

Committee on Publications Annual Report 2003

A meeting of the AMS Committee on Publications (CPub) was held on September 19-20, 2003 at the O'Hare Hilton, Chicago, IL.

As part of the regular review cycle of the Society's publishing program, the Committee reviewed the *AMS Book Program*. The review considered the scientific quality of the program and its underlying editorial policies, but it also extended to aspects of the program not normally considered by the Committee. This was largely because many changes have been made to the book program in the past two years, and the Committee was asked to comment on the overall effect of those changes. CPub endorsed the goal of expanding the scope of some of the existing book series to include a broader range of mathematics.

As part of the review, the Committee also considered the suggestion to combine some of the editorial boards for existing book series. No conclusions were drawn about the advisability of doing this.

The Committee undertook a review of the existing *Copyright Policy* and its implementation in light of the recent changes in scholarly publishing. The Committee agreed that the current AMS policy is fundamentally sound. There are some minor problems, however, and the Committee discussed recommendations for fixing them. There was consensus among Committee members to adopt the "Moderate Approach" as presented by the Publisher. The Committee formed a subcommittee to draft a revised statement of policy that would (i) maintain all the rights given to authors as specified in the existing copyright statement, (ii) slightly expand the rights licensed to the Society when authors hold the copyright, and (iii) make it possible for authors to dedicate their work to the public domain 28 years after publication if they choose to do so. A revised statement can then be forwarded to the AMS Board and Council for approval.

The Committee also passed a resolution about policy and process in dealing with copyright in the future:

The committee on Publications (along with the Council and Board) will have full responsibility for determining the copyright policies of the AMS and will exercise that responsibility by creating clear policies and reviewing them periodically. Staff will have responsibility for implementing those policies by designing a consent agreement, updating it and occasionally modifying it to confirm to changes in the environment (or the law).

The AMS is regularly approached with proposals to publish *New Journals* and the Committee was asked to comment on whether the AMS should provide help to other organizations to start them. In many cases, those who propose new journals already have the ability to produce the journals and merely lack the ability to distribute them, either in print or electronic form. As a result, the Society has established a model for providing help with the distribution of new journals at minimal or no cost to the AMS. This provides an important service to the mathematical community, especially in the developing world. AMS provides mostly advertising, stability and distribution, and is not involved in editorial work. The Committee voted to review the policies for AMS distribution of *New Journals*, as part of the regular four year cycle of reviews presently conducted by CPub.

The AMS was asked whether it wanted to endorse a *Probability Digital Library* project by Jim Pitman (Berkeley). The project has requested funding from the National Science Foundation and has received non-financial support from various organizations. CPub endorsed the concept of the proposal, but did not think it appropriate to forward a recommendation for official endorsement to the AMS Council. The AMS Executive Director was asked to write a letter of encouragement for this project.

The length of time to make decisions and the pressure to process manuscripts for AMS journals has increased in recent years. Ultimately it is hoped that centralized manuscript tracking will solve the problem; in the meantime, other steps need to be taken. One of these is a proposed new set of *Guidelines for New Editors of AMS Journals*, with suggestions for a basic protocol to handle manuscripts submitted to the Society's journals. The Committee recommended adoption of the guidelines and requested that they be sent to all editors, current and new.

The *Digital Mathematics Library*, a project meant to coordinate digitization of the printed mathematics literature from the past is moving forward slowly. Progress has been made and there are a number of digitization projects already underway. Two groups met in May—the NSF sponsored project through Cornell University and the Committee on Electronic Information and Communication of the IMU. Minutes of the CEIC meeting and the recent article in the *Notices* on the *Digital Mathematics Library* were submitted to the Committee for information and discussion.

The Committee received reports on *Mathematical Reviews*, *Bulletin*, *Notices* and the journal backlog.

AMS Member Journals (*Bulletin*, *Notices*, and *Abstracts*) was selected by CPub as the review topic for 2004. Next meeting was scheduled for October 1-2, 2004 in Chicago, IL.

Respectfully submitted,

*Robert L. Bryant, Chair
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October, 2003