

AMS Committee on Meetings and Conferences

Highlights of 2010 Meeting

The Committee on Meetings and Conferences (CoMC) held its annual meeting on March 20, 2010, at the Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport. Aloysius "Loek" Helminck, 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. The history of some decisions made by CoMC was reviewed. Committee members had numerous questions, which were answered by the Secretary Robert Daverman, Associate Secretaries Georgia Benkart, Matthew Miller, and Steven Weintraub, and AMS staff members AED Ellen Maycock and Director of Meetings and Conferences Penny Pina.

Reports

- **Secretariat.** Robert Daverman gave a report on the March 19, 2010 Secretariat meeting.
- Upcoming international meetings: A Joint AMS-SMM Meeting will be held at Berkeley on June 2 – 5, 2010. A Joint International Meeting with Chile will be held December 15-18, 2010 (considered as the 2011 meeting). A Joint International Meetings with South America will be held November 30 – December 3, 2011 (considered as the 2012 meeting). A proposal for a Joint International Meeting with Romania in June 2013 was discussed; formal approval for this meeting will be solicited in the April Secretariat Meeting.
- Upcoming named lectures at Sectional Meetings: The 2010 Erdős Lecture was given by Doron Zeilberger at the University of Kentucky on March 27, 2010. The 2011 Erdős Lecture will be given by Emmanuel Candes, at the University of Nebraska, on October 15, 2011. Terrance Tao has accepted an invitation agreed to do the 2010 Einstein Lecture in Los Angeles, at the Sectional Meeting to be held at UCLA October 9 – 10, 2010. There will be no Einstein Lecture in 2011.
- The Secretariat discussed the synchrony of Special Sessions at the Joint Mathematics Meetings and Sectional Meetings. CoMC endorsed the recommendation organizers should be strongly encouraged to follow the standard format (20 minute talks with 10 minute breaks or 45 minute talks with 15 minute breaks) so that participants can move between Special Sessions.
- The Secretariat discussed a policy that appears to be out of date, concerning whether someone could speak on a paper that has already been published or

presented elsewhere. The Secretariat decided to omit the following sentence from the manual for organizers of Special Sessions and from the general information web page about abstracts:

Papers may not be presented if published in full before the date of the Society meeting or if previously presented to any learned society except the National Academy of Sciences or the Royal Society of Canada.

- ***Subcommittee to Review the AMS Conference Program and Institutes.*** This subcommittee was composed of Ann Trenk (chair), Skip Garibaldi, and Alex Iosevich. The subcommittee reported on the 2005 Summer Institute on Algebraic Geometry, the 2007 von Neumann Symposium and the ongoing Mathematics Research Communities (MRC) program. The MRC program is currently funded by an NSF grant, and the von Neumann Symposium series has been endowed. Funding for a Summer Institute is requested from the NSF on a case-by-case basis. The subcommittee also compared the activities of the AMS in the mid-1990s with what is currently in place. CoMC agreed that the mathematics institutes now provide sufficient opportunities for one-week conferences in the summer, and that the establishment of something similar to the former SRC program would not be desirable. However, CoMC felt that the 3-week Summer Institute is unique. A subcommittee (Don McClure and Ann Trenk) will investigate whether it may be possible to bring back the Summer Institute on a more regular basis, for a variety of topics (not just algebraic geometry). The subcommittee recommended that the MRC program try to have more diversity in the topics that are offered each summer. It was suggested that former MRC participants apply for AIM workshops, in order to continue their collaborations. There was a summer school at IPAM in 2007, just before the last von Neumann Symposium, in order to help early career mathematics gain some background in the topic of the conference. CoMC suggested that a pre-symposium summer school be suggested to the organizers of each von Neumann Symposium, after the topic is chosen.
- ***CoMC Focus Group Breakfast.*** David Meredith chaired the focus group at the 2010 JMM. Since his term on CoMC has ended, Loek Helminck presented the ideas that had been discussed during that breakfast. Much of that discussion centered around the difficult job market, and ways to help those who are seeking employment consider non-academic jobs. Loek Helminck or Ann Trenk will chair the 2011 focus group in New Orleans.
- ***San Francisco Questionnaire.*** The responses from the San Francisco 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. About 1100 participants responded to the survey.

New business:

- ***AMS at MathFest:*** AMS President George Andrews and MAA President David Bressoud have discussed the AMS once again having a presence at MathFest.

CoMC endorsed their recommendation that there be a joint AMS-MAA invited lecture, with a related Special Session. This recommendation will be brought to the Council.

- ***AMS Activity Groups at Sectional Meetings:*** CoMC chair Loek Helminck proposed that the AMS consider creating special interest or activity groups similar to those run by SIAM and the MAA. A subcommittee (Loek Helminck, David Farmer, Janet Talvacchia, Robert Daverman and Ellen Maycock) will investigate this, and report back to CoMC for further consideration.
- ***Criteria for awarding travel grants to graduate students to attend the JMM:*** The AMS has given grants to graduate students to attend the 2009 and 2010 Joint Mathematics Meetings, funded by a donation made by an anonymous donor. The decisions have been made by small selection committees. This will be an ongoing program for the AMS, and the Council has approved a standing selection committee. However, firm criteria have not yet been established for the selections. A subcommittee (Steven Weintraub, chair, Skip Garibaldi and Alex Iosewich) was appointed to propose criteria. The criteria will be considered by CoMC, so that a working list will be available in time for the next round of awards. The criteria will be brought to the Council for a formal approval in January 2011.
- ***Changing the date of the JMM in the future:*** Two members wrote to the AMS last fall, asking if the Joint Mathematics Meetings could be moved into December in the future, in order to facilitate graduate student and employment recruitment. This proposal was not approved by CoMC.
- ***A lectureship between the AMS and the New Zealand Mathematical Society:*** The New Zealand Mathematical Society has proposed a lectureship exchange between the two societies. A Task Force (George Andrews, chair, Robert Daverman, Aloysius Helminck, Vaughan Jones, Matthew Miller, Donald McClure and Katherine St. John) recommended this proposal on a trial basis, for 6 years. CoMC endorsed this recommendation, and will bring it to the Council.

2011 CoMC Meeting.

- The committee approved the suggested date of March 26, 2011 for its next meeting, to be held at the Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport.
- For the 2011 meeting, the topic to be reviewed will be: National Meetings (Scientific Program)

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