

Committee on the Profession Annual Report 2010

The Committee on the Profession (CoProf) held its annual meeting on October 23-24, 2010, at AMS Headquarters in Providence, RI. Highlights of that meeting are provided below.

Annual review: CoProf's annual review, conducted by a subcommittee, was on the topic of the Society's activities related to Professional Development. The subcommittee was very impressed with the wide range of services that the AMS already provides, listed in a document prepared by AMS staff members. The subcommittee's report identified three areas for further discussion by CoProf:

1. The current state of and the evolution of academic mathematics as a profession and especially the effects of new technologies on mathematics.
2. The "Math in Moscow" program and its possible domestic correlates.
3. The problem of determining the ultimate fate of Math PhDs who do not end up in tenured academic positions.

CoProf agreed that the "Math in Moscow" program is worthwhile and was assured by AMS staff that another proposal would be submitted to NSF in the fall of 2010. Several programs that are currently operating in the United States—the programs at Smith College and at Penn State University—were mentioned in the discussion. SIAM is undertaking a study to track a cohort of early career mathematicians whose first jobs were outside of academia. CoProf members are concerned about the growth of permanent, non-tenured positions. CoProf will send a request to the Joint Data Committee to collect additional information on temporary and permanent positions that are not tenured or tenure-track. Finally, everyone recognized that online materials and courses will be part of the future of academic instruction; the "faculty of the future" need to be prepared for these changes.

2010 Information Statement on the Culture of Research and Scholarship in Mathematics: The Committee on the Profession has been making a series of statements that highlight ways in which the traditions of mathematics differ from those in other disciplines, especially other sciences and engineering. This year, CoProf discussed a statement concerning teaching loads. Although the draft of the culture statement included considerable detail, CoProf decided that more data, specifically on teaching loads for faculty who are actively engaged in research at Group I and Group II institutions, were needed in order to complete the statement. AMS staff members will collect this data later in the year, after departments complete their CBMS surveys.

Programs that Make a Difference: Each year, CoProf recognizes at most two programs that: (1) aim to bring more persons from underrepresented backgrounds into some portion of the pipeline beginning at the undergraduate level and leading

to an advanced degree in mathematics, or retain them in the pipeline; (2) have achieved documentable success in doing so; and (3) are replicable models. The deadline for nominations was September 15, 2010, for programs to be considered for the 2011 recognition. The subcommittee will make its recommendation to CoProf later in the fall. Four nominations were continued from last year, and five more have been received. The programs that are chosen will be featured in the May 2011 issue of the *Notices* and will be presented on a web site linked to the AMS home page. The two programs recognized in 2010 were the Department of Computational and Applied Mathematics (CAAM) at Rice University and the Summer Program in Quantitative Sciences at the Harvard School of Public Health.

AWARDS Program of AWIS: Based at the Association for Women in Science, the NSF-funded AWARDS (Advancing Ways of Awarding Recognition in Disciplinary Societies) program is working with seven professional societies, including the AMS, to “develop processes customized for each organization to foster the diversity of their scientific award recipients,” as stated in the successful grant proposal. The AMS sent three volunteers, Georgia Benkart, Charles Epstein and Frank Morgan, to a workshop held in Washington, DC, on June 24-25, 2010. Their report and an additional letter from Charles Epstein are contained in another attachment of the ECBT agenda.

At its meeting on October 23-24, 2010, CoProf discussed the report and endorsed forming a committee to further consider its proposals. There is some overlap of this report and the report of the Task Force on Prizes, which was also included in the CoProf agenda. The proposed committee, to be convened by Bob Daverman, will also consider whether a permanent, separate, oversight committee needs to be formed, or if the responsibilities can be folded into the regular activities of CoProf.

CoProf voted to continue participation in the AWARDS project, but on a limited basis. AMS Secretary Bob Daverman will contact Georgia Benkart and Frank Morgan to see if they wish to continue to participate in the AWARDS events.

Prizes: CoProf discussed issues that have arisen with two prizes and with the Centennial Fellowship:

- The most recent selection committee for the Centennial Fellowship requested clarification concerning the following sentence in the Fellowship description: *“Preference will be given to candidates who have not had extensive fellowship support in the past.”* CoProf has rewritten that sentence to read: *“In close decisions, preference will be given to individuals who have less prior postdoctoral fellowship support.”* This revision needs the approval of Council.
- There was a request from a member to change an eligibility requirement for the Morgan Prize. This was not approved.

- There was a request from SIAM to consider removing the geographical limitation on the Birkhoff and Wiener Prizes. Currently, prize winners must reside in the United States, Canada or Mexico. CoProf will recommend to Council that this requirement be removed.

AWM issue related to the Joint Prize Session at the JMM: At its June 2010 meeting, the AMS-MAA Joint Meetings Committee (JMC) voted to no longer allow the prizes awarded by the Association for Women in Mathematics (AWM) to be presented at the Joint Prize Session held at the Joint Mathematics Meetings, starting at the 2012 JMM. CoProf encouraged the AMS representatives to the JMC to reconsider the vote, and to allow AWM to present three awards in the future at the JMM, including the Hay and Schafer awards and the new Humphreys award. CoProf also encouraged the representatives to work to reduce the time of the individual recognitions and responses for all of the prizes and awards presented at the Joint Prize Session.

Proposal of a designation of “Speakers Laureate”: Frank Morgan submitted the following proposal:

- (1) *That all (living) AMS and joint invited plenary lecturers, past and future, be designated “Speakers Laureate of the American Mathematical Society” and receive a certificate.*
- (2) *That their department chairs and deans be notified.*

The proposal was tabled by CoProf.

Employment issues and discussion concerning postdocs: A few days before the CoProf meeting, AMS Associate Executive Director Jim Maxwell prepared a report using preliminary data from the most recent Annual Survey. His report confirmed the results of an earlier short survey done in the spring of 2010, which showed that hiring for the 2010-2011 academic year was down considerably from the previous year. The difficulties were exacerbated by the fact that we continue to produce record numbers of PhDs. After considering this bleak situation, the discussion at the CoProf meeting then moved to the situation for postdoctoral positions, with a focus on the postdoc agreement that the AMS handles each fall. CoProf agreed that the postdoc agreement should stand; despite the fact that it impacts only a small portion of the job market, it works to the benefit of young mathematicians. Several CoProf members strongly urged the AMS to consider implementing a computer matching system for postdocs similar to what is used in the medical profession to place residents.

Nominee Program: For some time, there has been concern about the Nominee program, which allows institutional members with graduate programs to enroll all of their graduate students as members of the AMS. In 2009, CoProf appointed a Working Group on the Nominee Program. The report of the Working Group was included in the 2010 CoProf agenda. Most of the recommendations in the report

were endorsed by CoProf at its meeting. The specific actions of CoProf related to the Nominee program are included as a separate agenda item in the ECBT agenda.

CoProf Panel at the 2011 JMM: CoProf will have a panel at the 2011 Joint Mathematics Meeting in New Orleans. The panel will be: *What I wish I had known before applying for a job*, moderated by Eric Friedlander, University of Southern California. The panelists will be Ruth Charney, Brandeis University; Erin E. Corman, National Security Agency; Mark Huber, Claremont McKenna College; Zachery Miner, University of Texas at Austin; and Malabika Pramanik, University of British Columbia.

Panel description: This panel will give a first-person look at the process of applying for positions, both inside and outside academia. Through their experiences, panelists will help young mathematicians understand how to approach the job search process: what to expect; how to prepare; what to do; and what not to do. This session will focus on the employment opportunities for doctoral students and recent PhD graduates, and will give you lots of chances for Q & A with the panelists. The panelists will include both people who have recently been on the job market, and people who have recently been on hiring committees.

Next meeting: The Committee on the Profession will hold its next meeting on September 24-25 at the Chicago O'Hare Hilton Hotel. The Committee selected the Society's activities in the area of Membership and Member Services as the topic of the next year's annual review. This topic was last reviewed in 2003. CoProf will continue to work on the 2010 information statement on the culture of mathematics on the topic of teaching loads for the 2011 meeting.

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November 29, 2010