Inside the AMS

AMS Participates in Planning for 2004 NAEP

Every four years, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) gathers information about student achievement in several academic areas, including mathematics. The results of the assessment are published in *The Nation's Report Card*, which is used by citizens, teachers, curriculum specialists, school systems, and policymakers as a barometer of student achievement. Begun in 1973, NAEP has grown into a major enterprise. It has both a national and a state component, each of which assesses students in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades. In the mathematics part of the 2000 NAEP, 47,000 students were tested for the national component, and another 212,000 were tested by individual states.

The AMS Committee on Education (COE) has had substantial involvement in the development of the mathematics framework for the 2004 NAEP. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is overseeing the NAEP Mathematics Consensus Project, which is designed to bring views of different groups to bear on the preparation of the framework. CCSSO appointed four mathematicians to committees working on this project. Herb Clemens of the University of Utah and Carl Cowen of Purdue University are on the planning committee, and Wilfried Schmid of Harvard University and H. H. Wu of the University of California, Berkeley, are on the steering committee. Clemens and Cowen are also COE members (though they do not officially represent the COE in the CCSSO project).

In August 2001 a draft of the 2004 NAEP mathematics framework was issued for public comment. The framework identifies five main content areas to be assessed at the different grade levels: Number, Measurement, Geometry, Data Analysis and Probability, and Algebra. Clemens and Samuel M. Rankin III, director of the AMS Washington Office, brought the draft before the COE and asked the committee members to comment. COE Chair Roger Howe assembled an ad hoc subcommittee of COE to study and discuss the draft framework via e-mail.

As part of their commentary, the subcommittee provided a proposal for revising the introduction to the section of the framework describing the Number content area. The COE commentary was presented by Clemens to the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees NAEP, during a public hearing devoted to testimony concerning the draft framework. The sample revision for the introduction to Number was received enthusiastically by the board, and subsequently a decision was made to solicit introductions to each subject area from subject matter experts.

The COE was commissioned to write the introductions for Algebra and Geometry, as well as the one for Number. Introductions for Measurement and for Data Analysis and Probability were solicited from other outside experts. The COE received a commission for its writing work and donated the commission to the AMS Epsilon Fund. The COE will continue to provide advice as the draft framework evolves.

The COE's work on the 2004 NAEP mathematics framework is a substantive contribution to an assessment that has a large impact on perceptions about student achievement in mathematics and, in turn, on efforts to improve mathematics education. Appropriate input from mathematicians can greatly aid these efforts. "I was delighted that the [National Assessment Governing Board] session for public comment enabled CoE to contribute positively to the NAEP framework," Howe said. "I believe that, with appropriate mechanisms, research mathematicians could do a lot to benefit mathematics education."

—Allyn Jackson

Babbitt Retires as AMS Publisher

At the end of June 2002, Donald G. Babbitt will retire as AMS publisher. His eight years in that position have been a time of fundamental changes in scholarly publishing and in the AMS publishing enterprise.

Babbitt first joined the staff of the AMS in July 1992 as executive editor of *Mathematical Reviews* (MR) in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He took that position while on a leave of absence from the University of California, Los Angeles. At that time, electronic versions of MR were available on compact disks and tape, but the paper version was still

dominant. Babbitt recalls the fall 1993 meeting of the AMS Executive Committee and Board of Trustees (ECBT), in which two board members, John Franks of Northwestern University and John Polking of Rice University, insisted that the AMS had to leave the disks and tapes behind and move MR to the Web. As a result, one of Babbitt's last acts as executive editor was to call upon the staff to create a Web prototype. Over the next two years the work of many people throughout the AMS developed that prototype into MathSciNet.

In 1994, Babbitt moved to the Providence staff of the AMS, taking the newly created position of publisher. Some of his duties had previously been handled by Samuel M. Rankin III, who served as director of publications from 1991 to 1993 (Rankin now heads the AMS Washington Office). In addition to those duties, Babbitt took over the production parts of the AMS publication operation, as well as electronic product development and the warehouse and distribution facilities.

One of Babbitt's main achievements was the creation in 1997 of a consortium pricing model for MR products based on the "data access fee" subscription model, which had just been introduced for subscribers to MR products. Consortium pricing arrangements are designed to provide groups of institutions greater access to MR products at lower prices. With this model of consortium pricing, "There are now hundreds of institutions around the world that have access to MathSciNet that wouldn't have been able to otherwise," Babbitt says. "The AMS was one of the pioneers in this kind of pricing."

Babbitt's tenure as publisher was a time of upheaval and uncertainty for scholarly publishers, as new modes of scholarly communication, such as free electronic journals and preprint servers, called into question the traditional subscription model for journals. Many professional societies including the AMS rely on journals as a main source of revenue. One of the strategies the AMS pursued in order to prepare for a possible decline in journal revenue was to build up the book program. Since Babbitt became AMS publisher the number of books the Society produces annually has grown by about 35 percent, and the unit sales have increased significantly as well. Babbitt says, however, that the book program must develop further before its income could replace a significant drop in income in the journal program.

Babbitt officially stepped down as publisher in January 2002 and will remain on the staff as "publisher emeritus" for six months, to help with planning for the future of the AMS book program. AMS executive director John H. Ewing is serving as interim publisher. After he leaves the AMS, Babbitt will move to southern California, where he lived for thirty years while on the UCLA faculty. Going to the AMS "was a great opportunity," he says. "It has been very interesting and very rewarding."

—Allyn Jackson

E. H. Moore Prize Established

At its meeting in January 2002, the AMS Council approved the establishment of the E. H. Moore Research Article Prize. The prize will recognize an outstanding research paper that has appeared in one of the primary AMS journals (*Journal of the AMS*, *Proceedings of the AMS*, *Transactions of the AMS*, *AMS Memoirs*, *Mathematics of Computation*, *Electronic Journal of Conformal Geometry and Dynamics*, and *Electronic Journal of Representation Theory*).

The prize will be given every three years. The amount of the prize will be the same as for other AMS prizes honoring research achievements; this amount is at present $5,000. To be eligible, an article must have appeared in one of these journals during a time window of six calendar years; the window ends one year before the meeting at which the prize is to be given.

The prize honors the memory of Eliakim Hastings Moore (1862–1932), a University of Chicago mathematician who had considerable influence on the development of mathematics research in the United States. He founded and nurtured the *Transactions of the AMS* and served as vice-president (1898–1900) and as president (1901–02) of the Society.

The first awarding of the E. H. Moore Prize will take place at the Joint Mathematics Meetings in Baltimore in January 2003.

—Allyn Jackson

Journal Backfiles to be Made Freely Available

At its meeting in September 2001, the AMS Committee on Publications considered a proposal to make available for free electronic backfiles of AMS journal articles that were published more than five years ago. In its deliberations, the committee had to weigh two factors: the benefit to the mathematical community and the possibility that making the files available for free might erode the subscription base of AMS journals. The committee decided that a good balance could be achieved by making available only material that had been out for more than five years.

The Executive Committee and Board of Trustees, as well as the AMS Council, have approved this plan. Current plans call for the backfiles to be made available in the summer of 2002

—Allyn Jackson

Death of AMS Member

EDMUND J. PINNEY, professor emeritus, University of California, Berkeley, died on December 19, 2000. Born in August 1917, he was a member of the Society for 58 years.