

Building a Stronger Mathematical Community Through Diverse Committee Membership



Appels de candidatures

Septembre 2023 (tome 55, no. 4)

Karen Meagher (University of Regina)

Chair, Women in Math Committee

The Women in Mathematics Committee is a great committee, organizing many worthwhile and engaging events. As Chair, I have enjoyed being a part of a vibrant community of women mathematicians in Canada and working closely with my fellow committee members. Unfortunately, as fun as the committee is, members come and go. When a member finishes their term, as Chair I'm left to search for a replacement.

Good news, I have a friend from graduate school who is awesome; I would love to have her on the committee with me. We took the same classes, had the same supervisor, earned the same degree, have the same number of kids, and have similar jobs now. Our skills and experiences are so very similar that we'll get along great! Of course, that means the only advantage to both of us being on the same committee is that we could pretend that we are the same person so that only one of us would have to attend the meetings!

To make the Women in Math committee even better, it needs diversity. I want young researchers who understand the challenge of searching for a job in today's market and seasoned researchers who are involved in the hiring. I want people from large research intense schools and people from intimate teaching schools. I want people with the lived experiences of racialized academics and academics who are members of gender minorities. I want people who know the realities of working in remote areas and those in urban areas. I want people who are facing the practicalities of raising children, as well as people working with disabilities.

In short, a committee works better if the people serving on it are different. The composition should be reflective of the community it is supporting. If I ask my friends to join the committee we'll enjoy each other's company, but we will not be able to fill the gaps in knowledge, experience and perspective necessary to support the achievement of the committee's objectives. Working in an atmosphere of diversity and inclusion fosters a stronger committee. I need to find a better way to fill vacancies!

Fortunately, the CMS Nominating Committee has identified this is an issue for CMS committees generally and has changed the process used to find committee members. As of September 2022, the CMS Nominating Committee uses a «Call of Interest» to fill vacancies. Every fall, the Committee announces upcoming vacancies in order to fill positions commencing the following January. This methodology aims to build a more transparent and open process aimed at encouraging diversity in CMS committee membership. It will also allow the CMS to be more proactive in anticipating and filling committee vacancies.

The Call of Interest, including a list of current and upcoming open positions, can be found in this issue. Please, check what positions are available and apply for any that are of interest to you!

Copyright 2022 © Canadian Mathematical Society. All rights reserved.