

AMS Fellows Program Subcommittee

4.6.3. An AMS Fellows Program

CoProf discussed the possibility of establishing a “Fellows of the AMS”. Some background was presented in its agenda on these programs in other societies, and on past discussions within the AMS of this idea. See Attachment H. The next three paragraphs provide a brief summary of that discussion.

Advantages to the profession of such a program were mentioned, including:

- (1) Such distinctions help those who are nominated for a named or a distinguished chair position, or who are seeking an administrative position such as Dean, or even in salary considerations. Other disciplines have “fellows” programs, and academic administrators look for this. Overall, other disciplines have more honors and prizes.
- (2) The program might encourage sustained AMS membership

Some reasons why members were less inclined to start such a program:

- (1) It would, by nature, be limited to a tiny portion of the professional population, and therefore have little or no impact on, for instance, tenure decisions.
- (2) If it became a widespread distinction, NOT having it would actually hurt other mathematicians.
- (3) It may seem undemocratic, elitist. And, it will end up rejecting some people each year.

If such a program were established, critical decisions would have to be made at the outset, including:

- (1) Percentage of membership accepted into the program each year. (possibly higher number at the beginning, then level off when reach steady state). Steady state of 1000-1200? 30-40 per year?
- (2) Years of previous AMS membership required? Reciprocity members eligible?
- (3) Criteria: service or research? Or a broad term like “contributions to the profession”? Linking it to other criteria, for instance automatically offering this to invited speakers, was not viewed favorably
- (4) Method of application/nomination.
- (5) Resources needed to administer, both volunteer and staff.

In the belief that further consideration of such a program would be desirable, CoProf recommends that the Council form a subcommittee charged with studying the merits of AMS establishing such a fellows program and bringing a recommendation to the Council. CoProf encourages such a committee to consult with the members of CoProf during its deliberations.

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