

End of conference summary report: MAAIM

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Ambassadorship*

The conference “Modular Forms, Arithmetic, and Women in Mathematics” was held at Emory University November 1-3, 2019 on the second floor of the Mathematics and Science Center.

My co-organizers were Hannah Larson (Stanford University) and David Zureick-Brown (Emory University). The conference had Plenary speakers: Robert Lemke Oliver, Jeremy Rouse, Christelle Vincent, Bianca Viray, and Invited Speakers: Jackson Morrow, Padmavathi Srinivasan, Isabel Vogt, and McKenzie West. We had in-cooperation status with the Association for Women in Mathematics (AWM).

In total we had sixty one attendees. There were fourteen twenty-minute contributed talks that ran in parallel sessions. We provided shared room accommodations at the University Inn for thirty participants and accommodations for the Invited and Plenary speakers at the Emory Conference Center Hotel. We fully funded the travel of the Invited and Plenary speakers and provided full or partial travel funding to thirty four of the other conference participants.

This conference also had a community component: on November 2nd, we had a public lecture by two time International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM) speaker and Emory faculty member Raman Parimala with a reception and screening of the Committee for Women in Mathematics (CWM) film “Journeys of Women in Mathematics.” In addition to the conference participants who attended (sixty one), a total of thirty seven people registered for the public lecture, reception, and film screening.

Raman Parimala gave a fantastic public lecture entitled “Building numbers square by square” and we were lucky to have the Deputy Provost for Academic Affairs Dr. Christa Acampora to introduce Professor Parimala.

The public lecture was advertised not only to conference participants but to the Emory community, to undergraduates from local universities such as Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University, Kennesaw State University, Morehouse College, Agnes Scott College, Spelman College, and to students who attend Emory Math Circle.

After the public lecture, a charter shuttle took conference participants from the Mathematics and Science center to the Emory Conference Center Hotel for a banquet. The banquet had an open bar and a buffet with vegetarian options. Special plated meals were prepared for participants with other dietary restrictions such as our vegan participants.

To fund this, in addition to the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) Women and Mathematics (WAM) Charles and Lisa Simonyi Ambassadorship grant, we received a grant from the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and a grant from the Emory Conference Center Subvention Fund. In addition, we had generous external grant matches from the Emory Department of Mathematics and Laney Graduate School. In addition David Zureick-Brown contributed from his NSF career grant and I contributed from my professional development funds.

Selected quotes from our conference survey:

On the conference:

"I had numerous conversations with people between talks, at tea, at the banquet, etc. It really felt like a community-building conference"

"I was able to speak with two of my collaborators during the conference. I also reconnected with many "conference friends", it is always nice to catch up with them. This workshop certainly helped maintain and expand our support network. I was able to give a short talk and get constructive feedback on some recent work."

"The plenary speakers were excellent, and I thought their talks matched the audience well. I was also impressed with how the talks seemed to flow together nicely, whether that was planned or not."

"Overall I felt this was a very friendly conference. I met a lot of knew people, and was approached by a lot of faculty and graduate students over the weekend, many of whom I'm looking forward to speaking to again."

"It felt great to have so many women mathematicians at various levels in their career (students, postdocs, junior faculty, senior faculty) at a conference. We need more conferences like this one."

"I felt very welcome at MAAIM. In particular, the conference banquet was great, and I got to know several people who weren't from my institution just from talking at our table."

"The environment at MAAIM was highly welcoming and highly inclusive."

"The people present were enthusiastic about their subjects and friendly. Food was provided between small breaks, lunch options were convenient and dinner was great."

"Great conference! Great organization and amazing food!"

"Very productive and empowering!"

"One of the best organized conferences I've been to!"

On the public lecture/reception:

"It was a really fun public lecture, and it was great to get a tour of the history of quadratic forms from one of the experts in the field! The film was really uplifting too, and I feel it would be great if every conference had some such community building activity -- to remind us all, why we do math, and that it's important to lift us all up by supporting and motivating each other."

"It was amazing! We need more lectures of this type. The film was inspiring, gave me goosebumps."

"Parimala's talk was very good. Since it was a public lecture, I was not expecting much mathematical content, but I think her talk had good mix of history of quadratic forms and actual mathematics. Also the food at the reception was exceptional. In particular, I really enjoyed the mac n cheese."