

**Committee on the Profession
Annual Report
December 2014**

The Committee on the Profession (CoProf) held its annual meeting on September 13-14, 2014, at the Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport Hotel. Allan Greenleaf, University of Rochester, chaired the meeting, highlights of which are summarized below.

Regular agenda items:

- **Annual Review:** CoProf's annual review, conducted by a subcommittee, addressed the issue of increasing participation at all levels of under-represented groups. CoProf's discussion focused on two of the subcommittee's proposals:

Math Programs that Make a Difference: The report recommended that this award should, like the Award for an Exemplary Program or Achievement in a Mathematics Department, carry a cash prize. CoProf passed a resolution asking the Development Committee to make a priority of raising funds for this purpose.

Web page on diversity: The subcommittee felt that the opening paragraph on the "diversity" web page <http://www.ams.org/programs/diversity/diversity> was poorly phrased. CoProf recommended the following statement as a replacement for that paragraph:

- *The AMS is committed to fostering efforts to support the hiring, retention and promotion of women and under-represented minorities at all levels of academia and in industry.*
- *AMS members, both individual and institutional, are urged to examine their policies and procedures to find ways to facilitate careers in mathematics for traditionally under-represented groups.*

More generally, the committee argued that the diversity web page should be revised to help it attract students to careers in mathematics.

CoProf accepted the subcommittee's report and urged AMS staff to follow up on its recommendations with respect to the web page.

- **Information Statements on the Culture of Research and Scholarship in Mathematics:** The 2008 statement on "The Culture of Federal Support for Academic Research in Mathematics" was updated, and CoProf will revise the other statements to make it easier to keep them up to date. CoProf decided to compose no new statements at this time.
- **Math Programs that Make a Difference:** Each year, CoProf recognizes at most two programs that succeed in bringing and keeping "more persons from underrepresented backgrounds into some portion of the pipeline beginning at the undergraduate level and leading to advanced degrees in mathematics and professional success." The programs recognized in 2014 were the Carleton College Summer Mathematics Program (SMP) and the Rice University Summer Institute of Statistics (RUSIS). Nominations for the 2015 award

were due on September 15, 2014, and the one or two programs that are selected will be featured in the May 2015 issue of the *Notices*.

- **Written Reports:** Staff reports on the following topics were included in the CoProf agenda: the Department Chairs Workshop, Membership, Employment Services of the AMS, Graduate Student Chapters, and Mathematics Research Communities.
- **Oral Report:** CoProf heard an oral report from the Standing Committee on Members and Member Benefits, which recommended adding the Fellows program to the list of member benefits.
- **JMM Panel:** CoProf decided not to sponsor a panel at the 2015 Joint Mathematics Meetings in San Antonio. It brainstormed about possible topics for 2016 and decided to finalize its choice after the new committee is in place in the spring of 2016.

Agenda items that were endorsed by CoProf and will be taken to the Council for consideration:

- **Prize Oversight Committee:** The current cycle that is used to award the Steele Prize for Seminal Research is: (1) algebra/number theory; (2) geometry/topology; (3) analysis; (4) applied mathematics; (5) an alternation between discrete mathematics and logic (each awarded every ten years). In two separate votes, CoProf endorsed the following changes in this cycle:
 - That the cycle be (1) algebra/number theory; (2) geometry/topology; (3) analysis/probability; (4) applied mathematics; (5) discrete mathematics/logic.
 - That the cycle be lengthened to six years, with the area of mathematics being entirely open in the sixth year.
- **Approval process for new prizes proposed by donors:** CoProf endorsed a recommendation from the Secretary that the Council authorize the Executive Committee to act on its behalf in cases where negotiations with donors require timely decisions and confidentiality.
- **Centennial Fellowship:** The current criteria for the Centennial Fellowship prohibit the recipient from holding it concurrently with a National Science Foundation CAREER Award. CoProf endorsed eliminating this restriction (but keeping the prohibition against simultaneously holding another major research fellowship, such as a Sloan fellowship or NSF Postdoctoral fellowship). This change would prevent problems caused by the fact that the Centennial Fellowship is typically announced before some of the CAREER awards have been made. Since CAREER Awards generally do not provide academic-year support, CoProf felt that holding such a grant would not conflict with the Centennial Fellowship.
- **Committee charges:** CoProf endorsed updated charges for the Karl Menger Fund Prize Committee, the Committee on Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Employment Security (CAFTES), and the Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE).

- **Policy regarding mass emails:** CoProf endorsed a new policy governing the sending of mass emails to AMS members, permitting the President, Secretary, and Executive Director to authorize such mailings, provided they comply with Society's practices regarding the frequency of such emails and with applicable laws and regulations that enable recipients to opt out of selected types of messages.
- **Proposal to establish an AMS Office for Graduate Education and Diversity:** CoProf discussed a proposal to create an AMS Office for Graduate Education and Diversity. This office would assume responsibility for a program currently run by the National Alliance for Doctoral Studies in the Mathematical Sciences that encourages members of under-represented groups to pursue doctoral degrees in mathematics. CoProf endorsed exploring this idea and recommended taking it to the Council. The Committee on Education discussed the proposal at its meeting in October 2014, and it, too, responded favorably.
- **New prize in Lie theory:** CoProf was apprised of the possibility of establishing a new research prize in Lie theory. After the CoProf meeting, a detailed description of the proposed Chevalley Prize was circulated to CoProf, which approved it by email.
- **Policy on a welcoming environment:** CoProf discussed the proposed Policy on a Welcoming Environment, which seeks to assure that participants in AMS activities enjoy a welcoming environment and establishes a procedure for reporting violations of that policy. At its meeting in September 2014, CoProf added its approval to that which had already been given by COMC. Afterwards, the draft was reviewed by legal counsel, and a revised version was circulated to CoProf, which approved it by email. The same revised draft was approved by COMC.
- *Other business:*
- **New prize in differential equations:** Through their estate plan, Edmond and Nancy Tomastik intend to donate funds to support an endowed prize in differential equations, and a letter of commitment has been signed. When the gift is received, a proposal to establish the new prize will go to CoProf for review.
- **Relationship between AMS and the NSA:** In light of ongoing revelations about the National Security Agency's activities involving intelligence gathering and encryption, and in view of the close connections between the NSA and the mathematical community, CoProf discussed the possibility that AMS should make a public statement. No such statement was approved.
- **AMS sexual harassment policy:** During the discussion of the proposed Policy on a Welcoming Environment, it was pointed out that the AMS policy on sexual harassment, which was adopted in 1994, should be reviewed and updated. A subcommittee was appointed for that purpose.

- **AMS Fellows program:** CoProf considered a proposal from the AMS Fellows Selection Committee that a nomination be eligible for a period of four years, rather than three. CoProf decided not to change the selection procedure at this time.
- **Annual review for 2015:** For its annual review in 2015, CoProf chose the issue of identifying appropriate venues for presenting AMS prizes. For example, perhaps some prizes could be awarded at AMS Sectional meetings, thus taking pressure off the Joint Prize Session at the Joint Mathematics Meetings. A subcommittee was appointed to consider this topic.
- **CoWIM report:** In response to a request from Carol Wood, the Chair of the AMS Committee on Women in Mathematics, CoProf discussed the relationship between itself and CoWIM. The consensus was that closer coordination would benefit both committees, and CoProf decided to invite CoWIM to send a representative to its 2015 meeting.

Next meeting: The Committee on the Profession will hold its next meeting on September 19-20, 2015, at the Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport Hotel.

*T. Christine Stevens
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