

Committee to Select the Winner of the Veblen Prize

General Description

- Committee is standing
- Number of members is three
- A new committee is appointed for each award

This prize was established in 1961 in memory of Professor Oswald Veblen through a fund contributed by former students and colleagues. The fund was later doubled by the widow of Professor Veblen, bringing the fund to \$2,000. The first two awards of the prize were made in 1966; thereafter, an award will ordinarily be made every three years for research in geometry or topology under conditions similar to those for the Bôcher Prize.

Principal Activities

The award is made every three years at the Annual (January) Meeting. The award is made for a notable research memoir in geometry or topology which has appeared in the last six years. Either the recipient is a member of the Society or the Memoir is published in a recognized North American Journal.

The Committee makes an interim report to the Executive Committee in a manner prescribed by the EC. See the report from Halmos and Hochster that the Council adopted as procedure. After Review of the report and comments on it by the EC, the selection committee selects the winner.

The award is supplemented by a Steele Prize from the AMS under the name of the Veblen Prize. This is a matter of no concern to the selection committee.

Report of a subcommittee of the EC

A subcommittee of the EC consisting of Halmos and Hochster have written the following report.

COLLOQUIUM LECTURERS, GIBBS LECTURERS, PRIZE WINNERS

A report of a subcommittee of the EC

Certain of the Council's decisions (the selection of the Colloquium and Gibbs lectures and the selection of the recipients of the Society's prizes) have traditionally been delegated to special committees and then routinely approved by the EC. The procedure has not been totally satisfactory. (In most cases the EC gave rubber stamp approval, sometimes recommending committee didn't even produce its nominee's CV.)

As a compromise between, in effect, doing the work of the special committees (undesirable interference) and merely being informed of their decisions (insufficient supervision), the subcommittee recommends that the EC in the future use a system of combined input and pre-approval, as follows:

The special committees should submit to the EC their semifinal short list of choices (ordinarily two or three names for each slot), together with a one-page summary of the documentation justifying each name on the list, and to do so before receiving preliminary acceptable from the suggested nominees. The system should not be inflexible: if, for instance, the special committee feels strongly that there is a single obvious choice, it will suffice that that fact be communicated to the EC. For the Gibbs Lecturers, it would be desirable for the selection committee to provide some insight into the mathematical component of the proposed lecturers' work, not merely his credentials within his own area.

The EC should then comment on each name (“acceptable”, “unacceptable”, “excellent”), and possibly even suggest another name or two for the special committee's consideration. The final choice is to be left to the special committee. The EC is to be informed of it, but need no longer approve it.

Other Activities

Miscellaneous Information

The business of this committee can be done by mail, electronic mail, or telephone, expenses which may be reimbursed by the Society.

Note to the Chair

Work done by committees on recurring problems may have value as precedent or work done may have historical interest. Because of this, the Council has requested that a central file system be maintained for the Society by the Secretary. Committees are reminded that records of work should be kept and submitted annually to the Secretary for archival purposes. Confidential material should be noted, so that it can be handled in a confidential manner.

Authorization

Prize was established in 1961 by the Trustees.

10/05/89; updated 03/07/91; 12/92; 3/94; 8/94; 5/95; 501;1/08; 8/09

Past Members

- 1964 no record
- 1966 Raoul Bott, S S Chern (Chair), G T Whyburn
- 1971 Raoul Bott (Chair), Morton Brown, Stephen Smale
- 1976 Shiing S Chern, Robion C Kirby, John W Milnor (Chair)
- 1981 Raoul H Bott, Eugene Calabi, William Thurston (Chair)
- 1986 R H Bing, Richard K Lashof, Shing-Tung Yau (Chair)

A list of current and past members from 1990 onwards is available here:

<http://www.ams.org/about-us/governance/committees/veblen-past.html>

Past Winners

<http://www.ams.org/profession/prizes-awards/pabrowse?purl=veblen-prize>

AMS Website

<http://www.ams.org/profession/prizes-awards/ams-prizes/veblen-prize>