For Your Information

AMS Participates in Faculty Preparation Program

The AMS, together with the Mathematical Association of America (MAA), is participating in a national project designed to help academic departments improve the ways in which they prepare graduate students for future positions in higher education. With a recent grant from the National Science Foundation, a companion project has been launched that includes four mathematics departments selected by a joint committee of the AMS and the MAA.

The national project, entitled Preparing Future Faculty (PFF), was created in 1993 as a collaboration between the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), with support from the Pew Charitable Trusts. The PFF philosophy holds that doctoral students aspiring to become faculty members must be prepared not only to conduct research but also to teach and render service in institutions that are different from the ones at which they received their doctoral degrees. PFF fosters partnerships between doctoral departments and departments in other institutions so that graduate students can learn first-hand about faculty life in various academic settings. The goal is to ensure that future faculty are well prepared to take on the full range of responsibilities in teaching, research, and service in a variety of academic institutions with varying missions and diverse student bodies.

Examples of PFF activities include pairing graduate students with mentors in departments in two- or four-year colleges; providing training for faculty in how to mentor students in areas beyond research; holding discussions with doctoral alumni about how their careers do or do not connect with what they learned in their graduate programs; and having graduate students attend faculty, committee, or departmental meetings and discuss their observations. PFF findings have been presented at scores of professional meetings, and a good deal of written material has been produced. The main achievement, however, is the development of a national network of leaders in academia dedicated to the PFF philosophy.

PFF began with five doctoral institutions that received substantial grants to create PFF programs and twelve other doctoral institutions that received smaller start-up grants. A total of about seventy other institutions formed "clusters" led by these seventeen doctoral institutions. They worked together to develop programs tailored to the characteristics of the particular institutions in the clusters and to the needs of their students. The second phase of PFF, which started in the spring of 1997, is intended to move from a set of demonstration projects toward new national models for graduate education. Chosen to receive funding to carry out the second phase were ten of the original participating doctoral institutions and five new ones that already had activities consonant with PFF goals.

In late 1998 the National Science Foundation (NSF) granted the AAC&U and CGS $1.3 million to launch a related project called Shaping the Preparation of Future Science and Mathematics Faculty. The new project seeks to extend PFF by specifically addressing doctoral programs in mathematics and the sciences. It too is coordinated by AAC&U and CGS, with disciplinary representation provided by six professional organizations; representing mathematics are the AMS and the MAA. For each discipline the representatives selected four doctoral departments to receive grants to develop programs based on the PFF philosophy. The mathematics departments receiving grants are at the State University of New York at Binghamton, Arizona State University, the University of Washington, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Each department is receiving a $10,000 grant each year for two years.

In preparation for this project the AMS and the MAA collaborated to produce the part of the NSF proposal pertaining to mathematics. The two organizations also formed a joint committee, chaired by Thomas Rishel of Cornell University, to select the mathematics departments to receive funding. Rishel now chairs the oversight committee for the mathematics part of the project. Samuel M. Rankin III,

director of the AMS Washington office, has also been involved in the project and has served as the main contact with AAC&U and CGS in Washington. The AMS and the MAA will disseminate information about the project as it progresses.

For further information on PFF consult the Web site www.preparing-faculty.org/, or contact Samuel M. Rankin III, American Mathematical Society, 1527-18th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036; telephone 202-588-1100; e-mail: smr@math.ams.org.

—*Allyn Jackson*

14th Annual BMS Department Chairs' Colloquium

The Board on Mathematical Sciences (BMS) of the National Research Council (NRC) will hold its 1999 colloquium for chairs of college and university mathematics and statistics departments on Friday and Saturday, November 12 and 13. The colloquium will be held at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC. As in past years, this meeting provides an opportunity for department chairs to share experiences and ideas for addressing stresses that affect many departments. A special attempt is being made this year to appeal to chairs from smaller schools, both in designing the colloquium program and in the registration drive.

As has been the case for several years, the first half day of the meeting is designed for chairs who are relatively new to their positions, and the remainder of the meeting includes a mix of plenary and breakout sessions aimed at addressing a range of topics such as: the chair's role in individual faculty development, the study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology of the status of women faculty members, issues for small colleges, appropriate level of computing technology and training for statistics students, recent thinking on developmental math courses, means of developing collaboration and cooperation within institutions, and mathematics education and educating mathematicians.

A half day of the colloquium will explore the diverse forms of distance education and the issues that distance education presents for academic departments in the mathematical sciences. Chairpersons who attend will also have an opportunity to learn about federal funding initiatives and policy changes that affect their departments.

Brochures with registration forms were mailed in August to each four-year U.S. mathematics and statistics department. The agenda is also available online at www.nas.edu/bms/. The registration fee for the colloquium is $175. For further information contact: Board on Mathematical Sciences, National Research Council, Room NAS 340, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20418-0001; telephone 202-334-2421; e-mail: bms@nas.edu.

—*From a BMS announcement*

Weidman Appointed BMS Director

Scott T. Weidman has been appointed director of the Board on Mathematical Sciences (BMS) of the National Research Council (NRC). He succeeds John Tucker, who left the BMS in 1998.

Weidman was on the staff of the BMS from 1989 through 1992 and then moved to the NRC's Board on Chemical Sciences and Technology from 1993 to 1995. In 1995, he became the first director of the NRC's Technical Assessment Board for the Army Research Laboratory; the board convenes and oversees external peer reviews of the Army's basic research and development laboratory. Weidman continues as director of this board, and the position has evolved into a half-time assignment. He holds this position simultaneously with the BMS directorship, which is now also half-time.

Prior to joining the NRC in 1989, Weidman spent four years performing scientific computing research in industry. He received a Ph.D. in applied mathematics from the University of Virginia in 1985.

—*Allyn Jackson*

Correction to AMS Election Material

The photograph of Editorial Boards Committee candidate Palle E. T. Jorgensen was erroneously placed with the biographical information for Donald St. P. Richards on page 945 of the September *Notices*. The error has been corrected for the official ballot and in the the *Notices* on the Web.

About the Cover

Washington, DC, is the site for the Joint Mathematics Meetings in January 2000. This photo shows one of the buildings of the Smithsonian Institution, the red sandstone "castle" that stands on the Mall in Washington. The Smithsonian Institution is the world's largest museum complex, with collections in every area of human interest, including mathematics (see "Mathematical Treasures of the Smithsonian Institution," *Notices*, May 1999). Plans are under way for special events showcasing mathematical items from Smithsonian collections, to be held in conjunction with the Joint Meetings. When available, further details about these events will be published in a future issue of the *Notices* and will appear on the AMS Meetings and Conferences Web site, www.ams.org/meetings/.

—*Allyn Jackson*

Photograph © 1994, the Smithsonian Institution. Used with permission of the Smithsonian Institution.