

2011 Minutes of the Business Meeting of the SIAM Activity Group on Dynamical Systems

Snowbird, UT. 5/23/2011.

The business meeting was chaired by Alan Champneys, SIAG Chair. Alan began by requesting attendees to make suggestions for future candidates for officers to the Nominating Committee. Alan then reviewed membership data which showed a healthy and growing membership in the activity group. This, according to Champneys, demonstrated the vibrancy of the discipline.

John Dawes, a co chair of the organizing committee (OC) for the 2011 Conference on Dynamical Systems, was asked to make a presentation on his observations on the state of the conference. Dawes began by noting that the current conference had 811 scheduled talks/posters, and had thus far 822 registered participants. The growth in presenters posed a challenge for the OC, especially given the limited space in the Snowbird facilities. The OC made several changes:

- Minisymposium talks were reduced to 20 + 5 minutes (20 for the talk, 5 for switching speakers);
- There were only 9 invited presentations and these were reduced in length to 45 + 5 minutes.
- The conference concluded at 12:00 on Thursday because of poor attendance at talks in the last afternoon at the previous meeting.

Dawes introduced several options, which were included in the bags of all attendees. Because these were distributed in advance of the business meeting, each was not covered in detail. The basic idea of one of the options was to reverse the trend towards minisymposia as the main means of presenting by reviewing minisymposia and rejecting some (proposers would be encouraged to give contributed talks or present posters instead). One other option that Dawes (and Champneys mentioned) was the possibility of leaving Snowbird for a new venue in the future (after current contracts are completed). Dawes and Champney then opened up for discussions from the floor.

There was a lively discussion on several points. One speaker noted that the American Meteorological Society has a uniform time of 15 minutes for all talks. Another suggested that low attendance at contributed sessions might indicated that we should move these towards posters; we could add a second poster sessions in order to accommodate more posters. Another speaker noted that minisymposia have tended to become very focused and are often targeted to a few specialists in the field; the APS makes all talks contributed, and organizes them into coherent sessions. Several people, including Champneys, suggested that themed minisymposia (themes declared by the OC), where researchers can contribute talks, might be a way to go in the future; this might require procedural changes to accommodate the organization of talks into sessions and to allow those not accepted to submit a contributed paper.

Champneys then gave his summary of the discussion. Minisymposia have grown to dominate the meeting because there is a perception that they offer greater prestige. It is the prestige factor that drives people to the ½-hour talk over a contributed paper or poster. The minisymposium has become

the default way of speaking at the conference. There seemed to be support for the idea of going to an earlier deadline and soliciting a few themed minisymposia; the rest of the speakers would give contributed talks.

Some disagreed with this assessment. Golubitsky worried about the unintended consequences of such changes. He worried that it might change the meeting and urged caution. In particular, he discouraged rigorous refereeing. He also suggested going back to the full five days.

Guckenheimer proposed a 2-stage process, where people could propose topics and speakers, followed by an amalgamation of sessions to cut down the overlap that we now see.

Jim suggested that we more clearly tell people when the conference ends; this, coupled with a strong program, might attract people to stay on the final day.

The next speaker was Jens Rademacher who talked about DSWeb and options for the future. He showed statistics that indicated that DSWeb was healthy and its usage growing. Registered users are currently around 2,300. The new editorial board for DSWeb is moving towards more opinion pieces, feedback, and commentary. Eric Shea-Brown then talked about tutorials, which he wishes to make more teaching-oriented with a searchable emporium. An attendee suggested more animations/demos for classroom use would be desirable. Links, such as to relevant Scholarpedia items, were also suggested. Jim suggested adding a place for posting items on and about recently deceased members of the community; this would be something where people can contribute. It was also suggested to have a blog-type space where community members can post commentary; a specific medium (media wiki versus Facebook) has not been decided. Further suggestions were solicited.

It was also suggested that we need to advertise DSWeb better.

Finally, Tasso Kaper gave a short presentation on the SIAM Journal on Dynamical Systems (SIADS). Started in 2001, SIADS expects to receive over 200 submissions this year. The quality is generally very high. The median time to first review is still below 3 months. And SIADS has been a pioneer in animations and still seeks articles that make good use of multimedia.