AMS Committee on Meetings and Conferences
Annual Report
2012

The Committee on Meetings and Conferences (CoMC) held its annual meeting on March 24, 2012, at the AMS Headquarters in Providence, RI. David Farmer, 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 Robert Daverman, Associate Secretaries Georgia Benkart and Steven Weintraub, and AMS staff members AED Ellen Maycock and Director of Meetings and Conferences Penny Pina answered questions posed by CoMC members.

Reports

- *Secretariat*. Robert Daverman reported on the March 23, 2012, Secretariat meeting.

  o **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.
    ▪ Tentative: meeting to be held in India in 2016.

  o **2012-2013 Einstein Lectures.** Gunther Uhlmann gave the 2012 Einstein Lecture on March 17, 2012, at George Washington University. The 2013 Einsterin Lecutre will be given by Jon Kleinberg at Washington University in St. Louis.

  o **2012-2013 Erdős Lectures.** The 2012 Erdös Memorial Lecture will be held during the Sectional Meeting at the University of Arizona, October 27-28, 2012. Ken Ono has accepted an invitation to give this lecture. The 2013 Lecutre will be held at Temple University on October 12, 2013. The lecturer will be Barry Mazur.

  o Matthew Miller has resigned as Associate Secretary of the Southeastern Section. A search committee has been formed, consisting of Ruth Charney, Carla Savage, Joe Silverman and Robert Daverman (chair).

- *CoMC Focus Group Breakfast*. David Farmer chaired the Focus Group at the 2012 JMM. The participants discussed a variety of topics related to the Joint Mathematics Meetings. Many made helpful comments about the new JMM Personal Scheduler and the Employment Center. All enjoyed Boston as a location and encouraged the Joint Meetings Committee to consider Boston again for the JMM.

- *Boston Questionnaire*. The responses from the Boston 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 2400 participants responded to the survey.

- *Review of the Joint International Meetings*. Paul Muhly and Steven Weintraub (chair) formed the subcommittee that carried out this review. The subcommittee gathered information from the AMS Associate Secretaries, who are involved in planning these meetings.

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

  > *The AMS international meetings program is working very well, producing meetings of high quality that are a service to the mathematical community and a benefit to the AMS as an institution. In general, these meetings attracted wide participation from mathematicians from the host country, from North America, and from other countries as well. Mathematicians in the host countries were in general very enthusiastic and all participants greatly appreciated the opportunity provided by the meetings.*

  > *We recommend that the program continue along its current lines and with its current frequency, approximately one international meeting per year.*

  The subcommittee also recommended that the AMS-SMM special joint meetings be discontinued, and rolled into the regular schedule of Joint International Meetings. CoMC members discussed this recommendation carefully, and determined that nothing should be decided on this topic until after the first meeting of the Mathematical Congress of the Americas, to be held in August 2013. CoMC will consider this again at its meeting of 2014.

  CoMC voted to accept the report of the subcommittee.

- *Report from the Subcommittee on Guidelines for Exposition*

  At its March 2011 meeting, CoMC created a subcommittee on Guidelines for Exposition. Members of this subcommittee were Estelle Basor, Laura De Carli (co-chair), Benson Farb (co-chair), David Farmer and Ellen Maycock. This

subcommittee was charged to write a set of guidelines for selecting invited plenary speakers for AMS meeting. Additionally, the subcommittee was charged with drafting guidelines that would help a speaker as he or she prepares a plenary lecture. CoMC discussed the two sets of guidelines, made some revisions and then approved the revised guidelines. The guidelines for choosing speakers will now be considered by the Council. The guidelines for speakers are posted on the AMS web site. Both sets of guidelines are included at the end of this report.

Old business

- *AMS Activity Groups.* At the CoMC meeting of March 2010, a proposal for AMS Activity Groups was introduced by chair Loek Helminck. A subcommittee was charged with considering this possibility and writing a proposal for such a program, which was presented at the March 2011 meeting. There was considerable discussion about the proposal at that meeting. However, CoMC felt that there needed to be more consideration of alternatives to meetings and charged the subcommittee to review and revise the proposal. A revised proposal for Activity Groups was written by a new subcommittee, whose members were Bob Daverman, Laura De Carli, Benson Farb, David Farmer, Eric Friedlander, Bus Jaco, Ellen Maycock and Janet Talvacchia (chair) and presented at the CoMC meeting. The new proposal called for the creation of AMS Activity Groups that would be primarily electronic in nature. CoMC endorsed the revised proposal and has recommended it to the Committee on the Profession (CoProf).

- *Joint Prize Session at the Joint Mathematics Meetings*. At its January 2011 meeting, the Council approved the following recommendation from the Task Force on Prizes that was endorsed by the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees:

  The appropriate policy committees should undertake a review of the current prize ceremony at the Joint Meetings and include in their review that
  - i.   **some prizes be associated with talks (possibly at Sectional Meetings);**
  - ii. **the AMS hold a separate prize ceremony at the Joint Meetings; or**
  - iii. **some prizes be announced and awarded outside of meeting.**

  At the recommendation of CoMC, a joint CoMC-CoProf committee was formed, with Georgia Benkart and Don McClure as CoMC representatives and Jennifer Shultens and Abigail Thompson as CoProf representatives. CoMC endorsed the following principle proposed by Don McClure:

  To award only prizes and awards at the JMM that are highly selective and truly national in scope.

New business:

- ***Handicap accessible venues***. Associate Secretary Steven Weintraub proposed the following policy:

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

  CoMC approved the policy and recommended it to the Council.

Information items

- ***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. 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 will occur at the Joint Mathematics Meetings in San Diego. (*adapted from the home page of MPE2013*)

- ***Mathematical Congress of the Americas.*** The first Mathematical Congress of the Americas (MCA) will be held at CIMAT (Centro de Investigación en Mathemáticas) in Guanajuato, Mexico on 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 the scientific integration of all mathematical communities in the continent. The AMS will support the MCA in the following ways:

  - Provide support for three plenary speakers
  - Provide infrastructure and support for abstracts
  - Submit a proposal to the NSF for travel grants to the MCA
  - Help advertise and promote the MCA 2013

2013 CoMC Meeting.

- The committee approved the suggested date of March 23, 2013 for its next meeting, to be held at Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport.
- For the 2013 meeting, the topic to be reviewed will be: National Meetings (overall program, including governance meetings).

Ellen Maycock
Associate Executive Director
November 28, 2012

The following was approved by CoMC at its March 24, 2012 meeting and has been recommended to the Council for consideration during its meeting of April 21, 2012.

How to choose plenary speakers

It should be remembered that giving a plenary AMS talk is a privilege, not a right.
Proving an excellent theorem is necessary but not sufficient for an invitation.
Each of the following criteria should be considered when choosing plenary speakers:

> *1. Committee members are encouraged to look outside their departments and their fields when they choose speakers.*
>
> *2. Each speaker should have made a recent notable contribution to mathematics.*
>
> *3. The committee should have evidence that the proposed speaker is a good (preferably excellent) expositor.*
>
> *4. Speakers should have the ability to explain their areas and their contributions to a general audience. For example, a talk on the details of a hard technical advance is not appropriate for a plenary AMS talk.*
>
> *5. The list of all plenary speakers should represent the full diversity of mathematics, in terms of fields, career stages, and membership in underrepresented groups.*

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The following was approved by CoMC at its March 24, 2012 meeting and is now posted on the AMS web site:

Guidelines for the preparation of a good AMS invited address.

Being an invited speaker at an AMS meeting is a privilege and a responsibility.
The charge to invited speakers is to describe recent significant advances in their field to a national audience. Their talks are meant to inspire graduate students and young researchers, and should be accessible to a general mathematical community.
Accordingly, AMS invited addresses require more care and attention than invited lectures for a smaller or more specialized audience.

Basic Guidelines:

1) Make your talk as self-contained as possible.

For a 50-minute talk, a good rule of thumb is: 20 minutes for a basic introduction, notation and preliminaries; 15 minutes for stating your results and for examples and counterexamples, and 15 minutes for extra details or for a sketch of proof.

2) Include at least one example.

3) Prepare clear and legible slides using large fonts.

Your slides should be readable from the back rows of a large auditorium. 35 words per page should be the absolute maximum. If your material is hand-written, write large, clear and legible formulas.

4) Practice your talk for time.

AMS meetings are highly structured, and no talk can take longer than the allotted time.

5) Speak clearly and slowly.

6) Give people time to read each slide.

Every part of your slide should stay visible for at least one minute. Refrain from distracting gimmicks such as twirling page transitions and excessive clicking to reveal or hide parts of a slide.

Additional helpful hints:

1) Be sure to check that the appropriate media are available for your talk.

2) Know the exact phrasing of your opening sentence.

3) It is better to outline or sketch your talk in words facing the audience, and not use a non-informative outline slide.

4) Have a clear idea of the transitions between different parts of your talk.

At various points throughout the talk give a brief summary of what has already been said and explain how the next part fits into the overall picture.

5) Consider using explanatory pictures.

6) Remember to address the silent questions: Why are you doing what you are doing? What are the long-term and short-term goals of this research topic? Of your project? Why is this interesting?

6) It is often helpful to have an "extra section" if there is enough time to add material and an "optional take out" section if one is running late.