A WORD FROM...

Jill Pipher, AMS President

Photo is courtesy of Brown University.

My term as President is just days old (as of this writing), and I am excited to get started on the hard work of advancing my highest priority goals. These include advocacy for mathematics research and education, and increasing public awareness of the importance of mathematics; identifying processes that support, or hinder, diversity and inclusion in AMS programs and activities and in the profession more broadly; strengthening partnerships with other mathematical professional societies; and ensuring support for programs that develop a full range of professional opportunities for the next generation of mathematicians.

In this note, I'd like to highlight a few of the ways that AMS has been working to support students and early career mathematicians, and then look ahead to future initiatives and challenges.

Recently, one of my graduate students had the good fortune to participate in a Mathematics Research Community (MRC). This extraordinary program, partially funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation, offers early career mathematicians an intensive one-week collaborative research retreat led by faculty experts. Several MRCs are chosen and developed each year from a very competitive pool of high-quality proposals. The graduate student research teams typically find results leading to publications and long-lasting collaborations, and they are also given funds to attend the next Joint Mathematics Meetings (JMM).

It is really important for students and recent graduates to be able to travel for research, and attend mathematics conferences like JMM and the sectional meetings. In another partnership, this time with the Simons Foundation, the AMS launched a travel program for research-related travel for early career mathematicians, with awards of $2000 per year. A second travel award program, made possible through the support of a private gift, provides funds for graduate students to attend AMS meetings.

Professional development, interacting with the experts in one's field, and creating connections with peers are some of the important benefits of going to conferences. Some of these goals can be accomplished closer to home, through activities generated by student chapters. At my home institution, Brown University, our AMS graduate student chapter has held several annual one-day conferences featuring student talks and posters. I was happy to learn that there are now more than sixty AMS graduate student chapters, engaging students with our Society while building mathematical communities. AMS provides a small annual fund to support chapter activities like the one at Brown.

Looking ahead, there are great opportunities for AMS to continue its important work in these directions: The Campaign for The Next Generation, new commitments to mathematics education, and Joint Mathematics Meetings Reimagined.

Historically, the most successful AMS programs for early career scholars have existed on temporary funding. The public phase of The Campaign for The Next Generation (`www.ams.org/giving/nextgen`) was launched at the 2019 JMM. A generous benefactor is providing matching funds of up to $1.5 million to help establish this endowment. At present, the AMS is 85% of the way to the initial goal of a $3 million endowed fund. Funds from this endowment will be used to provide small yet impactful grants to support early career mathematicians in multiple ways, such as with travel and child care grants. And in the near future, the AMS will bring on a Director of Education located in the Office of Government Relations in Washington, DC, thus expanding its commitment to mathematics education.

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Finally, and importantly, the leadership of AMS is inviting the community to help in reimagining our future JMM (`https://www.ams.org/about-us/jmm-reimagined`); starting in 2022, MAA will focus its administrative efforts on MAA MathFest, and management of JMM will be handled entirely by AMS. This creates both a challenge and an opportunity—to ensure that JMM contains all the programming attractive to a wide constituency of mathematicians, from undergraduate students to senior mathematicians. I believe that the success of this annual meeting lies in its amazing breadth, in programming and events that reflect the wide-ranging interests in teaching and research of its attendees. We welcome your ideas as the process of remaking JMM unfolds.

Jill Pipher
AMS President