

American Mathematical Society

2010 Report on the Committee on Publications

A meeting of the AMS Committee on Publications (CPub) was held on Friday and Saturday, October 22-23, 2010, at the AMS Headquarters in Providence, RI. CPub Chair Joseph H. Silverman presided over the meeting.

On Friday evening, guest speaker Carol Hutchins of the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences (CIMS) Library at New York University led discussion on issues facing research mathematics, universities, and university libraries. The discussion centered on three main topics: the future of mathematics journals, eBooks, and the relationship between the AMS and librarians.

Saturday's agenda included the following topics:

CPub 2009 Updates

The Publisher provided an overview of actions taken as a result of the 2009 CPub meeting:

- Guidelines for Book Editors

The "Guidelines for Members of Book Series Editorial Committees: To guide the decision making process" were approved by the Council at its January 2010 meeting. The approved guidelines have been distributed to book series editors and posted on the AMS website (<http://www.ams.org/about-us/governance/policy-statements/guidelines-book-editorial-coms>).

- Policy on Plagiarism

After discussion at its January 2010 meeting, the Council made a slight revision to the proposed policy recommended by CPub. With this revision, the Council approved the policy, which reads:

AMS Policy on Plagiarism

The AMS asserts that the Society's journal editorial boards and the publisher have a responsibility to be vigilant regarding plagiarism in the material that they publish. Once notified of possible plagiarism in their publication, the journal editorial board and the publisher have a responsibility to investigate carefully such an allegation at any stage of the publication process. In the pre-publication stage, a determination of plagiarism should result in rejection of the article. In the post-publication stage, a retraction or correction should be published in a subsequent issue of the journal.

The approved AMS Policy on Plagiarism has been posted to the AMS Policy Statements and Guidelines webpage (<http://www.ams.org/about-us/governance/policy-statements/plagiarism>).

- Review of the AMS Member Journals

Below is a summary of actions taken in response to the 2009 Report of the Subcommittee Reviewing the AMS Member Journals (recommendations of the Subcommittee are bulleted):

- Consider inviting the *Notices* chief editor to attend Council meetings to remain informed about current issues facing the AMS.

The Notices chief editor is provided with Council meeting agendas in advance of each meeting by the Secretary's office and has an open invitation to attend.

- Consider making *Notices* more interactive online.

AMS is currently in the process of redesigning its entire website. The new AMS website was launched earlier this year and improvements will continue to be made once design options are thoroughly evaluated and decided upon. The suggestions made by former Notices chief editor Andy Magid are on par with AMS's goal to enhance the website as a whole.

- Continue discussion on eliminating paper copies of the *Abstracts* if it is found to be a cost-effective measure.

AMS executive staff met several times to discuss this issue and decided that it would be important to continue printing the paper edition of Abstracts for the JMM, at least for the foreseeable future. Abstracts for sectional meetings will also continue to be printed and included in the program for each meeting.

Staff was primarily deciding if it would save money to stop printing the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th volumes of the year. At the present time, however, the reduction in costs (printing and postage) would not replace the loss of income from subscriptions. AMS executive staff plans to revisit this issue periodically.

- Consider modifying current procedures for providing copies of *Bulletin* and *Notices* to nominee members. (The Subcommittee noted that the AMS is in the implementation stage of a new policy whereby nominee members will receive mailed copies of the *Bulletin* and *Notices* only if they request that such copies be sent.)

A Working Group on the Nominee Program, established by the AMS Committee on the Profession (CoProf), began considering this and other issues related to the Nominee Program in January 2010. In their report, the Working Group recommends "that the 'opt-in' method for paper Notices be continued" at this time, and that "The AMS should draw attention to this choice in the materials sent to departments." The report of the Working Group will be distributed and discussed further as part of the CoProf meeting taking place following CPub's meeting, October 23-24th.

- Backfile Digitization Project

Due to the generosity of an anonymous benefactor, the backfile digitization project for the AMS primary journals (the undertaking of which was originally proposed by CPub) was completed in May 2010. All issues of the *Journal of the AMS*, *Mathematics of Computation*, *Proceedings of the AMS*, and *Transactions of the AMS* are now available on the AMS website via each journal's home page, and all pre-2006 back issues have been made freely available for download in electronic format.

- AMS Publication Language

In 2009, CPub suggested that, in lieu of setting policy, it would be more appropriate and less exclusive to establish English as the "preferred" (but not exclusive) publication language of the AMS. The matter was then discussed further at the meeting of the AMS primary journal managing editors which took place on Friday, October 22, 2010, just prior to the CPub meeting. It was suggested that since only a small fraction of papers are submitted in languages other than English, considerations regarding publication language will continue to be made at the discretion of the editorial boards and managing editors of each journal.

Report on the Managing Editors' Meeting

A meeting of the Managing Editors of the AMS primary journals (*Journal of the AMS*, *Mathematics of Computation*, *Proceedings of the AMS*, and *Transactions of the AMS*) takes place every other year in conjunction with the CPub meeting. The Publisher provided a report on the meeting, which was attended by the four (4) Managing Editors, the Associate Executive Director of Publishing, the Publisher, and the Production Manager.

Managing Editors and the staff present discussed the newly endorsed IMU Best Current Practices for Journals document, which was also included as an attachment in the CPub agenda. Additional topics discussed at the meeting included the following: review of submission rates and feedback on EditFlow, AMS publication languages, journal backlogs, editorial board histories, and the upcoming Mathematics Journal Workshop being held February 14-16, 2011, at the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) in Berkeley, CA.

The next Managing Editors' meeting will take place in 2012.

Review of AMS Primary Journals

The report of the CPub subcommittee which reviewed the AMS primary journals: *Journal of the AMS* (JAMS), *Mathematics of Computation* (MCOM), *Proceedings of the AMS* (PAMS), and *Transactions of the AMS* (TAMS), was presented. The subcommittee's evaluation was conducted to determine the overall scientific health of the primary journals, focusing on their effectiveness in serving the needs of the Society and the mathematical community. The areas reviewed by the subcommittee included journal quality, backlog and journal efficiency, manuscript submission software, appropriateness of coverage, acceptance/rejection rates, and author geographic demographics. To compile their report, the subcommittee utilized data provided by the AMS and the results of two web-based surveys conducted with AMS authors and AMS editors.

Although the subcommittee's review identified a couple areas of concern, including TAMS' struggle to obtain a healthy backlog and the low acceptance rate and concentration of papers in certain areas for JAMS, it was concluded that, overall, the primary journals are doing a good job of meeting their objectives and the standards as set for them by the AMS in the areas assessed.

Public Access Legislation

The Executive Director led discussion on the potential impacts of pending public access legislation on current AMS policies. The Head of the AMS Washington Division has been working with representatives of other scientific societies to ensure that the concerns of publishers are also considered as part of legislation on public access. This group has successfully contributed wording to the legislation to this effect, which is reflected in Section 103 of the Senate version of the America Competes Act. Information on the February 2011 Mathematics Journal Workshop, which will bring together scientific publishers, funders of research, representatives of academic institutions, mathematicians, and editors to discuss the future of mathematics journals, was also shared with CPub.

www.ams.org as a Publication

Using the online version of *Notices* as a model, the AMS has been taking steps toward managing the content of its website as a publication of the Society. This includes the development of a Managing Editor position and an advisory board to assist with creation of content. CPub has been asked to consider if it should include the AMS website in its review of publications. It was

suggested that, were it to be added, it could become part of the review of member journals (*Notices, Bulletin, Abstracts*), which is conducted in Year 4 of CPub's review cycle. CPub will consider this possibility further at its meeting in 2011.

Report on Journal Backlogs

As it is a standing item on both the Managing Editors' and CPub agendas and was also covered as part of CPub's review, there was significant discussion regarding backlogs for the primary journals throughout the course of the meetings. Of particular concern is how the *Transactions* backlog can most effectively be reduced. Attempts to mitigate its backlog by increasing the pages published per year and increasing the page limit for *Proceedings* articles have so far proved relatively ineffective.

Report on Mathematical Reviews

The annual report on Mathematical Reviews was provided to the Committee by the Executive Editor. The MR database continues to grow steadily, with roughly 109,000 items added in 2009, 370 entries being added daily, and 30 new high-density journals added for coverage so far this year. Expansion of the scope of the database also continues, with 2,500 items projected to be added this year in non-traditional areas such as applied computer science and applied statistics. Significant progress has also been made on securing agreements to obtain pdf copies for reviewers. A demo of the latest release of MathSciNet, which was launched on October 12th, was presented. Three new features including MathJax, Booklinks, and bibliographic information through ProQuest, were demonstrated.

Other Business

Approval of 2009 minutes

The Committee approved the minutes of the 2009 CPub meeting as presented.

2011 Meeting date/location

The 2011 CPub meeting will be held September 23-24, 2011, at the Chicago Hilton O'Hare in Chicago, IL.

2011 Committee on Publications review topic

According to its charge, CPub will conduct an evaluation of all other journals (electronic-only, translation, and distributed journals) for presentation at its 2011 meeting.

Sergei Gelfand, *Publisher*
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