

AMS Committee on Meetings and Conferences

Highlights of 2013 Meeting

The Committee on Meetings and Conferences (CoMC) held its annual meeting on March 23, 2013, at the Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport Hotel. Paul Muhly, 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 Carla Savage and AMS staff members AED Ellen Maycock and Director of Meetings and Conferences Penny Pina answered questions posed by CoMC members.

Reports

- **Secretariat.** Carla Savage reported on the March 22, 2013, Secretariat meeting.
 - **Upcoming Joint International Meetings:**
 - Romania, June 27-30, 2013, in Alba Iulia.
 - Israel, June 16-19, 2014, in Tel Aviv.
 - Portugal, June 11-14, 2015, in Porto (with EMS).
 - Tentative: meeting to be held in India in 2016.
 - **2013-2014 Einstein Lectures.** The 2013 Einstein Lecture will be given by Jon Kleinberg at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, on October 12, 2013. The 2014 Einstein Lecture will be held on October 25-26, 2013, at San Francisco State University. James H. Simons will be the speaker.
 - **2013 Erdős Lectures.** A 2013 Erdős Memorial Lecture will be held at Iowa State University on April 27, 2013. The lecturer will be Endre Szemerédi. This was a late addition to the Erdős Lecture Series, intended to be a substitute for the 2014 Lecture. The 2013 Lecture will be held at Temple University on October 12, 2013. The lecturer will be Barry Mazur.
 - **AMS-NZMS Lecture Series.** The first AMS-NZMS Maclaurin Lecturer will be Marston Conder. He will deliver an Invited Address at the Eastern Sectional Meeting to be held in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts on April 6-7, 2013. He will also deliver colloquia at the University of California, San Diego, University of Washington, University of Chicago, Vanderbilt University, Colgate College and the University of Texas. Conder is officially

the 2012 Maclaurin Lecturer, but his visit was delayed until 2013 to allow scheduling a talk at a Sectional Meeting. Terrence Tao is the 2013 Maclaurin Lecturer, visiting New Zealand during summer 2013.

- ***CoMC Focus Group Breakfast.*** Laura De Carli chaired the Focus Group at the 2013 JMM in San Diego. The participants discussed a variety of topics related to the Joint Mathematics Meetings. They came to the JMM to give and attend talks, to have job interviews, to attend committee meetings and to network with colleagues. There was a discussion of the theme “Mathematics of the Planet Earth.” Only a few of the Focus Group participants were aware of the initiative, but they felt that there was merit in having a well-considered theme. Participants were very interested in having an app for the JMM.
- ***San Diego Questionnaire.*** The responses from the San Diego 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 2000 participants completed the survey.
- ***Review of the National Meeting (overall program including governance).*** Estelle Basor, Laura De Carli (chair) and Robert McCann formed the subcommittee that carried out this review. The subcommittee studied the survey results from the past seven years and participated in the Focus Group discussion held at the 2013 JMM.

Overall, the report was very positive. In summary, the report stated:

In our assessment, the JMM does an excellent job at fulfilling the AMS needs for national meetings. Considerable experience, good staff work, and careful planning allow the JMMs to run smoothly. The subcommittee recommends not making any major changes to the overall program of national meetings.

The subcommittee recommended that:

- The AMS invest additional resources in order to provide a smartphone or tablet app for the JMM.
- The AMS inform the registered participants of special initiatives such as the MPE 2013 with an email before the meeting.
- Efforts to maintain the standards and the quality of the Exhibits be continued.
- The AMS contact heads of mathematics departments and ask them to pass information about the JMM on to advisers and students.
- Ongoing efforts to provide common areas be continued.

Old business

- ***AMS Activity Groups.*** At its March 2012 meeting, CoMC approved a 3-page

narrative describing a proposed AMS Activity Groups program, accompanied by an appendix of procedures for establishing and maintaining such groups. CoMC forwarded these materials to the Committee on the Profession (CoProf) for its consideration. CoProf endorsed the idea and recommended sending the narrative to the Council, but without inclusion of the appendix on procedures, and recommended that a small pilot program for AMS members only be started, with minimal regulations and procedures. CoMC concurred. At its January 8, 2013 meeting, the Council approved the recommendation by CoMC and CoProf that a limited pilot program of Activity Groups for AMS members only, otherwise structured as set forth in the narrative, be started. AMS staff members expect the Activity Groups pilot program to be launched during summer 2013.

- ***Handicap accessible venues.*** At its meeting of March 24, 2012, CoMC endorsed the following policy and recommended it to the Council.

All AMS meetings and AMS-sponsored conferences held in the US shall be held in venues that are fully accessible to the physically handicapped.

However, members of the Council expressed concern about unintended consequences of such a statement during the January 8, 2013, Council meeting. The Council voted to return the statement back to CoMC for reconsideration.

AMS Executive Director Don McClure consulted with an AMS attorney about the policy. Based on feedback from the attorney, CoMC has endorsed the following statement and has recommended it to the Council:

It is the goal of the AMS to ensure that its conferences are accessible to all, regardless of disability. AMS shall strive, unless it is not practicable, to choose venues that are fully accessible to the physically handicapped.

- ***Joint Prize Session at the Joint Mathematics Meetings.*** In September 2012, CoProf endorsed the principle that had already been endorsed by CoMC at its March 2012 meeting:

One principle that could be adopted is to award only prizes and awards at JMM that are highly selective and truly national in scope.

The following statement was included in the report of the MAA Secretary, Barbara Faires, in the February/March 2013 *MAA Focus*:

Beginning in 2015 with the MAA centennial celebration in Washington, D.C., the Meritorious Service Awards will be given at MAA MathFest.

New business:

- **Short Course Subcommittee.** The AMS Short Course is a long-standing tradition at the Joint Mathematics Meetings. One or two Short Courses are offered during the two days just prior to the JMM each year. The Short Course Subcommittee requested that the charge of the Subcommittee and the Short Course manual be revised and broadened.

CoMC decided that the charge for the Short Course is clear enough, and that the Short Course Subcommittee is functioning effectively and appropriately. The Short Course Subcommittee has the liberty to interpret the charge broadly. It is acceptable to ask proposers if they wish for their proposals to be considered for another year.

The AMS Secretary will make the changes in the charge so that it is up to date. This involves two points: to eliminate the reference to the Summer Joint Mathematics Meetings and also to indicate that the proceedings *may* be published rather than they *will* be published. The revised charge will then be taken to the Council for discussion. AMS staff members will revise the Short Course manual so that it is up to date and will explore posting the slides from the Short Course lectures on the AMS web site.

- **Proposal for a joint AWM-AMS Noether Lecture.** The Association for Women in Mathematics (AWM) has proposed to the AMS that the long-standing annual Noether Lecture become the AWM-AMS Noether Lecture. CoMC endorsed this proposal and recommended it to the Council.

Information items

- **New AMS Associate Secretary.** The Executive Committee and Board of Trustees recommended to the Council that Brian D. Boe, University of Georgia, be named as Associate Secretary for the Southeastern Section, to replace Matt Miller, who resigned due to health reasons. The Council approved this appointment at its meeting of January 8, 2013.
- **Mathematics of Planet Earth 2013.** Mathematics of Planet Earth 2013 (MPE2013) is a worldwide, year-long project supported by a large number of mathematics institutes and societies around the globe. Mathematics plays a key role in many processes affecting Planet Earth, both as a fundamental discipline and as an essential component of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research. The mission of MPE2013 is to increase the engagement of mathematicians, researchers, teachers, students, and the public with the role of mathematics in issues affecting Planet Earth and its future. In the United States, the launch of MPE2013 occurred at the Joint Mathematics Meetings in San Diego. (*adapted from the home page of MPE2013*)

More information about the project can be found at <http://www.mpe2013.org/>.

- ***Mathematical Congress of the Americas.*** The first Mathematical Congress of the Americas (MCA 2013) will take place in Guanajuato, Mexico, August 5-9, 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 collaborations among researchers, students, institutions and mathematical societies in the Americas.

The Society is supporting MCA 2013 in several ways:

- It will support three plenary speakers. This is the customary level of support the AMS provides for a joint international meeting.
 - It will provide the infrastructure and support for the submission of abstracts.
 - It will administer a travel grants program for invited speakers and early career mathematicians to attend the MCA 2013. These travel grants are funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation. A selection committee has determined which applicants will receive funding for their travel.
 - It will help advertise and promote MCA 2013.
- ***Report on MRC program.*** The Mathematics Research Community (MRC) program, funded by NSF, is a program run by the AMS to support young mathematicians as they begin their research careers. The program is now in its sixth year. The conferences in summer 2013 will be:
 - **Complex Dynamics** (20). *Organizers:* Laura DeMarco (University of Illinois at Chicago), Adam Epstein (University of Warwick), Sarah Koch (Harvard University).
 - **Tropical and Nonarchimedean Analytic Geometry** (20). *Organizers:* Matt Baker (Georgia Institute of Technology), Sam Payne (Yale University).
 - **Geometric Group Theory** (40). *Organizers:* Ruth Charney (Brandeis University), Tullia Dymarz (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Dan Margalit (Georgia Institute of Technology), Kim Ruane (Tufts University), Kevin Wortman (University of Utah).
 - **Regularity Problems for Nonlinear Partial Differential Equations Modeling Fluids and Complex Fluids** (40). *Organizers:* Peter Constantin (Princeton University), Gautam Iyer (Carnegie Mellon University), Igor Kukavica (University of Southern California), Helena Nussenzveig-Lopes (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro), Jiahong Wu (Oklahoma State University).

The AMS has submitted a proposal to NSF to fund three more years of the MRC program.

2014 CoMC Meeting.

- The committee approved the suggested date of March 8, 2014 for its next meeting, to be held at Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport.
- For the 2014 meeting, the topic to be reviewed will be: Sectional Meetings.
- The CoMC Focus Group Breakfast will be held on Thursday, January 16, 2014, in Baltimore, Maryland.

*Ellen Maycock
Associate Executive Director
March 29, 2013*