

AMS Committee on Meetings and Conferences

Highlights of 2016 Meeting

The Committee on Meetings and Conferences (COMC) held its annual meeting on March 12, 2016, at the Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport Hotel. Monica Nevins, chair, presided.

Actions taken by COMC include the following:

Meetings and conferences 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." At the COMC meeting in 2015, the Secretary had 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. In response, COMC had chosen this program as the subject of its annual review. The members of the annual review subcommittee were Pierre Albin (chair), Monica Nevins and Illya Hicks. They recommended that the program be discontinued, since it lacked a clear benefit to the AMS. COMC agreed with this recommendation but also passed a resolution stating that, in truly exceptional circumstances, the Secretariat may recommend to the Executive Committee that AMS participate in some form. Both of these recommendations will be forwarded to the Council.

AMS-NZMS Maclaurin Lecture Series: In 2010 the American Mathematical Society (AMS) established a new lectureship exchange program with the New Zealand Mathematical Society (NZMS), called the AMS-NZMS Maclaurin Lectureship. Under the terms of the bilateral agreement, in alternate years a New Zealand based mathematician will visit the US and then a US-based mathematician will visit New Zealand. In April 2010 the Council approved this program for an initial period of 6 years, allowing three AMS lecturers to go to New Zealand, and three NZMS lecturers to travel in the US. The third AMS lecturer will visit New Zealand in 2017, which will be the last year of the program, unless the agreement is extended. COMC was asked to consider whether the AMS should continue this program. Although it deemed the program a success, COMC felt that the program should not be continued beyond the initial six-year period. This recommendation will be forwarded to the Council.

Prize venues: 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 Joint Mathematics Meetings (JMM). Since the AMS is in the process of creating new prizes, it may become necessary to award some prizes in venues other than the Joint Prize Session. In 2014 a subcommittee of the Committee on the Profession (CoProf) was charged with identifying additional venues in which AMS prizes and awards could be presented. Acting on a recommendation from that subcommittee, CoProf approved in 2015 a resolution stating that that one of the five AMS Invited Address slots at the JMM should be devoted to a lecture by the recipient of the Steele Prize for Lifetime Achievement, or a designee, and

that the Prize be awarded at the start of the Invited Address, rather than at the Joint Prize Session. Acknowledging there were many details to be worked out, CoProf suggested that this recommendation be considered by COMC before being sent to the Council. COMC did not approve the recommendation and instead proposed creating a joint subcommittee of CoProf and COMC to deliberate further about the issue of prize venues. The members of that subcommittee are Richard Durrett and Christina Sormani from COMC and Alicia Dickenstein and Bryna Kra (Chair) from CoProf. That subcommittee's report was discussed by CoProf at its meeting in September 2016, and it will be on the agenda for COMC's next meeting in March 2017.

2017 Annual Review: For its next Annual Review, COMC chose the topic of conferences, institutes, and short courses. The members of the subcommittee conducting the review are Monica Nevins (chair), Rebecca Garcia, and Alan Reid.

Reports

COMC received and discussed several reports, including ones on JMM 2016, JMM Child Care grants, the Mathematics Research Communities program, the Summer Research Institute on Algebraic Geometry, and AMS Activity Groups. The JMM 2016 went well, and the child care grants were deemed a success, with 58 grants of \$250 each being made. COMC discussed the idea of establishing a reduced JMM registration fee for new Ph.D.s, and there was some interest in making renewed efforts to activate the Activity Groups. It was noted that the Summer Research Institute, a three-week conference that drew about 750 mathematicians from 32 countries, was a great mathematical success, but also a significant drain on AMS staffing resources.

2017 COMC Meeting. The next meeting of COMC will be held on March 18, 2017, at the Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport Hotel.

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