

From the Conference Organizers of ICTM2

Mathematics is central to our world. Mathematical ideas are essential for developments in science and engineering. Contributions from mathematicians have revolutionized finance and biology over the past decades. A mathematically literate citizenry is essential to a country's vitality. The teaching of mathematics is therefore a cornerstone of a country's educational health.

Yet most countries today are concerned about the level of mathematics their students learn, and concerned that interest in mathematics is falling at a time when the need for technical skills is rising. Many countries are wrestling with shortages of teachers, curricula that do not reflect modern needs, and teaching practices that do not always work for their students. Fortunately, recently there have also been significant advances in understanding how students learn and a surge of interest in the teaching of mathematics.

Following the success of the *First International Conference on the Teaching of Mathematics* (Samos, Greece, July 1998), the *Second International Conference on the Teaching of Mathematics* (ICTM2), provides a remarkable opportunity to bring together faculty from around the world who are committed to introducing innovative teaching methods. Mathematicians have traditionally not talked to each other much about teaching, nor have they talked to mathematics educators. Certainly, international communication between mathematicians is often more about research results in mathematics than about teaching strategies. This conference attempts to foster a conversation to fill this gap.

ICTM2 received about 420 proposals for presentations from over 65 countries—over one third of the world's nations. Their topics span educational research, technology, innovative teaching methods, curricula innovations, the preparation of teachers, connections of mathematics with other disciplines, and distance learning. Papers from ten distinguished plenary speakers, representing several continents, are also included in the proceedings. We hope that the published papers will lead the reader to a better understanding of the issues facing instructors of mathematics around the globe and that this understanding will lead to a higher level of international cooperation in the effort to improve the teaching of mathematics.

In addition to the papers, abstracts of the accepted oral and poster presentations are included. Abstracts were reviewed by members of the program committee and authors of accepted abstracts given the opportunity to submit a full paper. The papers were also reviewed by the International Program Committee.

We would like to express our immense gratitude to each and every member of the organizing committee, for his or her time, dedication, and invaluable comments in the refereeing process. We are also deeply indebted to the conference sponsors for making such an international event possible in beautiful surroundings on the island of Crete.

Special thanks to the University of Crete for hosting the Conference and to John Wiley & Sons Inc. for publishing the Proceedings.

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