

Committee on the Profession
Annual Report
2015

The Committee on the Profession (CoProf) held its annual meeting on September 19-20, 2015, 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, focused on identifying additional venues in which AMS prizes and awards could be presented. 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). As new prizes are added, it may become necessary to award some prizes in venues other than the Joint Prize Session.

The subcommittee made two specific recommendations. The first was to award the Conant Prize in conjunction with the annual Conant Lecture at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. That institution has given informal support for such an arrangement. The second was to devote one of the five AMS Invited Addresses at JMM to a lecture by the winner of the Steele Prize for Lifetime Achievement (or a designee), with the prize awarded at the start of the Invited Address. CoProf approved both recommendations. The first will go to the Council, and the second will be considered by the Secretariat and the Committee on Meetings and Conferences.

- **New prize in stochastic theory and modeling:** CoProf was apprised of the possibility of establishing a new prize in stochastic theory and modeling. It voted to support the creation of an AMS prize in this area, with final details to be discussed by CoProf and approved by the Council. It did so with the understanding that the prize might have to be on the ECBT agenda in November 2015, in order to meet a request from the donors regarding the timing of their contributions.
- **Information Statements on the Culture of Research and Scholarship in Mathematics:** CoProf discussed possible updates to its existing information statements regarding the culture of research and scholarship in mathematics and its differences from other sciences and engineering. It suggested several changes in wording, which were incorporated into the final versions. CoProf also adopted a new statement regarding Arm's Length Letters of Evaluation, which is attached to this report. It recommended making it easier to find these statements, as well as other information for department leaders, on the AMS website.
- **Mathematics 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 2015 were the Center for Undergraduate Research in Mathematics (CURM) at

Brigham Young University and the Pacific Coast Undergraduate Mathematics Conference (PCUMC). Nominations for the 2016 award were due on September 15, 2015, and the one or two programs that are selected will be featured in the May 2016 issue of *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.
- **JMM Panel:** CoProf will sponsor a panel at JMM 2016 entitled “Promoting mathematics to policy makers and the public.” Speakers include Jordan Ellenberg, Kristin Lauter, William Massey and Sam Rankin. CoProf brainstormed about possible topics for 2017 and decided to continue the discussion by email.
- **Standing Committees:** CoProf asked the Committee on Members and Member Benefits to consider ways in which the AMS can increase members’ awareness of existing AMS programs and to provide a sounding board for the new Director of Membership Development, once one has been hired. The Prize Oversight Subcommittee was asked to develop a “wish list” of new prizes.

Agenda items that were endorsed by CoProf and will be taken to the Council for consideration (in addition to the aforementioned recommendation about the Conant Prize):

- **Bertrand Russell Prize:** CoProf endorsed the proposed Bertrand Russell Prize to honor “research or service contributions of mathematicians or related professionals to promoting good in the world” and to “recognize the various ways that mathematics furthers human values.”
- **Nomination procedure for the Steele Prizes:** CoProf discussed a recommendation from the Steele Prize Committee that limitations be established on the amount of material that can be submitted as part of a nomination for each of the Steele Prizes. CoProf agreed that it was reasonable to establish page limits on the nomination materials and endorsed “in spirit” the recommendation of the Steele Prize Committee regarding the material that can be submitted.
- **AMS Anti-Harassment Statement:** The current AMS Policy Statement on Sexual Harassment (www.ams.org/about-us/governance/policy-statements/sexualharassment) was approved by the Council in 1994. At its meeting in September 2014, CoProf created a subcommittee to review that statement, with the goal of possibly modifying and updating it. In September 2015, CoProf approved a new AMS Anti-Harassment Statement, which was subsequently reviewed by the Society’s attorney. The final version was approved by CoProf by email.

Other business:

- **Program to improve the departmental climate for women and minorities:** The American Physical Society (APS) has programs under which institutions can request “site visits,” for the purpose of improving the climate for women and minorities. Other organizations with

such programs include the American Philosophical Association and the American Astronomical Society. CoProf formed a subcommittee to study the possibility that the AMS develop a similar program.

- **CoWIM Report:** CoProf heard an oral report from the Committee on Women in Mathematics (CoWIM), which shared its views on the proposed AMS Anti-Harrassment Statement and on the “site visits” program mentioned above. Regarding the latter, it felt that the idea is worth investigating and that the next step would be for CoProf to consider the feasibility and desirability of such a program. CoWIM also recommended that one of its members serve on the Joint Committee on Women.
- **Computational Reproducibility Guidelines for Mathematics:** Currently there are no established guidelines or policies about how to submit, referee, and publish mathematical articles with significant computational components. CoProf agreed to appoint a joint subcommittee of CoProf and the Committee on Publications (CPub) – with two members from each committee -- to consider what role, if any, AMS should have in the creation of guidelines for computational reproducibility standards for the mathematical community.
- **Committee on Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Employment Security (CAFTES):** In response to issues raised by the chair of CAFTES, CoProf established a subcommittee to review its charge, with the goal of making it more realistic.
- **Relationship between AMS and the National Security Agency (NSA):** CoProf discussed the possibility of adding a page to the AMS website that describes the NSA grants program and the Society’s role in managing the review process. CoProf responded favorably to this suggestion and left the details to be worked out by AMS staff.
- **AMS Fellows program:** CoProf considered the report of the AMS Fellows Selection Committee, which sought guidance about whether it is appropriate to elect as a Fellow someone who is currently serving in a government agency or private foundation in a policy-making capacity concerning funding of mathematics. CoProf chose not to address that issue but expressed concern that the number of Fellows currently selected annually is too small and that it may be creating ill will in the mathematical community.
- **Nominations by petition:** CoProf discussed the existing policies that govern nominations by petition and decided not to recommend any changes to the process. They felt, however, that the following statement should be removed from the Nomination by Petition instructions that are published in *Notices*: “The Council of 23 January 1979 stated the intent of the Council of nominating all persons on whose behalf there were valid petitions.” CoProf did not view the statement in question as binding the Council to accept a nomination by petition.
- **Proposal that the AMS provide an institutional home for the National Alliance for Doctoral Studies in the Mathematical Sciences:** CoProf was updated about plans for the AMS’s new Department of Education and Diversity, and it discussed a proposal for the AMS to provide an institutional home for the National Alliance for Doctoral Studies in the Mathematical Sciences. Members of CoProf asked about how the Alliance would fit into the

Department of Education and Diversity and what other activities that department might pursue. They also requested additional data about the track record of the Alliance. It was agreed that CoProf would continue this discussion electronically, prior to voting on the proposal. The same proposal was subsequently considered by the Committee on Education at its meeting October 2015.

- **Strategic Planning:** CoProf received an update on the AMS's strategic planning process.
- **Annual review for 2016:** CoProf discussed possible topics for its annual review in 2016 and agreed to finalize the choice by email.
- **Next meeting:** The Committee on the Profession will hold its next meeting on September 17-18, 2016, at AMS Headquarters in Providence.

*T. Christine Stevens
Associate Executive Director
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