

American Mathematical Society

Committee on Publications

Annual Report 2011

A meeting of the AMS Committee on Publications (CPub) was held on Friday and Saturday, September 23-24, 2011, at the Chicago Hilton O'Hare, Chicago, IL. CPub chair Gregory F. Lawler presided over the meeting. A summary of the meeting is provided below.

Friday's agenda included the following topics:

www.ams.org as an AMS Publication

Executive Director Don McClure provided the Committee with an update on the steps AMS has taken toward redesigning the structure and content of the AMS website (www.ams.org) to function as a publication of the Society. Since the launch of the new website in April 2010, AMS has made further progress, such as creating a Web Editor position, reconstituting the Web Advisory Group (WAG) and expanding its scope to include increased external representation from the larger mathematical community. In continuing with the steps taken so far, CPub endorsed the idea that a working group, to be named the Web Editorial Group (WEG), be assembled by the Secretary and President to make suggestions about mathematical content on www.ams.org and to collaborate with the expanded WAG in this capacity. At its 2012 meeting, CPub will work on formulating the charge to the WEG.

IMU-ICIAM Discussion on Rating of Mathematics Journals

Executive Director Don McClure led an informational discussion on work being done by the IMU and ICIAM on journal rating. A joint working group of the IMU and ICIAM, the Working Group on Journal Rankings and Pricing (WG-JRP), was established in fall 2010 and charged to consider "whether or not a joint ICIAM/IMU method of ranking mathematical journals should be instituted, and what other possible options there may be for protecting against the inappropriate use of impact factors and similar manipulable indices for evaluating research."

The Committee discussed the findings outlined in the report of the working group, which was presented at an ICIAM forum in July 2011. The working group's report proposes the establishment of a four-tier international rating system and outlines criteria, financial considerations, timelines, and risks. However, both the ICIAM and IMU have adopted resolutions to spend more time gathering input from the community before any concrete action is taken. It was pointed out that one of the issues for further consideration noted by the working group was if AMS could be "persuaded to adapt the MCQ rankings to make it more widely applicable".

Saturday's agenda included the following topics:

CPub 2010 Updates

CPub's 2010 meeting and review of the AMS Primary Journals did not result in any recommendations for action to the Council. CPub moved to accept the report of the Subcommittee with thanks, and the 2010 CPub report was filed in the AMS Committee Report Book as Committee Report No. 101026-015. CPub chair Joseph Silverman provided an oral report on CPub's 2010 meeting, including the review of primary journals, to the Council in January 2011.

Review of AMS “Other” Journals

Gregory Lawler, chair of the CPub subcommittee that conducted the 2011 review of AMS electronic-only, translation, and distributed journals, presented the report prepared by the subcommittee. Other subcommittee members included: Richard Brualdi, Mark Goresky, and Andrew Odlyzko. The Committee discussed the findings of the review, which highlighted the strengths of these AMS publications.

For AMS electronic journals ([*Conformal Geometry and Dynamics*](#) and [*Representation Theory*](#)), it was noted that the “most important aspect of the review is to guarantee that the journals are publishing excellent papers that contribute to their areas. The simple answer is that this seems to be the case for both journals and there is no need to make any significant changes”. Similarly, regarding journals distributed by the AMS, the subcommittee found that “all seem to publish high quality papers by international contributors. All are highly respected and serve an important need.”

The AMS translation journal [*Sugaku Expositions*](#) received a favorable review by the subcommittee, which noted that such “expositions would probably not be available outside of Japan if it were not for this journal. There is no question that we should continue this series.” Regarding the three other translation journals ([*St. Petersburg Mathematical Journal*](#), [*Transactions of the Moscow Mathematical Society*](#), and [*Theory of Probability and Mathematical Statistics*](#)) they summarized that a “quick look at these journals indicates that they contain solid research papers, but it is hard to give a more accurate assessment.”

Overall, the findings of the review were positive and no recommendations for changes were proposed. The report was accepted with thanks by the Committee.

Publishing the Joint Meetings Program in the [*Notices*](#)

The Society publishes the program of the annual Joint Mathematics Meetings (JMM) in the *Notices* but not the programs of the Sectional Meetings. At its March 2011 meeting, the Committee on Meetings and Conferences (CoMC) considered that since the JMM program is available online and participants are provided with the printed program 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 practice of publishing the JMM program in the January *Notices* be discontinued. The Committee discussed and approved CoMC’s recommendation, which will be included in the January 2012 Council for agenda for approval.

AMS eBook Program

Beth Huber, Associate Executive Director of Publishing, provided the Committee with an update on the AMS eBook program. AMS has partnered with Google eBooks to offer its books for sale in electronic format. Beginning in 2012, the AMS [*Contemporary Mathematics*](#) series will also be available in electronic format by yearly subscription. Additional proceedings series will follow, as well as complete backlist offerings. AMS will also be expanding the program to include direct sales of eBooks through which member discounts and other benefits to members can be offered.

The Evolution of Mathematics Journals

CPub first began discussing possible implications of open access models for mathematics journals at its 2008 meeting. A subcommittee of CPub then recommended the following policy statement on author pay models, which was adopted by Council in January 2009:

The American Mathematical Society strongly endorses the principle that a paper in the mathematical sciences should have the opportunity to be evaluated and possibly

published without regard to the financial circumstances of its authors. For this reason, the AMS does not charge authors any fees for publication in its journals.

With the passage of the America COMPETES legislation, it is very likely that mathematics journals will need to adjust to mandated open access in the near future. As a result, the Executive Director recommended that CPub consider alternative wording to the policy statement which would not exclude any author from publishing in an AMS journal. CPub discussed the recommendation and approved deleting the last sentence from the policy statement. The revised statement will be recommended to Council for approval.

Review of AMS Editorial Committee Charges

The Secretary and Publisher suggested various changes to some book and journal editorial committee charges to make them more uniform and better reflect current practices. CPub authorized the suggested changes to the committee charges, which will be forwarded to Council for approval.

Report on Journal Backlogs

The Committee receives a report on the AMS primary journal backlogs as a standing item on its annual meeting agenda. Associate Executive Director of Publishing Beth Huber reviewed the Backlog of Mathematics Research Journals report which is published yearly in *Notices* as well as AMS's internal backlog report with the Committee.

Report on Mathematical Reviews

Similar to the report on journal backlogs, CPub regularly receives information about Mathematical Reviews (MR) from its Executive Editor, who is invited to attend all meetings of the Committee on Publications. Graeme Fairweather provided the Committee with an update on MR activities since his previous report in 2010. A new version of [MathSciNet®](#) will be launched in 2012 and will incorporate several new features. These features will include improved support of mobile devices, email notification alerts, and author profile personalization. The next meeting of the Mathematical Reviews Editorial Committee (MREC) will take place in October 2011 in Ann Arbor.

2012 CPub Meeting

The next meeting of the AMS Committee on Publications will be held on Friday and Saturday, September 28-29, 2012, at the Chicago Hilton O'Hare in Chicago, IL. In accordance with CPub's review schedule, a subcommittee will be established to conduct a review of the AMS Book Program. The report of the subcommittee will be presented at the 2012 meeting.

Sergei Gelfand, *Publisher*
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