

AMS Committee on Meetings and Conferences

Highlights of 2015 Meeting

The Committee on Meetings and Conferences (CoMC) held its annual meeting on March 21, 2015, at the AMS Headquarters in Providence. Graham Leuschke, chair, presided over the meeting.

After a round of introductions, there was a discussion of the roles played in AMS meetings by the Secretariat, the Meetings and Conferences Department, and CoMC.

Reports

- **Secretariat.** Carla Savage reported on the March 20, 2015, Secretariat meeting.

There is one Joint International Meeting currently scheduled. It will be held in Porto, Portugal, on June 10-13, 2015 (with the European Mathematical Society and the Sociedade Portuguesa de Matemática). In lieu of a Joint International Meeting in 2017, the AMS will participate in the Mathematical Congress of the Americas in Montréal on July 23-28, 2017. The Secretariat did not approve the proposed Joint International Meeting with the Indian Mathematics Consortium for December, 2016.

Two Einstein Lectures have been given since the March 2014 meeting of CoMC. The 2014 Einstein Lecture was held on October 25-26, 2014, at San Francisco State University. James H. Simons was the speaker. On March 7, 2015, Simon Tavaré gave the 2015 Einstein Lecture at Georgetown University.

Maria Chudnovsky gave the 2014 Erdős Memorial Lecture at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, on March 22, 2014. The 2015 lecture will be given by Peter Sarnak at Loyola University Chicago on October 3, 2015.

Ingrid Daubechies has agreed to be the 2015 Maclaurin Lecturer.

Carla Savage asked CoMC for suggestions for the Einstein Lecture and the Erdős Memorial Lecture in 2016.

For the Joint Mathematics Meetings, it was suggested that the AWM-AMS Noether Lecture not be scheduled simultaneously with Special Sessions in the speaker's research area, if the topic of the lecture is known sufficiently far in advance.

- **San Antonio Questionnaire.** The responses to the San Antonio questionnaire, which was completed by about 1700 participants, were reviewed. Penny Pina, the AMS Director of Meetings and Conferences, reported that there were many favorable comments about the JMM. The new JMM app, which was downloaded about a thousand times, was well received. In the free-response part of the survey, participants

suggested that the JMM be scheduled a week earlier in the calendar, complained about the high cost of the meeting, and requested free Wi-Fi everywhere.

- ***Child Care Grants in San Antonio.*** For the 2015 JMM in San Antonio, the AMS and MAA offered reimbursement grants of US\$250 per family to help with the cost of child care for registered participants. The funds could be used for child care expenses from local resources in San Antonio or for any other form of child care (such as hiring a nanny at home, bringing a caregiver to San Antonio, etc.), with the goal of enabling the parent to participate more fully in JMM. About 51 eligible applications were received, and all were awarded grants. Three applicants subsequently withdrew, so that 48 grants were made. A survey of child care grant recipients indicated that they were pleased with this arrangement.
- ***2015 Annual Review – Invited Plenary, Distinguished, and Joint Lectures.*** Rick Durett, Kailash Misra (chair), and Natasa Pavlovic formed the subcommittee that carried out this review. The subcommittee divided its report into three sections: Lectures at the Joint Mathematics Meetings; special named lectures; and AMS lectures at other events. In addition to studying data on attendance at the lectures, the subcommittee solicited comments from the speakers, and they found that most of the lectures were functioning well. Their recommendations included the following: adding joint lectures, such as the AMS-MAA Joint Invited Addresses at JMM, to the list of “special lectures” on the AMS website; making sure that lectures end on time (for the sake of the next speaker); preparing guidelines and advice for specific lectures, such as the AMS Lecture at Mathfest; and having the MacLaurin Lecturer give fewer talks, in order to create a less fatiguing schedule for the speaker. There was a general discussion of the desirability and practicality of videotaping some lectures, such as the Gibbs Lecture, and posting them on the AMS website. The subcommittee also expressed concern about the tendency of the AMS Lecture at the SIAM Annual Meeting to get “lost” in the overall program for the meeting. In response to a request from AMS staff, the members of CoMC brainstormed about possible venues for the Arnold Ross Lecture, and Robin Marek reported that the fundraising for the Lecture is nearing its goal. Finally, CoMC discussed the issue of whether to extend the Maclaurin Lecture Series, which was originally approved for six years.
- ***AMS Travel Grants.*** The AMS travel grant programs remain very popular. For the Graduate Student Travel Grants, the awards are divided between the JMM and AMS Sectional meetings. The ratio of JMM awards to Sectional awards will be adjusted in 2016, in order to make the success rates for the two kinds of applications more nearly equal.
- ***Mathematics Research Communities.*** Funded by the National Science Foundation, this program is in its eighth year. Preparations for the 2015 conferences are underway, and the topics for 2016 have been chosen.
- ***AMS Activity Groups.*** CoMC first discussed the possibility of having AMS Activity

groups at its meeting in March 2011, and a proposal to establish them was approved by the January 2013 Council. The goal was to use electronic communications to facilitate exchanges of information and to support collaborations among AMS members in research areas. CoMC discussed some possible explanations for the fact that no Activity Groups have yet been proposed.

- **2015 Summer Research Institute in Algebraic Geometry.** The 2015 Summer Research Institute in Algebraic Geometry will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, on July 13-31, 2015.

New Business

- **Meetings in Cooperation with the AMS.** As explained on the AMS website, “the AMS occasionally cooperates with meetings and[/]or conferences of other societies and other groups for specific scientific/engineering purposes. In cooperation, the AMS provides publicity for the events in its publications and on its website.” Carla Savage described some of the issues that such meetings can raise, particularly if they are held in countries where there are policies that violate human rights, and she expressed the Secretariat’s desire for guidance in determining which meetings to approve. CoMC discussed the advantages and disadvantages of holding “meetings in cooperation with the AMS,” and **it chose “meetings in cooperation with the AMS” as the topic for its 2016 annual review.**
- **Venues for Awarding AMS Prizes.** An agreement between the AMS and the Mathematical Association of America limits the number of prizes that may be given at the Joint Prize Session at the JMM. A modification of that agreement will permit the new Chevalley Prize to be awarded at JMM 2016 and 2018. As other new prizes are added, however, it may become necessary to award some prizes in venues other than the Joint Prize Session. CoMC discussed several possibilities, including the Fellows Reception and the AMS dinner at JMM, and it noted that prizes that were not awarded at the Joint Prize Session could still be included in the prize booklet.
- **2016 CoMC Meeting.** The committee approved the suggested date of March 12, 2016 for its next meeting, to be held at the Hilton Chicago O’Hare Airport Hotel.

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