bressoud's Retiring Presidential Address
Math & Teaching Seminar
IUPUI
March 2, 2011

There is a crisis in Calculus at the college level because a growing number of students, whose counterparts in previous years took Calculus in college, but in the present era are not. Very often, therefore, a large number of talented students, and talented in mathematics, never visit college math departments!

This talk will be based on David Bressoud's retiring presidential address at the New Orleans Joint Meetings: His slides from that presentation and his ideas will be used (with his permission) as a foundation of the discussion in the seminar. The discussion will begin with the question:

What Should Our Department's Response Be to This Problem?

Here is an excerpt from Bressoud's abstract: "Over the past quarter century, college enrollments at the level of calculus and above as well as the number of mathematics majors have remained flat or decreased slightly. This is despite the fact that the US population has increased by 25% and total college enrollments have gone up by almost 50%. This lack of growth in mathematics impacts not just math departments but all science, engineering, and other mathematically intensive majors."