

**JPBM Spring 2010 Meeting
ASA Building
Alexandria, VA
April 26, 2010**

Members Attending: George Andrews (AMS), Douglas Arnold (SIAM), David Bressoud (MAA), Robert Daverman (AMS), Reinhard Laubenbacher (SIAM), Donald McClure (AMS), Sastry Pantula (ASA), Tina Straley (MAA), Philippe Tondeur (MAA)

Members Absent: James Crowley (SIAM), Steve Pierson (ASA), Ronald Wasserstein (ASA)

Guests: Barbara Faires (MAA), Michael Pearson (MAA), Samuel Rankin (AMS), Keith Crank (ASA), Rebecca Nichols (ASA), Elizabeth Grossman (SIAM), Kumar Garg (OSTP), Richard Smith (SAMSI)

The meeting began at 9:00 with a talk by Richard Smith. Richard is the incoming Director of the Statistical and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute (SAMSI). He will replace Jim Berger in July. Richard talked about the current status of SAMSI as the only DMS institute with an emphasis on statistics. SAMSI received its initial funding in 2002 and was renewed in 2006 without competition. There will be a new competition in 2011, and SAMSI will need to submit a proposal to that competition.

SAMSI is “owned” by Duke, NC State, UNC – Chapel Hill, and NISS. It generally runs two programs each year, as well as a “summer school.” The distinctive feature of SAMSI’s programs is the creation of working groups that meet regularly to work on problems associated with different aspects of the program.

Richard talked about the timeline for renewal funding. He mentioned that the NISS/SAMSI partnership would continue and that he expected an increased budget if the renewal is successful. He also mentioned that Rick Durrett, who will be moving from Cornell to Duke, will be an Associate Director of SAMSI.

The discussion with Richard dealt with issues of national visibility, undergraduate activities, public awareness, and the professional development of the postdocs.

Kumar Garg, from the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), talked about the administration’s plans for STEM education. He said that the President is deeply committed to STEM education and that the effort will be a combined effort from the President’s Science Advisor, the Department of Education, NSF, and PCAST. The major goal is for all students to be prepared for college and to instill in them a passion for learning.

Specific activities described by Kumar included “Educate to Innovate,” a public-private campaign to improve STEM education, National Lab Day, a White House science fair, and a Science and Math Teacher Imperative (SMTI) to expand the number of STEM teachers produced annually from 7500 to 10,000 in the next five years.

Discussion centered around undergraduate education, especially the lack of any new funds in the President’s budget for this, and the problems with the development of the common core standards. In particular, the development of the standards was a process that tried to do too much too fast.

Washington Reports:

Elizabeth Grossman (SIAM), Michael Pearson (MAA), and Sam Rankin (AMS) discussed the current activities in the federal government. The America Competes Act, which includes the reauthorization of NSF, will be going to the House floor soon. Initial budget numbers for NSF were \$8.2B rising to \$10.0B, but these numbers are likely to be cut (though they will still stay above the projected requests). There is a push to get the NSF reauthorization done this year, since many of the committee members are retiring.

NSF is looking to broaden the “Broader Impacts” portion of its review criteria. The current list is viewed as being too narrow. NSF is also looking to retool CCLI.

All of them agreed that appropriations would be delayed until after the midterm elections. And there was concern that Congress would not enact individual appropriations, but would put all agencies on a continuing resolution for the entire year.

Sastry Pantula (ASA) and Rebecca Nichols (ASA) talked about ASA’s recent activities involving science policy. (Steve Pierson was unavailable due to the recent death of his father.) The ASA President’s visited NIH to discuss the lack of a sufficient number of biostatisticians. There are ongoing efforts to educate Congress on climate change, which include a booth at the CNSF exhibit and visits to Congressional staff. ASA also provided comments for the common core standards and is working with Congressional staff to get statistical literacy in future versions of the No Child Left Behind legislation.

Math Awareness Month:

Tina Straley (MAA) said that there was a very positive response to the Math Awareness Month posters. The video on “Hard Problems” was getting lots of showings on public TV. MAA, AMS, and ASA will have booths at the science festival on the mall in October.

The Math Awareness Month theme for 2010 was Math in Sport with MAA leading the effort. For 2011, SIAM will have the lead and the theme is Complex Systems. A couple of possible posters for 2011 were circulated. Comments on them were solicited.

Postmortem on OSTP education activities:

Further discussion of the administration's education activities was quite critical. Comments included complaints that the current administration was amateurish and was trying to reinvent the wheel, and that the unmentioned assumption of their efforts is that the goal of K-12 education is preparing students for college. The Vermont Math Initiative, a Master's program for inservice math teachers, was brought up, as was a suggestion that the four societies write a joint letter to the administration.

Communication Award:

It's time for nominations for the Communication Award. AMS and SIAM solicit nominations through their websites. MAA has a webpage about the award, but no nomination form. The AMS call for nominations has a July 15 deadline, but the discussion indicated that discussion of the nominations should not wait. A preliminary decision should be made by the end of May. This could be modified if a stellar nomination appeared. For future years, nominations should close earlier so that decisions could be made earlier. Scheduling issues have caused problems in the past.

There was also a question as to whether the person's work needed to be known or have had an impact in the US. There was general agreement this should be the case.

Society Reports:

Doug Arnold led a discussion of the IMU's Committee on Electronic Information and Communication (CIEC) report on "Best Practices for Journal." He distributed a draft of the report. The comment period ends May 21.

AMS: Jobs are a major issue. NSF added about 70 postdocs last year, but this year looks a lot worse. There are 60% fewer positions being recruited this year than two years ago. The next AMS Congressional Fellow will be Hugh McMillan from Clemson University. The Mass Media Fellow for this summer is Ben Pitman from the University of Arizona who will be working at the Oregonian.

MAA: They are doing a calculus study. The sample of 530 colleges and universities has been chosen. They are also rewriting their by-laws. And they have plans for some targeted visits to Capitol Hill.

SIAM: They established a Fellows program last year. There were 194 inductees last year. This year 34 new Fellows were chosen. They are establishing a Gene Golub summer school with \$2M they received from his estate.

ASA: They announced the names of approximately 50 new Fellows. There is a draft plan for implementation of their accreditation program. They have established a relationship with RSS to jointly produce magazines, among other things. The recent US News rankings of graduate programs included statistics as a separate discipline. There are four ongoing initiatives: Growth, Impact, Visibility, and Education.

Other Business: Tina mentioned that DBIS is preparing a package deal that would include MAA, SIAM, and ASA. (AMS already purchases their services at a higher level.) Philippe mentioned that Ben Mann will be leaving DARPA at the end of April.

The meeting ended at 3:00.