

Report on the annual ICIAM Board meeting 12 April 2008

Ian H. Sloan*

This year's Board meeting of the International Council for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (ICIAM) was held in Vancouver, the host city for the 2011 ICIAM Congress. The Congress site is, in a word, magnificent, and the Congress organisation, even at this early stage, is impressive.



Credits: Tourism Vancouver/Al Harvey

The ICIAM Board consists of the representatives of the member societies. The full members of ICIAM are societies, like ANZIAM, that are principally devoted to applied and industrial mathematics. The associate members, which include the London Mathematical Society and the American Mathematical Society, have a significant but not primary involvement in the applications of mathematics. With the admission in Vancouver of the Mathematical Society of Japan as the latest associate member, the member societies now number 35.

A key responsibility of the Board is to decide on the site of future Congresses. At the Vancouver meeting pre-bids for the 2015 Congress were accepted from societies in China and Japan. The ICIAM Officers will carry out site visits to Beijing and Tokyo later this year, in preparation for a decision on the rival bids at the next Board meeting in one year's time.

*School of Mathematics and Statistics, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW 2052.
E-mail: I.Sloan@unsw.edu.au

One significant decision at the Board meeting was to make the ‘Olga Taussky-Todd Lecture’ a permanent feature of ICIAM Congresses. The first such lecture, at the Zurich Congress in 2007, was organised as a one-off experiment by the Congress Director (Rolf Jeltsch) in cooperation with the Association for Women in Mathematics (AWM) and European Women in Mathematics (EWM). The latter organisations (both of which were represented at the Board meeting) consider that handing responsibility for the lecture to ICIAM is the best way of ensuring that it becomes a permanent feature, and becomes recognised as a great honour for the woman mathematician chosen to deliver the lecture at each Congress. Unlike the ICIAM invited lectures, the Olga Tauskky-Todd lecture will be a plenary lecture, delivered in the evening with no competing events. (Olga Taussky-Todd was a very distinguished applied mathematician, with a special interest in matrix theory; see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olga.Taussky-Todd>.)

Another important decision was the in-principle one to raise the cash value of all five ICIAM Prizes to US\$5000. That means that substantial additional financial support will be needed. At the present time the various prizes are supported by particular member societies, which each contribute US\$1000. For example, the Pioneer Prize is supported by (and was initiated by) the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM). Under ICIAM’s rules it is open to a society such as ANZIAM to join in support of one of the existing prizes (for example the Pioneer Prize), at the cost of \$1000 (US or Australian!) over the four-year period. Perhaps the ANZIAM Executive might consider this possibility.

The next Board meeting will be held in Oslo, during the Abel Prize week in May 2009. That meeting will be important as the next ICIAM President will be chosen then, as will the site of the 2015 Congress. Those with opinions on possible candidates for next President are urged to contact Rolf Jeltsch or Ian Sloan, on the grounds that these are the only ICIAM Officers who are not credible candidates for the Presidency in 2011.

The Vancouver meeting was the first Board meeting with Rolf Jeltsch, the new ICIAM President, in the Chair. The meeting was lively, interesting and effective.

Notes compiled by Ian Sloan in the absence of Neville de Mestre



Ian Sloan is a computational mathematician at the University of New South Wales with research interests in high dimensional integration, approximation theory, continuous complexity and the solution of operator equations. He has been Chair of ANZIAM and President of the Australian Mathematical Society, and is a former winner of the Society’s ANZIAM Medal and George Szekeres Medal. Between 2003 and 2007 he was President of the International Council of Industrial and Applied Mathematics (ICIAM).