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President of the CMS

I want to begin this note by saying what a delight it was to attend the CMS Summer Meeting in St. John's at the beginning of June. This was the society's first in-person gathering in over two years, and despite a few hiccoughs (such as a shipment of conference materials being lost by a courier) the conference overall was a great success. It was especially heartwarming to see people engaging in discussion and collaboration, the kind that happens when people come together and are able to freely chat and share ideas. For many student attendees, it was their first chance to experience the joy and benefit of such networking and to have the opportunity of serendipitous interaction.

The Society held its Annual General Meeting during this conference, at which time I transitioned to being President, having spent the previous twelve months as President-Elect.^[1] In these two capacities I have been (and still am) gaining a much better awareness of the many facets of the society and its operations. Some of these I was only peripherally aware of, and as I suspect this is the case for others as well, I want to let you know about them.

One key observation that I will circle back to near the end is the profound impact that volunteers have within the CMS. At our headquarters in Ottawa² we have a small group of paid staff who fill some of the core roles needed to maintain the society's functionality. The remainder of what the CMS does is largely dependent on the contributions of people who generously volunteer their time and expertise. At the governance level, the society has a President, five Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer and 19 members on its Board of Directors, all of whom serve without compensation. Moreover, the society has several standing committees, which again are comprised of people who donate their time and knowledge. The [main committee list](#) is as follows

- Education
- Endowment Grants
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusiveness
- Finance

Shortly before the pandemic struck, we set out to find and purchase a suitable building in Ottawa for our new headquarters. Thinking that we could accomplish this fairly quickly, we left the space that we had previously been renting. As a result, our office staff have had to work remotely from their homes, not because of the pandemic, but because we have not had office space in which to employ them.^[2] We owe them a huge debt of gratitude for the work they have done under these difficult and prolonged circumstances.

- Fellows Selection
- International Affairs
- Invested Funds
- Mathematical Competitions
- Nominating
- Publications
- Reconciliation in Mathematics
- Research
- Student
- Women in Mathematics
- Distinguished Awards Selection

Additionally, two new CMS committees are in the process of being established (for Human Rights of Mathematicians, and International Prize Nominations). There are also several editorial boards for the society's various journals and other publications, although in this note I will focus on the society's committees.

Some committees (and their subcommittees) generally act behind the scenes and people may not be aware of their function or impact. For example, the Nominating Committee plays a key role in identifying and recommending people to serve on many of these committees. The Finance Committee and Invested Funds Committee play critical roles in maintaining the society's financial future by developing budgets, suggesting fees, and overseeing our financial assets. Frequently in the background are the Scientific Organizing Committees that are formed for each of the society's semi-annual conferences, and whose efforts lay important foundations for our conferences to succeed.

Among the society's standing committees, the Student Committee is unique in that it is primarily made up of students, whereas most other committees are predominantly populated by faculty members. The Student Committee is very active. Among other things, it oversees the poster competitions that are held at regular CMS meetings, along with hosting workshops and student socials at these meetings. The Student Committee also organizes the annual [Canadian Undergraduate Mathematics Conference](#), the next instance of which will take place in July at l'Université Laval in Québec.

The Education Committee does many things, as evidenced by its multitude of subcommittees. Among its more visible roles is that of overseeing the CMS Math Camps Program which supports summer camps that offer mathematical introductions and enrichments to students. Less obvious to the casual observer but nevertheless significant in terms of promoting the beauty and importance of mathematics, particularly to the upcoming generation, is that the committee provides grant funding in support of provincial competitions.

The Endowments Grant Committee supports a myriad of initiatives that contribute to the greater good of the Canadian mathematical community. Although the available funding is modest, the impact that it has is wide and diverse. Projects that have been supported include focussed professional development workshops, outreach activities, and other novel initiatives. There is an annual competition; [the current call for proposals](#) has a deadline of September 30th.

Conducting mathematical competitions and supporting students who represent Canada at international competitions are CMS activities that serve to promote mathematical awareness and appreciation, as well as giving students the opportunity to shine and do us all proud. These activities fall within the purview of the CMS Mathematical Competitions Committee. It runs four annual competitions: the Canada Jay Mathematical Competition, the Canadian Open Mathematics Challenge, the Canadian Junior Mathematical Olympiad and the Canadian Mathematical Olympiad. In 2021, over 8000 students participated in these competitions. The CJMC is relatively new (it was first held in 2020) and is open to students in grades K-8. Performance in the COMC is used to help select which students are invited to participate in the CMO as well as to select students who will represent Canada at the International Mathematical Olympiad and the European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad. The Mathematical Competitions Committee also conducts training camps to help prepare our teams for international competitions.

I don't want to tire readers with an exhaustive list of the activities of every committee. Instead, by highlighting a selection, my hope is that I have increased awareness of some of the things that our society does and supports. And I want to reiterate that these activities are primarily driven by volunteers and a collective joy of mathematics.

Our society simply could not function without these volunteer efforts, and I want to emphatically offer thanks and praise to everybody who contributes towards our common goals and vision. No matter how big or small the effort, we are all pulling together as a team and as a family.

If anybody is interested in reading more about our committees, editorial boards, and what they do, let me suggest taking a look at the comments given in some of the society's [online Annual Reports](#). Full statements of mandates and terms and reference for standing committees are also [available on our website](#). If you know of somebody (possibly even yourself) who might want to get involved in some way, then there is a [Volunteer Application form on our website](#) that can be filled out.

On a closing note, I also want to point out that many of the society's activities benefit greatly from financial sponsors, to whom I also express our collective gratitude. The CMS has been a registered Canadian charity since 1967 and as such we are able to provide income tax receipts for donations that we receive. We welcome contributions that help us to carry on our mission of promoting mathematics.

[1] Let me pause to express my sincere thanks to Javad Mashregi, who has now transitioned from being President to being Past-President. The COVID pandemic presented unprecedented challenges during Javad's presidency. Javad led us through this storm, during which the society remained active and accomplished many things. One particular legacy of Javad is the purchase of a new home for the society's headquarters in Ottawa (about which more news should be coming soon). Javad, you have inspired us, and I hope to live up to your example.

[2] The society has actually been operating for about two years now without a physical office location.