

2021 Annual Report
AMS Committee on Meetings and Conferences (CoMC)
Division of Meetings and Professional Services (MPS)

The Committee on Meetings and Conferences (COMC) met on March 6, 2021, by videoconference and was chaired by Martin Bridgeman of Boston College (term February 1, 2021 – January 31, 2022).

Much of the CoMC meeting was devoted to reporting changes of the reimagined 2022 Joint Mathematics Meetings (JMM) and brainstorming about the future of AMS meetings following reporting on the 2020 virtual Fall Sectional Meetings and the 2021 virtual JMM. Catherine Roberts, AMS executive director, reported that the Mathematical Association of Mathematics (MAA) decided to organize three events for the 2022 JMM, the Porter Lecture, Project NeXT activities, and the AMS MAA SIAM Hrabowski-Gates-Tapia-McBay (HGTM) Lecture. Committee members expressed concern about the MAA type programming following MAA's withdrawal from the JMM and provided ideas to attract more proposals from the mathematical community to diversify the JMM program. Boris Hasselblatt, AMS secretary, informed CoMC that the 2022 Erdős Lecture, traditionally scheduled as part of the sectional meetings, will be an expository lecture targeting undergraduates during the 2022 JMM. Committee members weaved lively dialogue about offering in-person, virtual, and/or hybrid modes for future meetings throughout the meeting.

Ruth Charney, AMS president, led a discussion about 2021 JMM events promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion to brainstorm policies and activities the AMS might adopt or implement to broaden participation at AMS meetings. She informed CoMC that increasing diversity in the AMS has been a top priority of the Society. She explained the task force's work which was constructed to study the history of the AMS and make recommendations to increase diversity and serve a broader community. Ruth Charney mentioned that meetings are an obvious point to draw more people into the AMS and invited the committee to think about actions the AMS could take to make meetings more attractive to a diverse group. The committee recommended the following:

- Ensure speakers who are invited to give talks represent the broader community.
- Make sure the activities offered at these events are appealing to a broader audience.
- Make events more accommodating to participants with time and financial constraints. Sectional meetings, by virtue of the regional locations and weekend schedule, have fewer of these constraints. Reenvision sectional meetings to have more activities to draw in a diverse audience.
- This committee seems homogenous; get mathematicians of color involved in the organization of the AMS. Welcome more diverse mathematicians into the organization and allow them an opportunity to build the organization. Reach out to active younger mathematicians on social media and bring them into the AMS with the idea that they have a stake in building the AMS.
- Actively invite mathematicians into the community, but do not ask them for proposals. Let them do whatever is best for their audience.
- Encourage organizers of special sessions to showcase diverse speakers within normal programming instead of having separate events.

- Publish proceedings of special sessions online. Participants should feel more included in social events.
Society for Industry and Applied Mathematics (SIAM) does a workshop, *Celebrating Diversity*, which encourages people to talk to people they do not know.
- AMS should also consider conducting a climate study.
- AMS should zoom in on efforts to include HBCU faculty and students.
- Solicit assistance from NAM and/or Mathematical Gifted and Black (MGB) involvement during sectional meetings. AMS could encourage organizers to choose speakers from the MGB list to give talks. Invite the speakers to take up space in this professional setting without constraints.

CoMC's annual review topic this period was studying and addressing issues surrounding #DisruptJMM organized by Piper H. The subcommittee discussed the call to action constructively by reaching out to members of the mathematical community to determine ways the JMM could be more welcoming. Stephan García reported ideas from the broader community, and CoMC members offered methods to address some of the community's concerns. These methods included: AMS should inform selection committees to be more diverse in their selection processes, having a larger venue at JMM to discuss issues impacting marginalized mathematicians, AMS being more open about serving a larger community, one year without inviting speakers from R1 institutions at JMM, and a high-profile panel discussion on the main stage. In addition, the subcommittee included a report on the hurt that resulted from the delay in naming the new Fellowship for a Black Mathematician.

In other business, CoMC created a subcommittee, Broadening and Diversifying AMS Programming at Meetings, and Virtual/In-person Meetings as the topic for its next annual review.

ECBT and Council Action:

The MAA SIAM AMS Hrabowski-Gates-Tapia-McBay (HGTM) Lecture was previously organized by MAA and co-sponsored by SIAM and AMS. MAA has decided to withdraw from the MAA AMS Invited Address. As a result, the MAA SIAM AMS Hrabowski-Gates-Tapia-McBay Lecture and panel event will be elevated to the main ballroom for the 2022 JMM and beyond. Catherine Roberts and Boris Hasselblatt presented a charge for the MAA SIAM AMS HGTM Lecture that is similar to the Porter Lecture. As a result of its discussion, COMC recommended that Council approves the proposed charge for the MAA SIAM AMS Hrabowski-Gates-Tapia-McBay (HGTM) Lecture recognizing it as a MAA, SIAM, and AMS joint lecture with shared responsibilities.

2021 Semi-annual Report AMS Committee on Meetings and Conferences (CoMC)

In its March 2021 annual meeting, CoMC voted to include a 2-hour semi-annual meeting to become nimbler and more effective, as well as provide the subcommittees an opportunity to give a mid-year report.

The Committee on Meetings and Conferences (COMC) held a semi-annual meeting on September 14, 2021, by videoconference chaired by Martin Bridgeman of Boston College (term February 1, 2021 – January 31, 2022).

Martin Bridgeman reported that in April 2021, CoMC conducted business by mail to approve organizing a CoMC panel at the 2022 Joint Mathematics Meeting (JMM). The panel, "Holding AMS Sectional Meetings in Localities with Discriminatory Practices," is scheduled for January 8, 2022, at 8:30 am. Boris Hasselblatt, AMS secretary, presented two discussion items. He explained MathSafe – a collaborative project with the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics (JPBM), initiated during Jill Pipher's presidency and motivated in large part by concerns about safety at the 2022 International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM) scheduled July 6 – 14, 2022 in Saint Petersburg, Russia. CoMC members were invited to participate in and review a MathSafe pilot program set for the 2022 JMM. Martin Bridgeman, Ruth Charney, AMS president, and Boris Hasselblatt volunteered to participate in the MathSafe training and review. In other business, CoMC discussed JMM plenary events, and decided to continue the discussion at the next CoMC meeting.

ECBT and Council Actions:

Modifying the structure of the JMM Program Committee. Since the MAA decided to no longer partner with AMS in organizing the JMM, the associate secretaries accepted sole responsibility for organizing the scientific portion of the JMM. For this reason, Council created two committees, the Committee on Special Sessions and Contributed Paper Sessions (CSSCPS) and the JMM Program Committee (JMMProg).

In order to give more representation to our level A partners (American Statistical Association (ASA), Association for Women in Mathematics (AWM), National Association of Mathematicians (NAM), Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM)) serving on the JMMProg Committee, the following change is recommended to the current committee member definition:

- Increase representation for each level A partner society from one member (current) to up to two members.

CoMC unanimously voted to recommend that Council approves the change to the JMM Program Committee charge.

AAAS AMS Invited Address. In its January 2021 meeting, the AMS Liaison Committee with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS – triple A, S) addressed

the idea of creating a AAAS presence at JMM beginning in 2022. The group approached the AMS Executive Director about hosting a AAAS AMS Invited Address with the premise that the invited address would be a more accessible talk than the typical experience from AMS Invited Addresses. A description of the AAAS AMS Invited Address was prepared by Ken Ono, AAAS Section A (Mathematics) Chair, and Boris Hasselblatt.

CoMC unanimously voted to recommend that Council approve the description of the AAAS-AMS Invited Address.

Statements to support in-person meetings. Judy Walker, Chair of the AMS Board of Trustees, referred to CoMC a request for the AMS to consider drafting language explaining the advantages of in-person meetings and conferences. Noting that mathematicians can provide language to administrators and supervisors to justify supporting their attendance for in-person conferences, especially if there is a virtual option. A motion was proposed to initiate drafting a statement in support of in-person meetings. The motion passed unanimously by the committee, and a subcommittee was formed including Ruth Charney, Stephan Garcia, Boris Hasselblatt, and Steven Weintraub. The subcommittee plans to complete their work in time to present a statement in support of in-person meetings at the January 2022 Council meeting.

The next annual CoMC meeting will be held on February 26, 2022, at the AMS headquarters in Providence, RI.

Torina Lewis
Associate Executive Director, MPS
October 2021