

How to organize a JAMI program

Introductory remarks. The Japan American Mathematics Institute (JAMI) was founded in 1988 at Johns Hopkins University, in cooperation with the mathematical community of Japan and with the support of the JHU Office of the President. It was viewed as an annex to the Mathematics Department, whereby each year mathematicians from Japan in a designated field would agree to be in residence, with the official title of Visiting Scholar. They would organize one or more seminars and provide an expanded core for an international conference during the Spring Semester in the field of the JAMI program.

The model program was the one set up in Algebraic Analysis for the first year. There was one renowned senior Japanese mathematician (Japanese organizer of the program) in residence each semester (M. Kashiwara, T. Oshima), and three visitors for the whole academic year who were more junior. The junior members of JAMI were chosen in advance by the senior members. It was a dream program, of a level we could only hope to sustain.

The need for a more flexible structure began to emerge after the first few years. Most significantly, it had become difficult to find potential JAMI members, be it junior or senior, who could stay for long periods, even for three months. Thus, we were obliged to aim for a larger number of shorter-term visitors.

JAMI has now completed its 18th year. In March, 2006, JAMI was awarded the Seki Takakazu Prize by the Mathematical Society of Japan, which is given to those who made remarkable contributions to support and encourage the development of mathematics in Japan over a long period of time.

Though there has been some fluctuation in the nature of the annual programs, the basic structure of a properly run JAMI program consists of cooperation with a Japanese organizer, several Japanese mathematicians in residence for a period at JHU, and a conference in March.

Effecting a successful program. With the above giving the backdrop, we describe the various steps involved in organizing a JAMI program. Some of these are the responsibility of the principal Hopkins organizer (PHO), some the domain of the principal Japanese organizer (PJO), and some are shared. *It is important to remember that issues of timing and funding influence the list that follows.* They are, more or less in chronological order:

1. Selection of the organizers
2. The junior JAMI members
3. The funding of JAMI
4. Outside visitors to the JAMI program
5. Organizing the conference
6. The JAMI Seminar(s)
7. The role of the department staff

These seven items are treated below. Since we want to give a timetable in which the year is unambiguous, we assume that the JAMI program for a given academic year begins in October.

1. Selection of the organizers. The organizing of the JAMI program for an academic year begins with the selection of the PHO from the Hopkins senior faculty. This should happen in the Spring a year-and-a-half before the program is to take place. The PHO will be someone who has expressed interest in running a program in some field of mathematics.

The PHO must be capable of finding a PJO to cooperate in running the program together. Because of grant application deadlines in Japan, this should be finalized by June of that year. The Director will check up on the progress of selecting a PJO; if there is trouble in finding one, the PHO may have to be replaced.

If it is mutually agreeable, the PHO and PJO may ask additional mathematicians to join the organizing committee, possibly from universities other than JHU and outside Japan. The main role of the additional organizers has been to help organize the conference (#5 below), but there are other possible contributions (e.g., helping with the seminar, bringing to the program graduate students and post-docs).

2. The junior JAMI members. The selection of the junior JAMI members is the province of the PJO. The PJO agrees to bring the most promising young mathematicians in Japan, in the area of the program, who are willing to come to Hopkins for JAMI. Because the conference is in the Spring, there has been a tendency for the JAMI members to come likewise in the Spring. However, there is no reason to exclude the possibility of Fall Semester visitors.

In the recent past, the funding of the JAMI members' travel and stay at JHU has come principally from a grant from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science

(JSPS). Additional support can come from the income on the JAMI endowment (which is designated for this purpose) and the Department's JAMI Budget. We describe the different sources of funding in the next section.

The Department Chair can apply to the Dean's Office to grant the JAMI members the status of Visiting Scholar if they will be in residence for at least one month. This is largely a formality, but a CV is required.

3. The funding of JAMI. There are two staple sources of funding: the Department's JAMI budget and the interest on the JAMI endowment. (They provide resp. \$40,000 and about \$5000 each year). Additional funding, which is usually needed, must come from grants.

Applying for a grant from JSPS is the responsibility of the PJO. It seems to be due in August, more than one year before the program is to start. Thus far, JSPS shows a willingness to fund JAMI annually, giving 5 million Japanese yen (about \$40,000 to \$50,000, depending on the exchange rate). This money is to support the JAMI members' travel and stay at Hopkins.

National Science Foundation (NSF) money is used primarily to pay participant costs for the speakers at the conference, to support junior domestic mathematicians who wish to attend, and to support outside visitors to the program. Applying to the NSF is the responsibility of the PHO, whose job is to portray the program as a significant one in a credible manner.

Guidance on how to write a good grant proposal can be found in the Department archive of proposals from previous years. The PHO is urged to consult with the Director if there are problems in writing the grant proposal. The PHO should discuss the budget for the grant with Tina Stanger (Dept. Administrator) and/or the Director.

Throughout most of the history of JAMI, the grant proposal went to the International Division of the NSF. They funded the JAMI conference annually, providing about \$20,000 to \$30,000. However, there has been an announced and practiced change of priorities in the International Division. For this reason, we now recommend submitting a conference grant proposal to the Division of Mathematical Sciences (DMS) of the NSF; DMS awards grants of about \$17,000.

Though the NSF has become flexible concerning submission of proposals and does not give absolute deadlines, we recommend applying one-and-a-half years before the program starts. *After applying for the grant, the PHO must not presume that the grant will be funded, nor that if it is, it will be for the full amount requested.*

4. Outside visitors to the JAMI program. The JAMI program may be of sufficient interest to attract visitors from outside Japan to spend a month (say) or longer at Hopkins. If it is for at least one month, they would come as Visiting

Scholars in the Mathematics Department. As such, they could be supported by the Department's JAMI budget, or possibly the NSF grant (if awarded). The presence of outside visitors can enhance the scope of the program, to its great benefit.

5. Organizing the JAMI conference. Organizing a conference can be a bit trying, but the way that proceeds is fairly standard. The PHO and PJO share the responsibility of organizing the conference.

It has become established that the conference is to be held during the JHU Spring Break in March, so there would be no problem getting suitable, conveniently located rooms. However, if necessary one can place the conference while classes are in session. In order to line up speakers, in time to be announced to the public, it is wise to get started early, before the program begins. A form letter for inviting people to speak can be provided. A guideline for the number of speakers at the conference is 25–35. It is our experience that about 80% of the invited speakers will accept the invitation to speak. A spreadsheet is available to help you determine outlays and avoid overspending the budget.

A list of speakers is should be posted as soon as it is available. A schedule should be posted no later than two months before the conference, preferably sooner. Linda Buckner (Assistant to the JAMI Program) of the Department Office will assist you with that. Also, Linda is responsible for arranging hotel rooms for speakers and other participants. Posting the schedule allows people outside JHU to decide when and whether to come here to attend all or part of the conference. Don't be afraid to post a largely reliable schedule just because changes may occur later.

Recent NSF policy says that one should make reasonable accommodations to invite members of underrepresented groups: women and certain minorities. Moreover, graduate students and recent Ph.D.'s are to be given preference in giving support to conference attendees. This policy *must* be followed if an NSF grant is awarded.

6. The JAMI Seminar(s) is the primary responsibility—indeed, the only fixed duty—of the PJO. The seminar should meet weekly at a time agreeable to all interested parties. The JAMI members and outside visitors will comprise the main source of speakers.

7. Members of the Mathematics Department staff (i.e., the Department Office) are available to assist in the organization of the program and conduct of the conference. They will take care of local arrangements for visitors and conference participants, reservation of facilities, registration, organization of refreshments and receptions, and the conference dinner (if any).