

2009 Annual Report to the Council AMS Committee on Meetings and Conferences

The Committee on Meetings and Conferences (CoMC) held its annual meeting on March 14, 2009, at the AMS Headquarters in Providence, RI. Katherine St. John, chair, presided over the meeting

Introductory items. The meeting began with a round of introductions. Time was then devoted to discussing the components that play roles in AMS meetings: the Secretariat, the Meetings and Conferences Department, and CoMC. Committee members' questions were answered by the Secretary Bob Daverman, Associate Secretary Matthew Miller and AMS staff members AED Ellen Maycock, Director of Meetings Penny Pina and Conference Coordinator Donna Salter.

Report of the Secretariat. Bob Daverman gave a report on the March 13, 2009 Secretariat meeting.

- The Secretariat reviewed the International Meetings: South Korea on December 16 – 20, 2009 (considered as the 2010 meeting), and Chile in late 2010 (considered as the 2011 meeting). A Joint AMS-SMM Meeting will be held at Berkeley on June 2 – 5, 2010. The 2009 Erdős Lecture was given by Jeffrey Lagarias at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, on March 28, 2009. The next Erdős Lecture will be held at the University of Kentucky in March 2010.
- The 2009 Einstein Public Lecture was held at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina, on April 4, 2009. The speaker was Michael Waterman. Terrance Tao has agreed to do the 2010 Lecture in Los Angeles, at the Sectional meeting to be held at UCLA October 9 – 10, 2010.
- The Secretariat requested suggestions of names for upcoming Einstein Lectures.
- The Secretariat agreed that abstracts that were determined to have been plagiarized will not be published, and the plagiarism will be reported to the author of the original article, who may or may not take action through COPE.

Report on the Subcommittee to Review Co-sponsorship of Meetings and Conferences of Other Organizations. The subcommittee, composed of Aloysius (Loek) Helminck, Michel Lapidus, Ann Trenk and Carol Wood (Chair), recommended that the AMS co-sponsorship be renamed “in cooperation with the AMS” and that the AMS post a list of guidelines about the program. CoMC approved this recommendation. The guidelines have been written by Loek Helminck, Michel Lapidus, Matt Miller and Ann Trenk, in consultation with Bob Daverman, and have been approved by CoMC. CoMC has recommended approval of the guidelines by the Council

Report on the Subcommittee to Review Special Lectures, Special Projects and Short Courses. The subcommittee, composed of Skip Garibaldi, Irena Peeva, Katherine St. John, in consultation with Bob Daverman, considered the following special lectures: Colloquium Lectures and the Gibbs Lectures at the Joint Mathematics Meetings, the Erdős Lectures and the Einstein Lectures held at Sectional meetings and the Arnold Ross Lectures held independently at science museums around the U.S. The subcommittee recommended that the AMS explore ways to videotape these special lectures, in order for them to be easily available online. There were also some specific suggestions on how to obtain more contacts for the audiences of the Arnold Ross Lectures.

The subcommittee also considered two special projects of the AMS that had not been reviewed before: the Current Events Bulletin and the game “Who Wants to be a Mathematician”. The subcommittee noted that the attendance at the Current Events Bulletin was low, given that the talks should appeal to many audiences. However, CoMC recognized that this is a continuing issue at the JMM, where there are many events scheduled during the same time period. CoMC asked that the selection committee for the Current Events Bulletin be reminded of the AMS diversity policy.

Finally, the subcommittee considered the AMS Short Courses offered at the JMM. The subcommittee proposed that the AMS offer two Short Courses each year, one on an applied mathematics topic and one on a pure mathematics topic. CoMC recognized that this may not be possible, given space and financial restrictions.

CoMC accepted the report of the subcommittee.

Report on the Washington, D.C. Focus Group. Catherine Roberts, who had chaired the Focus Group at the 2009 JMM, presented the ideas that had been discussed during that breakfast. CoMC will host a Focus Group on Thursday, January 14, 2010, in San Francisco, CA. David Meredith will chair the focus group.

Washington, D.C. Questionnaire. The responses from the Washington, D.C. questionnaire were reviewed. Once again, the AMS used an electronic survey form, and sent email to all participants after the meeting with a link to the survey. Over 1600 participants responded to the survey.

Update on Mathematics Research Communities. Ellen Maycock reported that the first MRC conferences were successfully held in the summer of 2008 in Snowbird, Utah. Participants from the three conferences gathered at the 2009 Joint Mathematics Meetings and attended Special Sessions that were planned by a few of the participants. The conferences for 2009 were announced, as well as the call for organizers for summer 2010.

Retraining Workshops for Young Mathematicians. Because of the current difficult job market, young mathematicians might do well to consider employment outside of the traditional mathematical sciences in academia. George Andrews reported on such a program that is to be offered at the Fields Institute in the early summer of 2009. He asked that CoMC consider whether the AMS should offer this type of workshop, given

the difficult employment market in academia. This idea generated considerable discussion among committee members. CoMC agreed that the tutorial that was planned but not offered on the day before the 2009 JMM was a good idea, and encouraged the AMS to offer the tutorial at the 2010 JMM. The committee liked the suggestion that graduate directors should have some additional training concerning non-academic employment, and suggested using the Focus Group for Directors of Graduate Studies for this. CoMC members also suggested that the AMS consider a 2-hour “job fair” at the JMM. Staff members will investigate the feasibility of the various suggestions.

Review of Selected Activities for 2010. For the 2010 meeting, the topic to be reviewed will be the AMS conference program and institutes. Skip Garibaldi volunteered to be on the subcommittee.

2010 CoMC Meeting. The committee approved the suggested date of March 20, 2010 for its next meeting, to be held at the O’Hare Hilton Hotel in Chicago.

*Ellen J. Maycock
Associate Executive Director
November 24, 2009*