

AMS Committee on Meetings and Conferences

Highlights of 2011 Meeting

The Committee on Meetings and Conferences (CoMC) held its annual meeting on March 26, 2011, at the Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport. David Farmer, chair, presided over the meeting

Introductory items

The meeting began with a round of introductions. Time was then devoted to discussing the components that play roles in AMS meetings: the Secretariat, the Meetings and Conferences Department, and CoMC. The history of some decisions made by CoMC was reviewed. Secretary Robert Daverman, Associate Secretaries Georgia Benkart, Matthew Miller, and Steven Weintraub, and AMS staff members AED Ellen Maycock and Director of Meetings and Conferences Penny Pina answered questions posed by CoMC members.

Reports

- **Secretariat.** Robert Daverman reported on the March 25, 2011, Secretariat meeting.
 - **Upcoming Joint International Meetings:**
 - South Africa, November 30 – December 3, 2011 (considered as the 2012 meeting), in Port Elizabeth.
 - Romania, June 27-30, 2013, in Alba Iulia.
 - Israel, June 16-19, 2014, in Tel Aviv.
 - Portugal, June 11-14, 2015, in Porto.
 - **2011-2012 Einstein Lectures.** In 2010, it was decided to have no Einstein Lecture in 2011. The Secretariat approved holding the 2012 Lecture at George Washington University. Gunther Uhlmann has accepted an invitation to give the 2012 Einstein Lecture.
 - **2011-2012 Erdős Lectures.** The 2011 Erdős Memorial Lecture will be held at the University of Nebraska, in Lincoln, NE, on October 15, 2011, and the lecturer will be Emmanuel Candes. The 2012 Erdős Lecture will be held during the Sectional Meeting at the University of Arizona, October 27-28, 2012. Ken Ono has accepted an invitation to give this lecture.
- **Review of the AMS Scientific Program at the Joint Mathematics Meetings.** The subcommittee that carried out this review was composed of Daljit Ahluwalia and David Farmer (chair). The subcommittee gathered information by adding several

questions on the AMS scientific program to the 2011 JMM questionnaire and by discussing this topic at the CoMC Focus Group Breakfast held in New Orleans. The report of the subcommittee considered three main components of the scientific program: AMS Invited Addresses, AMS Special Sessions and AMS Contributed Paper Sessions. The review was quite positive, indicating in particular that participants often reported that Invited Addresses and Special Sessions were highlights of the JMM for them. A significant minority of respondents to the questionnaire noted the importance of the Contributed Paper Sessions for them. The report did express concern about the fact that Special Sessions in similar fields sometimes occurred simultaneously. Several Associate Secretaries responded by describing how carefully they schedule Special Sessions and commented that given the large number of Special Sessions, there will inevitably be conflicts.

- ***AMS Activity Groups.*** At its meeting in March 2010, then CoMC chair Loek Helminck proposed that the AMS consider creating special interest or activity groups similar to those run by SIAM and the MAA. A subcommittee (Loek Helminck, David Farmer, Janet Talvacchia, Robert Daverman and Ellen Maycock) was appointed to investigate this, and report back to CoMC for further consideration. The report of the subcommittee listed a number of benefits to the AMS and to its members and also detailed how such activity groups could be formed. CoMC discussed the proposal at length. There was wide agreement that such a program could be very positive for the AMS. Several members of CoMC were more interested in activity groups that would be connected electronically. There was also discussion on the resources that such a program might need. The consensus of the meeting was that there needed to be more planning before a program of activity groups could be launched, and that, at least initially, any meetings of activity groups would center around standard Special Sessions at Sectional Meetings and the JMM. A new subcommittee was formed to continue the investigation of this potential program for the AMS.
- ***CoMC Focus Group Breakfast.*** Ann Trenk chaired the Focus Group at the 2011 JMM. Since her term on CoMC ended on January 31, 2011, David Farmer presented the ideas that had been discussed during that breakfast. Much of the discussion centered on how to improve the expository quality of the mathematics talks. Also, there was some discussion concerning possible activity groups for the AMS. David Farmer will chair the 2012 Focus Group in Boston. CoMC formed a subcommittee to create guidelines for speakers at AMS meetings.
- ***New Orleans Questionnaire.*** The responses from the New Orleans questionnaire were reviewed. Once again, the AMS used an electronic survey form and sent email to all participants after the meeting with a link to the survey. Over 1600 participants responded to the survey.

New business:

- ***AMS presence at the annual SIAM meeting.*** The Council approved, at its January 2011 meeting, the general idea of the AMS participating in the annual SIAM meeting. The Council's resolution requested that a detailed plan be presented to CoMC at its March 2011 and be brought to the Council again at its April 2011 meeting. CoMC recommended that the Council approve the proposal that the AMS have one invited speaker (semi-plenary) and organize four mini-sessions at the 2012 SIAM annual meeting.
- ***Joint Prize Session at the Joint Mathematics Meetings.*** At its January 2011 meeting, the Council approved the following recommendation from the Task Force on Prizes that was endorsed by the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees:

The appropriate policy committees should undertake a review of the current prize ceremony at the Joint Meetings and include in their review that

- i. some prizes be associated with talks (possibly at Sectional Meetings);**
- ii. the AMS hold a separate prize ceremony at the Joint Meetings; or**
- iii. some prizes be announced and awarded outside of meeting.**

CoMC recommended that a joint CoMC-CoProf subcommittee be formed to study this issue and appointed two people to the subcommittee.

- ***Programs of the Joint Mathematics Meetings in the January Notices.*** A letter appeared in the April 2011 *Notices* (made available online in the mid-March) commenting on the very large number of pages in the January 2011 issue devoted to the program of the JMM. CoMC discussed the fact that the Sectional Meetings programs are no longer published in the *Notices*, due to its early deadlines. The AMS Meetings and Conferences Department is actively researching the possibility of an electronic program and scheduler. Since a *pdf* of the JMM program is available online and the printed program is distributed to all participants either by mail or on site, it seems unnecessary to publish the program in the *Notices* as well. CoMC voted to recommend to CPub that the JMM program be removed from the January *Notices*. The JMM announcement, printed in the October *Notices*, serves important purposes and will continue to be included.
- ***The Mathematical Sciences in 2025.*** A letter from Scott Weidman, Director of the Board on Mathematical Sciences and Their Applications, was sent to the chairs of all the AMS policy committees. CoMC briefly discussed the request for individuals to provide their thoughts on: “ a) major research trends and opportunities over the next 15 years; b) what our profession should do to make the most of these opportunities; and c) stresses affecting the mathematical sciences.”

- ***Mathematical Congress of the Americas.*** The first Mathematical Congress of the Americas (MCA) will take place in August 2013. The goal of the Congress is to highlight the excellence of mathematical achievements in the Americas within the context of the international arena and to foster the scientific integration of all mathematical communities in the continent. There will be a meeting at IMPA in Rio de Janeiro in mid-May of the steering committee of the 2013 MCA. This committee has 6 representatives appointed by the AMS, CMS, SIAM, SMM, SBM and UMALCA. The committee has sent out a "call for bids" to host the 2013 MCA and the site will be selected at the committee meeting in Rio.

2012 CoMC Meeting.

- The committee approved the suggested date of March 24, 2012 for its next meeting, to be held at AMS headquarters in Providence, RI.
- For the 2012 meeting, the topic to be reviewed will be: Joint International Meetings.

*Ellen Maycock
Associate Executive Director
November 16, 2011*