

## **Planning and Organization**

The business of the Society is conducted in layers that have grown on both sides of a central structure. Originally business was done in the Council and carried out by officers. The treasurer was a business agent of the Society and the secretary conducted business activities as well. Specific recurring pieces of business, such as printing contracts, were negotiated by editors. With the incorporation in 1923 some business questions were separated from the Council. However, the Council has always impinged on financial questions in some of its policy recommendations, which may be formulated as decisions but become effective when honored by the Trustees.

The advent of the executive director in 1948 relieved the secretary and the treasurer of a great deal of the business of operating the Society. The growth of the headquarters office constitutes the layer, on one side, of the Council and Trustees, taking care of administrative functions once directly performed by elected personnel.

On the other side there has grown a committee structure. There were ad hoc and standing committees from the beginning to deal with specific policy matters. It is the standing committee structure to predigest business that goes to the Council and Trustees or to act instead of the Council or Trustees that is one of the subjects of this chapter.

### **THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

An ad hoc Committee on Reorganization made a variety of recommendations in April 1948. One of these was for an Executive Committee along the lines of the one that now exists. The ad hoc committee was discharged but a Committee on the Bylaws was authorized. In September 1948 the proposed revision, including a new Article V on the Executive Committee as now constituted, was presented. With minor modification the amended bylaws became effective on 1 January 1950.

The Executive Committee consists of the president, the president-elect or ex-president, the secretary, and four elected members. Through 1983, the

term of elected members was two years with two elected each year. Beginning in 1984 it was four years, with one elected each year. The term begins nominally on 1 January. In fact the election process cannot begin until the results of election to the Council are known (about 20 November). It has been a two-step process for many years, with a straw ballot to inform a nominating committee, followed by the election. Thus the new member may not be known until the middle of February and the departing member serves until replaced.

Principal duties of the Executive Committee are defined in Article V, Section 2 of the bylaws. It is empowered to act on matters delegated to it by the Council. It may refer matters to the Council if so requested by three of its members. It is responsible to the Council and reports to the Council. It may consider the agenda for Council meetings and make recommendations to the Council.

Until 1962, the Executive Committee appears not to have been systematically active. On 23 January 1962, in response to recommendations from a Planning Committee, and again on 19 August 1975 the Council delegated duties to the Executive Committee as follows:

1. Elect members of various classes.
2. Set dates and places of meetings.
3. Approve subjects and organizing committees of symposia, institutes, etc., in established series or upon recommendation of appropriate committees.
4. Approve publication of volumes in established series, such as Colloquia, Surveys, Proceedings of Symposia, upon recommendation of the appropriate committee.
5. Approve recommendations of Editorial Committees concerning numbers of pages to be published, interim editorial appointments, etc.
6. Approve invitations to give special lectures, such as the Gibbs Lecture and Colloquium Lectures, on recommendation by the appropriate selection committees.
7. Approve winners of prizes, such as Bôcher, Cole, Veblen, Birkhoff, Wiener, and Steele prizes on recommendation by the appropriate selection committees.
8. Approve panel discussions, short courses, and other events, either peripheral to a meeting or separate from meetings, including joint sponsorships of events in which the participation is real.
9. Receive reports of committees of the Council that recommend no action.
10. Set dates and places of Council meetings.

The procedure on election of members and setting dates and places of meetings and Council meetings (items 1, 2, 10) was changed in 1983 when these duties were further delegated to a committee consisting of the Secretary and the Associate Secretaries.

The procedure on approvals (items 6 and 7) was changed in November 1984. Selection committees were asked to submit semifinal lists of candidates for invitations or prizes to the Executive Committee for comment. Following the comments, the selection committee makes its choice.

The Council of 20 January 1971 received a long report of an ad hoc Committee to Review Society Activities, on which it acted. The fourteenth and last recommendation, approved by the Council "charged [the Executive Committee] to carry out a continuing review of Society activities." The Executive Committee agreed to carry out this charge in a three-year cycle, looking at meetings of all kinds, publications, and all other activities in turn. For several cycles, the process consisted of a draft message on the state of affairs prepared by the Secretary, revised by the Committee, and presented to the Council. This was ultimately regarded as a not sufficiently penetrating review. In 1986, which was a year to examine the residual set, each member of the Executive Committee prepared a critique of a phase of activity. These were discussed and summarized with the assistance of Allyn Jackson, the newly appointed staff writer. With further review this became the report to the Council.

Other duties have been assigned to the Executive Committee. In approving the subject matter for grant proposals for conferences, it is specifically charged with preventing duplication of covering of fields in instances where that might be undesirable.

The Executive Committee has noted that the bylaws contain two provisions that might come into conflict.

Article V, Section 2, says in part:

If three members of the Executive Committee request that any matter be referred to the Council, the matter shall be so referred.

Article V, Section 3, says in part:

An affirmative vote on any proposal before the Executive Committee shall be declared if, and only if, at least four affirmative votes are cast for the approval.

Inasmuch as there are seven members on the EC, it is clearly possible that both positions might be cited over a single issue and might raise the question of which should prevail. To avoid this dilemma, the Executive Committee adopted the following rule:

When the Executive Committee is considering whether to act on a proposal under Article V, Section 3, of the bylaws or to refer it to the Council under Article V, Section 2, the latter issue shall be resolved first.

The first joint meeting of the Executive Committee with the Board of Trustees appears to have been in May 1963 at the invitation of the latter. From that time on, joint meetings have been the regular arrangement. Over a long period of time, it is observed that several kinds of business have moved from the Council to the Executive Committee. This follows not only from the delegation of powers but also from increasing use of the power to report actions to the Council and to make recommendations to the Council. It is convenient to consider the scientific content of an issue and the financial implications at a joint meeting of the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees. If this shift in the locus of some categories of business were not to take place, the meetings of the Council would be intolerably protracted and the Council would have no time for the things that it still does.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

#### Presidents (ex officio)

E. Hille	1949	O. Zariski	1968–1971
J. L. Walsh	1949–1951	N. Jacobson	1970–1973
J. von Neumann	1950–1953	S. Mac Lane	1972–1975
G. T. Whyburn	1952–1955	L. Bers	1974–1977
R. L. Wilder	1954–1957	R H Bing	1976–1979
R. Brauer	1956–1959	P. D. Lax	1978–1981
E. J. McShane	1958–1961	A. M. Gleason	1980–1983
D. Montgomery	1960–1963	J. B. Robinson	1982–1985
J. L. Doob	1962–1965	I. Kaplansky	1984–1987
A. A. Albert	1964–1967	G. D. Mostow	1986–
C. B. Morrey, Jr.	1966–1969	W. Browder	1988–

#### Secretaries (ex officio)

J. R. Kline	1949–1950	J. W. Green	1957–1966
E. G. Begle	1951–1956	E. Pitcher	1967–1988

## Elected members

S. Eilenberg	1949	M. H. Protter	1967-1968
T. H. Hildebrandt	1949	R. C. Buck	1968-1969
S. Mac Lane	1949-1950	I. Herstein	1968-1969
W. T. Martin	1949-1950	V. L. Klee, Jr.	1969-1970
E. Hille	1950-1951	J. T. Schwartz	1969-1970
A. W. Tucker	1950-1951	R. H. Bott	1970-1971
W. Feller	1951-1952	C. C. Moore	1970-1971
M. H. Heins	1951-1952	M. E. Rudin	1971-1972
G. A. Hedlund	1952-1953	E. M. Stein	1971-1972
R. L. Wilder	1952-1953	W. Browder	1972-1973
E. E. Moise	1953-1954	F. W. Gehring	1962-1973
J. C. Oxtoby	1953-1954	P. R. Halmos	1973-1974
J. L. Doob	1954-1955	D. M. Stone	1973-1974
G. B. Price	1954-1955	C. S. Morawetz	1974-1975
D. Montgomery	1955-1956	I. Singer	1974-1975
C. V. Widder	1955-1956	C. W. Curtis	1975-1976
K. D. Friedrichs	1956-1957	J. T. Schwartz	1975-1976
A. Zygmund	1956-1957	R. G. Bartle	1976-1977
W. S. Massey	1957-1958	R. C. Kirby	1976-1977
A. H. Taub	1957-1958	W. Browder	1977-1978
R H Bing	1958-1959	I. Singer	1977-1978
E. Hille	1958-1959	L. P. Rothschild	1978-1979
A. M. Gleason	1959-1960	S. S. Shatz	1978-1979
R. P. Halmos	1959-1960	F. E. Browder	1979-1980
L. Bers	1960-1961	R. G. Douglas	1979-1980
G. P. Hochschild	1960-1961	R. L. Graham	1980-1981
R. H. Bott	1961-1962	F. W. Gehring	1980-1981
R. C. Buck	1961-1962	M. E. Rudin	1981-1982
M. M. Day	1962-1963	I. Singer	1981-1982
G. A. Hedlund	1962-1963	P. R. Halmos	1982-1985
P. D. Lax	1963-1964	P. J. Sally, Jr.	1982-1983
L. Zippin	1963-1964	E. M. Stein	1983-1984
P. R. Halmos	1964-1965	M. Hochster	1983-1986
L. Nirenberg	1964-1965	H. Bass	1984-1987
A. Rosenberg	1965-1966	J. E. Taylor	1985-1988
E. H. Spanier	1965-1966	W. A. Veech	1986-
N. E. Steenrod	1966-1967	I. Kra	1986-
D. Zelinsky	1966-1967		
G. W. Mackey	1967-1968		

LIAISON AND BUDGET COMMITTEE  
AND  
AGENDA COMMITTEE

As noted in the section on the executive director, the Liaison Committee, consisting of the president, secretary, and treasurer, was formed at the time of the appointment of the second executive director to serve as a reference point for the continuing operations of the executive director. With time it served not only that purpose but also as a locus for discussion of proposed administrative decisions and for formulation of problems for the more formal bodies. As the latter role expanded it became an agenda committee for the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees.

The budget of the Society from the beginning was in the hands of the treasurer, assisted by the office manager and later by the executive director. By 1968 there was a Finance Committee of the Trustees, of which the treasurer was a member. Beginning in 1974 the Liaison and Finance Committees met jointly as a Budget Committee to review the budget as prepared by the executive director and staff before the Trustees examined and modified and approved it.

The Liaison Committee maintained its role as reference point for the executive director. In its other functions it developed with the Budget Committee into the Agenda and Budget Committee (ABC), formally constituted in 1981. Beginning in 1982 the ABC met regularly a month or so before each joint meeting of the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees (ECBT) to go over a preliminary version of the agenda including the budget, deciding some minor points, placing proposed decisions on a consent agenda, modifying presentations, and making recommendations. The intent was to cut the bulk of material otherwise handled by the ECBT by doing some of the work and organizing the rest.

The increased volume of business and of staff support and the systemization of handling business in layers removed some kinds of business from the Council and the Trustees so that minutes of these bodies have changed markedly over the fifty-year interval. The Trustees are no longer concerned with salaries of individual staff members except for a small subset or with specific investments and the Council no longer considers whether to accept a specific book manuscript or how many pages each journal should publish in a

year. As a consequence however some members of the Council feel separated from the process of making decisions.

### PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Society has had many committees to review a segment of activity or to plan. Some of these will be reviewed here. A very influential one was the Planning Committee that was active in 1961–1962. It consisted of Richard Brauer, Saunders Mac Lane, chairman, J. L. Doob, Will Feller, E. E. Floyd, J. W. Green, A. E. Meder, Jr., and L. J. Paige.

In its first report to the Council of 29 August 1961, it recommended sectional meetings on special topics, restricting publicity at Summer and Annual Meetings to announcements of the meeting and of the invited lectures (attempts at publicity had been unsuccessful), and the routing of lecturers in the Visiting Lecturer Program to the smaller centers. The committee noted that it had considered strengthening the Executive Committee and having it meet regularly and the establishment of a Mathematics Service Organization for publishing and other business operations for both the AMS and other organizations. On these two points it made no recommendation. The Committee recommended that the Society take on the publication (but not the editorial responsibility) of *Mathematics of Computation* for a limited period. The Council approved the recommendations.

In a second report on 23 January 1962 the committee restated the purposes of the Society: in summary, these are scientific meetings for presentation of research, publication of research, recognition of achievement, and dissemination of results by reviewing and publication of monographs. The Society is also concerned with secondary means of support of its objectives. The recommendations covered these points. First was that the Executive Committee should meet three times a year before Council meetings with an assigned list of delegated duties and the duty of preparing and predigesting the Council agenda. This was approved, including a list of duties, as detailed elsewhere. Second was an experimental approach to Summer and Annual Meetings (including the idea of Special Sessions). This was approved on a limited basis. Third was the establishment of an advisory committee on issues related to the federal government. This was withdrawn. Fourth was the reinstatement of the column of "Letters to the Editor" in the *Notices*, which had been suspended. This was approved with the understanding that there be editorial selection and supervision. At the same time the Secretary was made an editor of the *Notices* along with the executive director. For the most part these recommendations have been discussed elsewhere in this book. Although the

details of execution may have differed from the proposals, the influence of the effort was substantial.

### THE SPECIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Trustees become concerned from time to time about whether they are performing their duties effectively. This concern is exacerbated by the increasing span and bulk of the enterprise that they supervise. The change is epitomized in the amount of paper that they see. In 1938 for the entire year there were 10 pages of minutes of the Trustees and 36 pages of supporting accounts. By 1987 the minutes of one of two meetings of the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees came to 23 pages (plus pages of an executive session) with 219 pages of attachments and a book of summary financial reports of 122 pages. The latter were presented only in summary because by 1982 the full set of financial reports came to 1017 pages and its distribution was discontinued.

As a consequence, the Trustees from time to time consider seeking advice. One route that they contemplate is the use of consultants on how to manage their affairs. The use of consultants in particular technical problems of the Society has been effective, for instance on problems concerned with computer equipment and operation, but on the badly posed problem of how to run Society business it was less so. The Society had one contact with a distinguished firm of consultants who pay special attention to nonprofit organizations but there was little return. It is the opinion of some Trustees, though this is an egocentric view, that mathematicians are different, that it is not possible to explain effectively to an outsider such as a consultant what the Society is about, and so it is impossible to get useful advice.

The Trustees faced the general problem of the effectiveness of their operation again in 1983 with the public resignation of Alex Rosenberg toward the end of his tenth year as Trustee over his stated lack of confidence in the Providence management, partly because of deficits that had been incurred. Rather than turn to professional consultants, the Society established a Special Review Committee consisting of Richard A. Leibler, formerly the director of the Institute for Defense Analysis in Princeton and then a consultant, and W. Ted Martin, treasurer in the interval 1965–1973 and for many years head of the mathematics department at M.I.T.

The Special Review Committee reported “that the Providence office is well managed and that it operates smoothly and efficiently.” The deficits were laid to the development costs of a *Mathematical Reviews* data base, the fact that journal prices had not been raised sufficiently, and the fact that evasion of



registration fees and purchase of books and journals at individual rates for libraries had not been policed.

### LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Society has been heavily dependent on committees to do its work. Planning activities are a natural committee activity. In May 1984 a Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC) was established. It was an outgrowth of the Special Review Committee. It was appointed by the Chairman of the Board, Cathleen S. Morawetz, as an advisory committee to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees (ECBT). Its initial membership was M. Hochster, chairman, H. Bass, R. L. Graham, F. P. Peterson, and E. Pitcher. It had a very broad charge, of which the first item was “[t]o suggest a number of different management plans to improve the operation of the Society.” Another was “[t]o offer suggestions for making the budget process safer.”

In fact in its initial report to the ECBT of May 1985 the LRPC found sufficient consensus that only a limited number of alternative suggestions appeared. Many recommendations were approved immediately by the ECBT including a variety of procedural matters. One was to make the Agenda and Budget Committee (ABC) more of a budget committee with less of an agenda function (countervailing some of the initiative that established the ABC). A second was to make the LRPC into a standing committee. Another was to change the procedure for amendment of the bylaws so that approval by the membership could be done by mail ballot, thereby permitting broader and less selected participation by the membership. This was soon accomplished by amendment of the bylaws. There were proposals for fund raising and for improvement of public relations, of which the most forceful was to support the recruitment of young mathematicians into the profession. As to budget questions, it was agreed that a reserve fund equal to one year's budget should be created over a period of years.

The LRPC reported again to the ECBT of November 1985. The permanent structure that was proposed and adopted called for a standing but relatively inactive committee that becomes intensely active one year out of five or at the request of the president or the chairman of the Board. Its membership should consist of the secretary, the treasurer or associate treasurer, the trustee in the third year of a term, and the members of the Executive Committee in the second and third years of their terms. Recommendations of the LRPC included moderate expansion of the publication program and ways and means to support the role of applied mathematics in the programs of the Society.

One delicate issue that was discussed at this time and later was the place of *Mathematical Reviews* in the hierarchy of the Society. These discussions resulted in the affirmation noted in the chapter on *Mathematical Reviews* that

the executive director is the chief executive officer of the Society, including *Mathematical Reviews*.

The Council of 23 April 1988 at the urging of W. P. Thurston established a committee consisting of R. M. Fossum, A. Marden, M. Pour-El, chairman, and H. Stark to reconsider the procedures of the Council for considering issues, and to review the set of powers delegated to the Executive Committee.