

ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN IN MATHEMATICS

Supplement

July 1973

In response to the report on the April meeting of the Council of the American Mathematical Society which appeared in the June newsletter, AMS Secretary Everett Pitcher has prepared the following statement of amplification, at the request of several people. It is being distributed to AWM members at AMS expense.

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I have learned that the statement on page 1 of the June issue that "the AMS has been unable to get its roster of women organized" may be misleading in that some of the difficulties were beyond their control. The Committee on Women in Mathematics recommended to the Council of January 24, 1973 that the Society maintain a roster of women with Ph.D.'s in mathematics. It is to contain, in summary form, complete curricula vitae. The Council approved the resolution. A questionnaire had already been constructed and was distributed to women who registered in Dallas and was placed on the hand-out table. A revised version of the questionnaire was published in the April issue of the NOTICES (p. 132-133). The response by women mathematicians to these two efforts was small, consisting of about 200 returned questionnaires. Accordingly, early in May a letter with another copy of the questionnaire was sent to about 750 additional women thought to be candidates to the roster. In the June issue of the NOTICES (p. 176) an effort was made to get addresses of about 60 women whose names were known but whose addresses were unknown. Late in June, returned questionnaires were still dribbling in to the Providence office at the rate of two or three per day. Although there may be nearly 1000 individuals who are candidates for the roster, only about 440 completed questionnaires have been returned. This suggests considerable apathy toward the project by the candidates find either the questionnaire or their inclusion in such a roster offensive. The closing date for inclusion is July 8 and the mailing date to initial subscribers to the roster is August 31.

I should note that the resolution about graduate programs at Traditionally Black Institutions, passed by the AMS Council in April, had a long history of revisions in the course of being considered by several bodies, including twice by the Council. The concepts involved in the resolution arose in the Panel on Special Problems of Minority Groups at a meeting in Atlanta on February 14-20, 1973. The Panel is a subdivision of CUPM, which in turn is an arm of the Mathematical Association of America. The idea was presented to the Executive Committee of the Society by Alex Rosenberg, Chairman of CUPM. The Executive Committee endorsed the idea and asked Rosenberg to formulate the resolution. He subsequently offered a version already considered by the Panel and already circulated to interested parties for comment. It was presented in parallel form to the National Association of Mathematicians, the MAA, and the AMS. The Council of the AMS amended the Rosenberg formulation, chiefly by eliminating a section, and passed it in January of 1973. A couple of days later the MAA considered the form adopted by the AMS and adopted it with minor changes acceptable to the AMS. Frank James, then President of NAM, produced a version almost identical with that passed by MAA and AMS a month later. The former version contained the following statement of principle: The Council of the American Mathematical Society is in favor of the establishment of quality graduate programs in the mathematical sciences at Traditionally Black Institutions leading to doctoral degrees. The latter omitted the word "quality". The officers of the AMS wished to have the three resolutions be exactly parallel, since they called for coordinated action in the charge to a joint committee. Saunders Mac Lane, President of the AMS, conferred with Frank James on the several changes that the latter had proposed. James agreed that the word "quality" belonged in the resolution, at which point the two of them appeared to be in complete agreement and the resolution was so offered, although already passed in January, to secure word for word agreement with other versions. The existence of objections to the resolution by James Donaldson of Howard University

was made known by Raymond Ayoub, Chairman of the AMS Committee on Opportunities in Mathematics for Disadvantaged Groups, so Donaldson was given the opportunity to voice the objections. The NAM position was not presented other than by their offering of the revised resolution. Several amendments in wording suggested by Donaldson were made but the proposal to remove the word "quality" was defeated.

In the June issue of this Newsletter I noted opposition by the Council to inclusion in a more general resolution of an endorsement of the use of maiden names. It has been suggested to me subsequently that the exclusion of the endorsement from the resolution did not represent opposition but rather represented the view that it is inappropriate for the Council to take a position on the matter at all.

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