

Joint Policy Board for Mathematics Meeting

October 31, 2011

Washington, DC

Minutes

Members Present: Jim Crowley (Exec Dir, SIAM), Bob Daverman (Secretary, AMS), Barbara Faires (Secretary, MAA), Eric Friedlander (President, AMS), Nancy Geller (President, ASA), Reinhard Laubenbacher (VP for Science Policy, SIAM), Don McClure (Exec Dir, AMS), Stephen Pierson (Dir of Science Policy, ASA), Tina Straley (Exec Dir, MAA), Ron Wasserstein (Exec Dir, ASA), Paul Zorn (President, MAA) .

Other Attendees: Doug Arnold (Past President, SIAM), Anita Benjamin (AMS), Joel Haack (MAA), Sastry Pantula (NSF-MPS/DMS), Michael Pearson (MAA), Miriam Quintal (SIAM), Sam Rankin (AMS), Ed Seidel (NSF-MPS), Scott Weidman (BMSA), Ruth Williams (President, IMS), Margaret Wright (MathSci2025), Dave Zook (MAA).

The American Mathematical Society hosted this fall meeting of the JPBM. Don McClure, Executive Director of the AMS, began the meeting with introductions and then presented speakers.

Update on Mathematical Sciences in 2025

Scott Weidman (BMSA and Staff Director for the Mathematical Sciences in 2025 Committee) described the Mathematical Sciences in 2025 study sponsored by the National Science Foundation, which is slated to produce a forward thinking examination of the current health of the mathematical sciences and of emerging trends that may affect the discipline and its stakeholders by 2025. He talked about the study process, its goals and the specific efforts made to get community input. The final report, which is due in spring 2012, will make recommendations to the NSF Division of Mathematical Sciences on how it might adjust its portfolio of activities to improve the vitality and impact of the discipline.

Margaret Wright (NYU and member of Mathematical Sciences in 2025 Committee) gave perspective from the study committee's point of view about their desire to produce a substantial but well balanced report. The committee is also looking for suggestions for reviewers of the final report, particularly people from industry.

Update on NSF Planning for Public Access and the Proposal to Change Name of the Division of Mathematical Sciences

Ed Seidel (Assistant Director of NSF-MPS) followed up on his presentation at the spring JPBM meeting regarding NSF planning for public access by stressing how important this change will be to interdisciplinary research. Interdisciplinary work is accelerating at a phenomenal rate and this has made the need for access to data across communities exceedingly important. Seidel also talked about the need for NSF-MPS to develop pilot programs that will test public access on a small scale before the foundation institutionalizes any long term or broad policy changes.

Ed Seidel elicited input from the JPBM member societies on the question of changing the name of the NSF Division of Mathematical Sciences to the Division of Mathematical and Statistical

Sciences. Each society described their efforts to poll their respective memberships about the idea and reported their findings. Don McClure (AMS) also mentioned that there will be a session on this topic at the upcoming Joint Mathematics Meeting in January 2012.

Reports from Washington Representatives

Michael Pearson/Dave Zook (MAA), Miriam Quintal (SIAM) and Sam Rankin (AMS) all spoke about concerns regarding FY2012 appropriations, especially with the mandate for the congressional "super committee" to forge a deficit reduction deal and also the impact of federal elections next year.

The Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction (or the "super committee" as it has become known) was created under the Budget Control Act of 2011 and is charged with cutting 1.2 trillion dollars from the federal budget. Its creation is one of several complex mechanisms put into place by the Act to resolve the 2011 debt-ceiling crisis in Congress.

The "super committee" is unlikely to come up with a bipartisan plan to address the debt crisis, which will pull triggers in the Act mandating across the board cuts that will most likely have a negative impact on federal investment in scientific research and education.

Sam Rankin also mentioned that the National Science Foundation has launched a new program called SAVI (Science Across Virtual Institutes), the primary objective of which is to foster collaborations between leading STEM researchers and educators from different countries on problems of mutual interest.

Society Reports and Issues

Ron Wasserstein reported for ASA and mentioned the need to help potential hires improve both their technical and non-technical skills in order to ensure a successful career. He reported that ASA is looking for ways to help in this endeavor and encouraged the societies to think of ways to address this need collaboratively. He also mentioned that the 150th anniversary of ASA is coming up in 2014. The International Year of Statistics will be in 2013, which will be celebrated as part of the Mathematics of Plant Earth (MPE) 2013.

Jim Crowley reported for SIAM that the International Congress on Industrial and Applied Mathematics (ICIAM) 2011 meeting was recently held in Vancouver, BC. He also mentioned that SIAM's revised Report on Mathematics and Industry will be released in the next few months.

Tina Straley reported that the MAA will be 100 years old in 2013 and they are planning ways to celebrate the event. She also mentioned that the MAA will distribute the film on Julia Robinson (the first female mathematician to be elected to the National Academy of Sciences and the first female president of the American Mathematical Society) and that the association was funded to do a calculus study and will prepare a report on their findings. She also reported that the MAA will soon be offering a hosting service for WeBWorK. WeBWorK is an open source Perl-based system for delivering individualized homework problems over the web. The MAA has been piloting the hosting service, but will now offer it more widely and already has 150 institutions signed up so far.

Don McClure reported for the AMS on efforts to expand programs in travel grants for the early career community. A private donor has made it possible to expand the program to 300 trips per year, but the society wants to create long term sustainability for the program. The society is also in the process of establishing graduate student chapters and is looking into internship programs as a way to further help young mathematicians. For the second year, the AMS has written to departments across the country to encourage more students to apply for NSF graduate research fellowships as they are awarded by discipline in direct proportion to the applications received.

Discussion on the Joint Committee on Women in the Mathematical Sciences (JCW)

JPBM discussed its participation in JCW, including how the committee is organized and what its charge should be. Don McClure suggested the discussion be broadened to include other organizations and will draft correspondence for JPBM consideration.

Mathematics Awareness Month

ASA reported on efforts for Math Awareness Month 2012. An advisory committee consisting of two representatives from each society is working with the theme of the 'Data Deluge' to create the message for next year's observance. Wasserstein presented a draft of the poster and received input from those attending.

JPBM Communications Award

The recommendation of Dana McKenzie as the recipient of this award was previously sent to JPBM members. A vote was taken today by a show of hands and the recommendation was accepted. The presiding society (AMS) will inform the nominee of the award.

Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes from the April 25, 2011 meeting were approved.

Date of Next Meeting

The spring 2012 JPBM meeting will be held on Monday, April 30, 2012 in Washington, DC.