

## **A note on procedures from the ICMI Awards Committee for the Felix Klein and Hans Freudenthal Awards**

Dear Colleagues,

It is our pleasure to announce the 2017 Freudenthal and Klein medalists. While doing this, we would like to add some clarifications about the process that led to the decisions.

As you may know, the first call for nominations did not bring many results. In spite of this, the ICMI Awards Committee eschewed naming its own nominees. This abstention was necessitated by the need to avoid conflicts of interest (see the IMU regulations, explained below). Fortunately, following the second call, nominations started flowing. By the deadline, a considerable number of candidates for each of the two awards had been nominated. The committee was deeply impressed by the quality of both the scholarship submitted for its consideration and the nomination files, with the help of which the decisions were to be made. Clearly, a great deal of good will and serious effort have been invested by the proposers and seconders into preparing those documents. The committee wishes to thank all those who engaged in this work of love.

It must also be stressed that the Committee deemed all the nominees to be excellent and deserving, and as a result, it was clear that the process of selecting just one of them for each award was not going to be easy.

An additional difficulty that complicated the process even further was the need to avoid conflict of interest. While self-evident, this need is now officially stressed in the new IMU regulations. Once the nomination procedure was completed, all the members of ICMI Awards Committee were asked to declare any conflict of interests they felt they had with the candidates. Typically, conflicts arise in those cases in which a person is a family member, a close colleague or a collaborator of a nominee. Committee members who declared a conflict with a certain candidate were subsequently excluded from evaluating this person's file. It turned out that five out of six committee members saw themselves in a conflict of interest with at least one of the candidates! In the light of this, a separate sub-committee had to be created to evaluate each of the nominees. In this situation, making the final choice was a truly intricate process, one that required much inventive thinking, and not just about the candidates' scholarship, but also about the decision-making procedures. As a result, choosing the awardees was a long and agonizing process. While happy with our final decision, we are sorry that the medals could not be awarded in this round to other highly deserving candidates.

Anna Sfard, on behalf of the ICMI Awards Committee for the Felix Klein and Hans Freudenthal Awards