



**Presentation by AMS President, Eric Friedlander,
at the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics Meeting**

October 31, 2011

NSF's Division
of
Mathematical
Sciences

American
Mathematical
Society (Eric
M.
Friedlander)

Importance

Preserve DMS
name and
mission

AMS
Response

Quotes

Quotes

NSF's Division of Mathematical Sciences

American Mathematical Society (Eric M. Friedlander)

RETAIN the **name** and the **mission!**

Importance

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- I am enormously grateful for **personal** funding.
- The **AMS** and the **NSF** work well together to build programs which support mathematics, for example the Mathematics Research Communities.
- The National Science Foundation is by far the **most important** source of funding for basic research for core mathematics.
- The NSF commands great **gratitude** and **respect** throughout the mathematical sciences community. The NSF is the **best** of federal agencies, with the most dedicated and fair-minded staff.

DMS name is appropriate

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- Breadth of DMS's 10 programs, one of which is Statistics: algebra & num thy, analysis, applied math, combinatorics, comp. math, foundations, geom analysis, math bio, probability, statistics, topology (that's 11 programs!).
- Explicit inclusiveness on the name "DMS"
- Common use of terms "Mathematical Sciences" and "Statistics"

DMSS name is inappropriate

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- WHY single out a single program which currently constitutes roughly 10% of DMS?
- Proposed name change is divisive (see comments below).
- Likely tendency to isolate Statistics if name is changed is **detrimental** to the mission of DMS.

Relative sizes

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■ “Core” proposals received & funding rates

Statistics/DMS:

'08: $213/2589 = 8.2\%$ 38 %/ 36 %

'09: $242/2732 = 8.9\%$ 46%/ 40 %

'10: $242/2978 = 8.1\%$ 37%/ 32 %

(e.g., in FY2010, 90 Statistics proposals funded out of 961 proposals funded in “core areas”)

Journal articles: CIS-ED* /MathSciNet

'08: $7740/78,369 = 9.9\%$

'09: $7608/77,969 = 9.8\%$

* Current Index of Statistics Extended Data Base
(Statistics, Probability, and related fields)

Basic Research Mission

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- **NSF's Mission:**

Discovery for progress

Imagination and creativity

Breadth and bridges

- Committee of Visitors: **Emphasize the Core**

- Future innovations involve unexpected partnerships and inputs!

AMS Response

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- Personal communications:
with AMS Executive Committee, Board of Trustees, Policy
Committee Chairs, AMS Council
- approximately 50 additional mathematical scientists (e.g.,
Peter Bickel, David Siegmund, Ed Waymire).
- Count of comments: **20 in favor, 339 against**
94.4 % AGAINST
(includes comments from some statisticians)

Quotes 1 & 2

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Changing the name of DMS affects far more than merely the National Science Foundation. It risks destabilizing a half-century-long effort to bring together many areas under a common name.... Dismissing that name because someone claims it is not inclusive is both ahistorical and foolhardy.

I had lunch with my colleague Mary Wheeler, on the entirely different end of the spectrum of mathematics than the one I sit in, and she agree[d] very vociferously with me. ...

Mathematics, Combinatorics, Mathematical Biology, Computation, Engineering Mathematics and Statistics? What a name! ... It is all mathematics. By adding the name statistics you imply it is **not** mathematics. I shudder to think what the world would be coming to—that is even worse than where it is going—if statistics were not mathematics.

Quotes 3 & 4

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The current name is an inclusive one, emphasizing a broad area of fundamental research. Adding "Statistical Sciences" to it is a very bad idea because it singles out one of the many areas within it for special treatment, and I can not think of anything more divisive and destructive than this.

As a former Division Director of DMS, I also would argue against the proposed name change ... Like many mathematicians, I have also been involved in research, applications and teaching of statistical methodology. From personal experience, I have found it difficult to accept the argument that Statistics is not a mathematical science (which I have heard for years from many friends and colleagues in statistics).

Quotes 5 & 6

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If the name change is intended to presage a shift of funding or emphasis, then the discussion should be about **that**, rather than about an apparently-symbolic change such as the name of the division. If the goal is to attract new funding through new initiatives involving Statistics, then the focus should be on formulating those initiatives not changing the name of DMS.

The proposed name change is a truly terrible idea. It is difficult to believe that it would be advocated by anyone .