

Recognition of Continuing Professional Development for CCMs

A Certified Consulting Meteorologist, or CCM, is endorsed by the American Meteorological Society (AMS) as having the necessary knowledge, experience, and character to effectively serve as a meteorological advisor or consultant to business, industry, and the public. The program is a service to the general public, administered and directed by the AMS Commission on Professional Affairs through the Board of Certified Consulting Meteorologists (CCM Board). The success of the CCM as a public service program depends on perception: it must be regarded as valuable and meaningful both by the professionals, agencies, and businesses seeking quality, up-to-date scientific guidance, and by the meteorologists themselves.

Since its inception in 1956, the CCM program has evolved into the premier meteorological and environmental certification program in the country because of the quality of the CCMs themselves. They have remained the most diligent professional meteorologists, whether they work in the private sector, academia, or in government service. All CCMs know this, since they recognized the benefits of enduring the rigorous steps required to attain certification. The CCM designation is an acknowledgment by both their peers and their professional organization of the certification holders' proven meteorological excellence.

The standards for the CCM are lofty, and will remain so, but if challenged by members of the public, the Society would have difficulty demonstrating objectively that any given CCM had remained suitably current in the field for perhaps several decades beyond his or her certification date. Numerous changes in the program have led to a situation in which CCMs use subjective and unverifiable means to attest to being active, and to staying atop their rapidly changing field.

Now, the CCM program is being elevated further—by undergoing changes that should enhance it as a public service, and thus enhance the value of certification. The changes include a multifaceted advocacy and marketing plan for the CCM community, as well as a mandatory continuing professional development component. This concerted effort to enhance the stature of the CCM before the general public may motivate more AMS members to consider pursuing certification.

THE EVOLVING CCM PROGRAM. The AMS Constitution states that “all members who are professionally active should endeavor to keep abreast of relevant scientific and professional developments; they should continuously strive to improve their professional abilities.” Thus, CCMs have always needed to adhere to an even higher standard of continuing professional development in order to maintain the value of the certification above and beyond professional membership in the AMS. Indeed, one of the purposes of the CCM program is “to provide incentive for the continued professional growth of the meteorologist after completion of his or her academic training.” This incentive was strong in the original plan for the program, which essentially required recertification every five years if the CCM did not maintain professional activity for two out of five years.

This proved impractical, however. Over the years, the language regarding this recertification, as expressed in each year's August *Bulletin*, gradually became more ambiguous. The incentive was weakened. For instance, in 1966, CCMs were required to be active in consulting meteorology for three of the five years in the certification period. If not,

it will be necessary for the applicant to satisfy the general requirements established for certification. . .

. . . If application for renewal is not received prior to the expiration date, complete application for certification must again be made.

By 1978, the *Bulletin* stated:

Certification is for a period of five years. In the application for renewal, the designee shall indicate his activity in meteorological consulting during the preceding five years, and the names and addresses of two persons who can verify it. If the applicant has been inactive for three or more years, it may be necessary for him to satisfy the general requirements for certification. . . . If application for renewal is not received prior to the expiration date complete application for certification may be necessary.

Thus the requirement of recertification for inactive CCMs had shifted from “must” to “may be,” while the verification required for renewal was beefed up to include specific documentation and work references. Then the statement about the program softened again, dropping the documentation. The requirement devolved into a stipulation that, each year, as part of their signed AMS renewal form, CCMs check a box next to the statement, “I certify that I have been actively engaged in the atmospheric, hydrospheric, or related sciences for at least 3 of the last 5 years.” Until now, the meaning of this statement—of “inactive” and “actively”—has been open to interpretation, yet the Board has been charged with constantly striving “to ensure the objectivity and fairness of the procedures.” (*Bulletin*, 82, p. 1689). Clearly the program had always intended to distinguish between active and inactive members.

Just as clearly, that distinction has gotten more complicated and, as a result, more significant. The evolving meteorological world has moved the CCM program beyond private consulting in the strict sense that applied in 1957. Today’s CCM applicants come from government and academia, in addition to private business. They do not all focus on consulting, yet seek the benefits of a rigorous certification. The potential reasons for holding a CCM designation are broader than ever—probably broader than is yet realized. For the program to grow commensurately, ideas about what constitutes “active” and “professional growth” need to be flexible and diverse enough to accommodate this broadening community, yet be fair, open, and lofty—with incentives. The need to fulfill the long-stated goals of the CCM program became intertwined with the need to help it realize its expanding potential.

For years, CCMs have discussed ways of implementing the program’s original intentions to meet the needs of this widening and strengthening community for a comprehensive, yet strong and meaningful, certification program. These discussions—over at least a decade of CCM gatherings at AMS annual meetings, for instance—led back to the idea of improving the mandatory program recognizing ongoing professional development. It was important that all CCMs could meet a standard of “activity” and continuing professional development with a reasonable level of effort. It was also important to find an efficient and fair mechanism for establishing the standard and tracking and maintaining those efforts.

RENEWED FOCUS ON CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. The search for these improvements admittedly was circuitous, as the CCM program temporarily became entwined with efforts to revamp other AMS certification programs. Intense discussions among CCMs about their certification program were renewed in the late 1990s, in part due to a proposal to create a certification program for operational meteorologists. During this same period, the AMS Board on Broadcast Meteorology was also receiving strong recommendations from the AMS Broadcast Seal of Approval holders to implement some form of mandatory formal continuing professional development. Ultimately, the CCM program was disentangled from these other efforts. However, in this period, mechanisms emerged for a fair, efficient continued professional development program, and interest in broadening the CCM community continued. A CCM Ad Hoc Committee discussed a proposal to rename the CCM certification as a means to increase the number of members interested in achieving certification. As a part of its report, this team raised the notion that a formal continuing professional development program should be considered as a means to strengthen the CCM certification, and thus entice more AMS members to consider pursuing it.

An Ad Hoc Committee on Recertification solicited a response at this time, publishing an article in the January 2000 *Bulletin* (page 134) as well as sending out 1200 letters with copies of the article to each Broadcast Sealholder and CCM in the AMS community. The nearly 200 written replies were reviewed in detail; they favored creation or strengthening of recertification for these AMS programs by a 2-1 margin. The committee did not stipulate that this majority response required a recertification program per se, however. It is worth quoting from their findings from May 2000, which stressed the proactive possibilities of improving the professional development component of AMS certification programs:

[O]ur committee feels as though membership, in majority numbers, would like to see some type of structured recertification guidelines issued. Whether or not it would be actual “recertification” is another thing. In the course of our discussions, the committee has also agreed with the response from our members that this might be best achieved through some type of structured (and documented) continued education/professional development effort. Our com-

mittee feels justified in presenting these findings based on the following points made by our members:

(1) The rapid changes that we've seen (and will likely continue to see) . . . make it very important that our members be "up to date" on the latest research and technology. . . .

(2) The AMS certification programs should be more valuable as well as more visibly promoted. After all, it is our "collective duty" to enhance, improve, increase public science awareness, scientific thinking and applications. . . . Continuing education and professional development is mentioned, by our members, as one way to achieve this.

(3) The AMS has a growing continuing education program (i.e., short courses). By strengthening our certification programs as it regards professional development requirements, we are validating those programs, noting their importance and, at the same time, increasing the attendance for those courses and programs.

(4) Compared with other professional societies, when considering continuing education/professional development requirements, our certification programs are seen as being "weak" by some members. Member response indicates the need for strengthening of the programs to make us more "in line" with other voluntary professional societies.

Based on this member feedback, the committee, composed of representatives from all areas within the Commission on Professional Affairs (including CCMs), recommended that mandatory formal professional development be implemented for both the CCM and Broadcast Seal programs as soon as practical. The recommendation to implement formal continued professional development was brought to the AMS Council by the Commissioner on Professional Affairs in 2001. The original proposal required both CCM and Broadcast Seal holders to successfully complete a periodic test in order to maintain active certification status. However, after considerable discussion, the Council felt that due to the wide range of CCM activities, an effective test would be difficult to develop.

During this discussion, the concept of having individual CCMs maintain a "portfolio" documenting their professional activities emerged as a possible method. This resulted in the Council directing the CCM Board to prepare a proposal for a Continuing Professional Development Program for CCMs based

on personal professional portfolios. The board's proposal was approved by the Council in September 2002 and presented to the CCM community at the CCM Breakfast held during the February 2003 AMS Annual Meeting in Long Beach, California. Along with approving the CCM Continuing Professional Development proposal, the AMS Council directed the CCM Board to "engage the CCM Community to develop a draft Implementation Plan for presentation to the Council in September 2003." Due to the comments received, the final plan is substantially and materially different from that originally proposed, and to which there was justifiably strong resistance. Many facets of the initial formulation have been changed. Thus it is important for each CCM to review this document carefully.

To develop the implementation plan, an Ad Hoc Committee of the CCM Board was assembled from volunteers. The members were

- Joe Schaefer, CCM #294, chair
- Paul Fransioli, CCM #291
- Ronald Keener, CCM #553
- Walt Lyons, CCM #163
- Stan Marsh, CCM #485
- Matt Parker, CCM #570
- Robert Serafin, AMS Past President
- Tim Spangler, CCM #228
- John Toohey-Morales, CCM #582

IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE CCM COMMUNITY. The CCM Board considered the Council's directive an opportunity to bring the CCM community together through a continuing dialogue, and thus all activities of the Ad Hoc Committee were conducted during open discussions. Every opportunity to involve the CCM community in the workings of the Ad Hoc Committee was taken. To foster communication between the AMS, the Ad Hoc Committee, and the CCM community, regular mail, Internet postings and data collection, and electronic mail lists were used. To aid the dissemination of information to the CCM community, the AMS established a dedicated CCM Web site at www.ametsoc.org/amscert/ccmprofdev/index.html. In addition, an alias e-mail address was established to allow CCMs to communicate with each other, and another e-mail address was established to allow CCMs to communicate directly with the Ad Hoc Committee.

The response of the CCM Community to these communication tools far exceeded expectations, as CCMs expressed their feelings and beliefs about the

developing program. Originally, the Ad Hoc Committee had intended to respond to all individual comments. Because of the overwhelming volume of communications received, the Ad Hoc Committee volunteers and AMS staff could not reply to each and every message, though some responses did, for instance, get posted on the CCM Web site. Dozens of comments—often contradicting one another—about what constituted continuing development, about marketing strategy, and about the merits and timing of changes to the program, were compiled on the Web site for public viewing. Those providing comments can be assured that Ad Hoc Committee members carefully considered all input in the development of the implementation plan.

The Ad Hoc Committee developed several drafts of the implementation plan over a period of six months. Each draft was posted on the AMS CCM Web site, and comments from the CCM community were solicited. The numerous e-mails, letters, and telephone calls from the CCM community that followed each posting were integral to the plan's development. While the CCM Board's stated goal of obtaining unanimity among the CCM community on the contents of the implementation plan was not attained, the plan accepted by the AMS Council came as close to achieving consensus as possible.

The final implementation plan was presented to the CCM community at the January 2004 CCM Breakfast held during the AMS Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington. This plan incorporates the communications components already demonstrated during the work of the Ad Hoc committee, plus the new continuing professional development portfolio, and an advocacy/marketing strategy for the CCM community.

THE PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO. The foundation of the Continuing Professional Development program is the creation and maintenance of an electronic professional portfolio (with hard-copy option available) by each individual CCM. This portfolio will track an individual CCM's continuing professional development activity. A list of the many activities that can be applied toward the CCM professional development requirements is online at www.ametsoc.org/amscert/ccmtable1.pdf. Each activity is given a numerical point value; the requirement for maintaining active CCM status is simply accumulating a point total of 28 over a five-year period.

How might these 28 points be earned? The program assigns points to activities routine to the nor-

mal continuing development of a CCM. For instance, a CCM would earn 10 points simply by being a continually employed consulting meteorologist. That leaves another 18 points which, due to the requests of many CCMs, may be obtained by managing contracts and projects (for instance, 1 point for each trial served as an expert witness; 2 points for each project served as lead forecaster). Even this option need not be utilized if the CCM's other professional activities allow the accumulation of sufficient points. For instance, an additional 19 points could be earned by attending one multiday conference each year (3 points each) and presenting just two posters (2 points each) during that five-year period. Or, a continually employed CCM could, during those five years, attend just two conferences (6 points), present two papers with preprints (6 points), take a college-level course (5 points), and subscribe to a journal for two years (1 point).

There are a myriad of routine ways to accrue the points. The list of activities and their point values is a living document. It was created largely from the suggestions of CCMs, and with their continued input it will be modified as meteorology, technology, or society changes the world of the operational meteorologist. Any active CCM can propose an activity to the CCM Board for approval. The CCM Board will consider all suggestions. The diversity of activities on the list makes clear that meteorologists from a wide range of sectors and specialties are accommodated. The fairness is inherent in the point system—it is now clear and open what the CCM Board considers an "active" CCM. Furthermore, the activities encouraged by the program are far broader now, potentially embracing a wider community. Of course, none of this guarantees that a CCM is actually accruing skill, but we think it is likely; furthermore, objective guidelines are established without resort to a time-consuming, periodic retesting procedure. These advantages also have been recognized by the new Certified Broadcast Meteorologist program, which will be using an electronic portfolio to define and track professional development.

A very important point: *No disclosure of any proprietary information will be required in either creating the portfolio or documenting its contents.* When fully implemented by the end of 2004, the AMS will operate an Internet tool for CCMs to use in creating and maintaining their portfolio. It will incorporate all currently accepted activities for demonstrating continuing professional development, and will reside on

the AMS Web site. This software system is undergoing testing at this time. All information in the portfolio will be confidential, open only to select AMS staff and the Chair of the CCM Board (or his/her designee).

CCMs who meet the required numerical point total (summed over a five-year period) will be designated as “active,” while CCMs not meeting the point total will be designated as “inactive.” A new CCM status category, “emeritus,” has also been created. This category may be requested by any active CCM who has at least 25 years of professional experience who has maintained active CCM status for at least the past 10 years. The emeritus category recognizes the professional accomplishments of semiretired CCMs. An emeritus or inactive CCM need only complete their portfolio to revert back to active status.

This continuing professional development program is simply documentation of what all CCMs already do as a matter of course in their professional lives. The only exposure to an individual CCM is a change in their CCM status from active to inactive or emeritus, if the documentation of their continuing professional development activities is not updated once every five years.

To bolster the portfolio system with incentive, a random sample of no less than 5% of CCMs each year will be asked to provide further details on the activities in their portfolios. To meet this requirement, CCMs will be asked to provide routine documentation—copies of receipts, their own business cards and company directories, etc. Again, to protect true situations of confidentiality, the board will certainly accommodate the excision of sensitive information where necessary. In short, the record-keeping required by the program is routine compared to the documentation CCMs maintain for business and other purposes. Similarly, due to the automation of the portfolios and the small number of audits required, the cost to AMS and its members should be very small—much smaller than the cost of recertification exams. It is anticipated that a small increase in the volunteer membership of the BCCM should accommodate the program.

ADVOCACY/MARKETING STRATEGY. The target market for CCMs includes, among others, their employers and a wide variety of potential clients, including attorneys. Unfortunately, these people are generally not familiar with the process of obtaining a CCM, or the extensive knowledge, experience, and character that one must possess to earn one. There-

fore, the CCM community must take it upon themselves to inform their target market and their clients—both internal and external—about the meaning of a CCM designation. The same stature granted to certifications in other professions, such as teaching and engineering, needs to be extended to the CCM. To accomplish this, a CCM advocacy/marketing strategy was developed by the Ad Hoc Committee.

The goal of this strategy is to transition the CCM program from a “well-kept secret” into a “well-known and respected resource.” To do this, advocacy activities will be directed by a CCM advocacy/marketing subcommittee of the CCM Board whose membership will be comprised of four CCMs and a member of the AMS staff. It will be chaired by the CCM Board chair. This subcommittee will work in conjunction with the National Council of Industrial Meteorologists (NCIM) and other interested organizations. The preliminary list of potential advocacy activities (viewable at www.ametsoc.org/amscert/ccmtable1.pdf) includes

- maintaining and expanding the communication avenues discussed above;
- staffing information booths at insurance, legal, environmental, and related venues;
- forming a speaker’s bureau for CCMs;
- publishing articles on the CCM program in *BAMS*;
- preparing articles on the CCM program for law, environmental, and policy publications;
- establishing AMS awards for CCMs;
- preparing *Weatherwise* articles on contributions by CCMs;
- proposing Weather Channel/Discovery Channel-type features on CCMs.

AN EVOLVING CERTIFICATION. As the nature of CCM work evolves, CCMs must also evolve. Continuing professional development has become a component of many professional certifications. Most of these professions require members to document their professional development activities. Indeed, the professional development portfolio approach is modeled closely after the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) program utilized by the Air and Waste Management Association. Within the AMS, the newly developed Certified Broadcast Meteorologist program includes a continuing professional development component similar to that for CCMs. It is essential that the CCM program remain at the same level as other certifications so that it can continue to

evolve to meet the challenges and changing work requirements of modern times.

Throughout this program's development, the topic of continuing professional development received considerable exposure and discussion within the CCM community. The CCM Board will do everything in its power to maintain the stature and integrity of the CCM program and the CCM community. Every

member of the CCM community is encouraged to volunteer to work with the CCM Board to help the CCM program grow.

—STANLEY L. MARSH, CCM, CHAIRMAN, CCM BOARD;
JOSEPH T. SCHAEFER, CCM, CHAIRMAN, AD HOC
COMMITTEE; JOHN R. TOOHEY-MORALES, CCM,
COMMISSIONER ON PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS; RAYMOND J.
BAN, PAST COMMISSIONER ON PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS

The above article was written with the following letters in hand, and the letters similarly were revised with the article in hand. Due to time constraints after all text was in final form, some signatories of the original versions of the letters were not able to confirm participation in this publication. Those names are listed at www.schaudt.us/ams.

RETURN THE CCM PROGRAM BACK TO "GOOD TRACK"

Since its first certification in 1957, the Certified Consulting Meteorologist (CCM) program has not faced a problem it could not handle. However, for historically inconsistent and poorly documented reasons, various ad hoc committees since 1997 have recommended adding a formal recertification process to the program. Regrettably, on 11 January 2004, the AMS Council approved a revised Certified Consulting Meteorologist program which requires all CCMs to document "continuing professional development" once every five years, or be reduced to "inactive" status. In the preceding article, Marsh et al. state: "The success of the CCM as a public service program depends on perception: it must be regarded as valuable and meaningful both by the professionals, agencies, and businesses seeking quality, up-to-date scientific guidance, and by the meteorologists themselves." As CCMs, we think that actual substance, performance, and maintenance of integrity are even more important than "perception." Marsh et al., describe the changes to the CCM program and state that the program is "elevated further,"

but we opine the opposite. We show below that the changes create false or misleading perceptions and, along with the failure to honor assertions made to the CCM membership, may motivate CCMs to discontinue their certification, and discourage other members from pursuing certification. We believe the very tenets of the AMS Constitution and the previously existing CCM program have not been adhered to in the development and implementation of the revised CCM program, and hereby call for retraction of those revisions.

Regarding rationales for revisions, Marsh et al. further state: "An Ad Hoc Committee on Recertification solicited a response at this time, publishing an article in the January 2000 *Bulletin* (page 134) as well as sending out 1200 letters with copies of the article to each Broadcast Sealholder and CCM in the AMS community. The nearly 200 written replies were reviewed in detail; they favored creation or strengthening of recertification for these AMS programs by a 2-1 margin." In addition to not identifying how many, if any, CCMs favored recertification,

what this statement does not reveal is how the Sealholder and CCM programs differ: Sealholders outnumber CCMs by over a factor of 2, and the CCM membership does not share the same concerns about the CCM program as Sealholders have had concerning their own credentials. These differences may have been observed if the survey had not merged the comments of the two programs. Notwithstanding the AMS claim that "the request for recertification came from within the CCM membership," there is no proof of much CCM support for such a claim. More recently, former Executive Director Ron McPherson summarized comments received on the 3 July 3 2002 recertification proposal: "From the CCMs: 38 responded, or about 10% of the active CCMs, all opposed to the proposal."

Despite receiving the report of such opposition, the October 2002 meeting of the AMS Council resolved: "... The Council endorses the principle of recertification for all programs that issue certifications. ... The Council recognizes that recertification may be implemented by various methods, including: continuing education,

testing, or submission and evaluation of a current portfolio representing recent work and related training. The Council recognizes that the implementation approach may be different for the CCM and Seal programs. . . .” The AMS Council subsequently directed the Board of Certified Consulting Meteorologists (BCCM) to develop an “Implementation Plan for Continuing Professional Development” (referred to elsewhere as “recertification”).

Very commendably, the Ad Hoc Committee that was established by the BCCM subsequently asserted in a 1 April 2003 open letter to all CCMs: “It is the goal of the Ad Hoc committee to attain consensus approval for this implementation plan from the CCM community. . . . However, to demonstrate consensus, all input and comments received from CCMs will be compiled into a database where they will be tracked for response and resolution. These comments will be posted on the AMS Web site.” Even now, Marsh et al. still assert: “Those providing comments can be assured that Ad Hoc Committee members carefully considered all input in the development of the implementation plan.”

Unfortunately, the above commendable assertions have not been honored. Specifically, many critical submittals were not posted on the AMS Web site, and most of the critical questions and substantive comments still remain unanswered or at least not reported to the CCM membership. At least a portion of the incompleteness of the AMS Web site can be documented. For example, of seven different files of comments submitted by the lead author of this letter between 30 April 2003 and 10 August

2003, only part of one submittal (file: 175-030430.doc) was included on the Web site. That submittal was stripped of the four files of comments that were attached. Despite repeated submissions of those files along with two additional expanded sets of comments and requests (175-030705.doc and 175-030810.doc), none of these other six files can be found anywhere on the AMS Web site.

In October 2004 we received some Ad Hoc Committee comments on our redrafted letter, indicating that the incompleteness claim was false! Maybe the respondent had not seen the many reminding e-mails (available in our documentation) officially submitted as instructed to: “ccmprofdev@ametsoc.org”, and maybe the mentioned “open discussions” did not bring such information to the attention of that respondent either. It is possible that the Ad Hoc Committee had too little time and means to include and handle all incoming comments, but in that case it is not right to impute to us that our claim is false. For whatever reason (lack of time or capacity, or selective lack of interest), the CCM membership was not provided with full disclosure of comments. To date, despite continuing assertions to the contrary, many of our comments and questions have never once been posted on the AMS Web site, and most of our crucial questions have not been substantively answered. On 10 November 2003, we were finally told that it was too late to do anything about it: “The train has left the station.”

Although the CCM article in this issue does not provide much substantive response to the issues raised, the authors of the article suggest: “While the CCM Board’s

stated goal of obtaining unanimity among the CCM community on the contents of the implementation plan was not attained, the plan accepted by the AMS Council came as close to achieving consensus as possible.”

Consensus means agreement, not tacit acquiescence—it indicates that a high percentage of the involved population agrees explicitly about the matter at hand. If there is a population majority that is silent, the assumption of their agreement can never be called consensus, not even an approximation to consensus. The Ad Hoc Committee could have backed up their consensus claim by a full compilation of all comments received to date, classified and tabulated by number approving versus number opposing particular measures. If that was practically not feasible, the alternative was to obtain a representative vote of the entire CCM membership (to determine their opinion about the final revision plan) before it was submitted to the AMS Council. No such vote on this issue was held, and therefore consensus was not proven. If the asserted demonstration is to be honored, we request a vote across the CCM community. If that vote does not show a clear majority (e.g., two-thirds of those who vote) in favor, it would mean that the unknown interests of a minority are imposed on the majority. If AMS continues to refuse to take a vote and or show demonstration by clear majority, not only is the process and product of dubious value, but also the integrity of the CCM program is called into question.

Despite repeated timely attempts over the last years, it has not been effective to submit comments and questions through the appropriate channels. Furthermore, sev-

eral requests by us for conference calls to work to resolve our concerns and any misunderstanding were not answered. Therefore, on 31 January 2004, two letters to the editor of *BAMS* were formally submitted to *BAMS*, the BCCM, the AMS Council, and the CCM community as another step in a continuing attempt to evoke some thoughtful responses and appropriate action. This letter is a condensed version of the more detailed of those two letters, adjusted to the article by Marsh et al. that was submitted much later.*

Given the 1 April 2003 assertions of the Ad Hoc Committee, more than 50 CCMs who have signed at least one of the two letters expect the professional courtesy of definition and/or references as to how the Ad Hoc Committee/BCCM/AMS Council has arrived at their conclusions. According to previously existing CCM standards based on the AMS Constitution, decisions should be based on true open, full discussions, and the Ad Hoc Committee should provide a demonstrated consensus, as asserted. We are rather certain that if there were anything close to CCM consensus on the implementation plan for “recertification,” the majority of active CCMs would favor either no change to the previously existing CCM program or some more cost-effective alternative such as proposed below.

As indicated in Article XII.3.A of the AMS Constitution: “Members should base their practice on sound scientific principles applied in a scientific manner.” Furthermore, as indicated in Article XII.3.D of the AMS Constitution: “Members should refrain from making exaggerated or unwarranted claims and statements.” From our perspective, the same

standards should apply to the processes followed and products developed by the Ad Hoc Committee/BCCM/AMS Council. However, well-founded description of the problem (the very first step in following a scientific approach) was never accomplished, and unwarranted assertions have been made—the very behavior our Society aims to minimize. The process itself lacked logic, and the changes to the existing CCM program were not proposed to solve any existing problems or any problems that were not previously anticipated.

Never was it explained how the proposed changes “minimize AMS legal liability,” as stated in the objectives of the July 2002 proposal. Rather, the new system:

- Requires proprietary information about clients and billable hours from CCMs, which may provide an unfair competitive advantage to those with the ability to access the database—not just AMS reviewers. The possibility of “hackers” entering any database should not be taken lightly, there are already too many databases that can and already have been misused (400,000 new cases of identity theft/fraud alone occur each year). The last thing that AMS needs to do is to create yet another potential source of information on individuals that may already be prime targets of the unscrupulous.

- AMS continues to assure us that no proprietary information would ever be required. If so, someone needs to explain how an audit that would meet normal verification standards could be preformed that would not require such things as time sheets, identification of clients, and hours billed as necessary to successfully complete the audit.

It would appear that AMS is neither sufficiently familiar with actual audit requirements nor has the time and capacity of unpaid volunteers to annually perform an actual audit of >5% of the CCM membership (at least 20 CCMs per year, if the number of “active” CCMs does not decline). We contend that the only audit ever to be performed should be as a result of an official substantiated complaint against a member. We have no objection to a requirement to maintain records, but we do have a concern as to when, where, and to whom such records are made available. Unless an audit for a legal cause is required, all private records and their safekeeping should be the sole responsibility of their owner.

- Uses a point system that creates a misleading appearance of objectivity and a deceptive measure of professional development under a naive perception that a point score connotes degree of currency with “state of the science,” or that a higher “score” connotes that one individual is more current and capable than another with a lower “score.” It is obvious that the Ad Hoc Committee spent much effort in developing their “point” lists to judge professional development. However, many activities identified as “professional experience,” which were not included in the list of voluntary activities identified by the previously existing CCM program, hardly appear to relate to expertise development. If anything should be considered, it is not “points,” not the billable hours, not number of clients, not service or offices in professional societies (although very laudable), but the CCM’s actual success in updating his/her knowledge and expertise. The “points” review is a useful checklist for judgment of quality,

but the numerical total means little. It remains a matter of trust whether scored “points” or an annual general statement really indicates an update of knowledge.

- Is not based upon any comparable credentialing program that has achieved equal or higher status than the previously existing CCM program. The “higher status” ascribed to some professional certifications (e.g., professional engineer (PE), medical doctors, and lawyers, results from state laws that require licenses or credentials to practice those professions, not from recertification programs). We do not expect or request that AMS pursue state-required licensing/credentialing of meteorologists in order to achieve such “higher status” for meteorologists.

If AMS feels there are other credentialing programs (that are not required by law) in existence that have better reputation and respect than the CCM Program, we encourage AMS to name such and, more importantly, critically evaluate them. Evaluation of those programs should determine: 1) if they achieved that higher status as a result of “recertification” of those with credentials, 2) whether they have higher monetary costs to achieve “recertification,” 3) whether much larger bureaucracies were developed in order to administer “recertification,” and, 4) whether such bureaucracies were developed for the purpose of financial profit to the bureaucracy from such requirements.

- Incurs additional costs to CCMs and the AMS bureaucracy, but provides no greater real benefit than the no-cost alternative that we propose. Akin to recasting “recertification” as “documenting continuing professional development,” we think that creating false

perceptions of values based upon point tallies are not real benefits, and should not serve as a “basis” for marketing the CCM program. Nor do we think that because some other credentialing programs have adopted such practices is a reason that AMS should also do so.

- Introduces the dubious distinction of “emeritus” status. Potential clients may have a negative perception of it, just judging it “inactive and old,” and thinking that a CCM who opts for it would have remained “active” if still able to collect the necessary “points” in his/her working field. A semiretired CCM should be trusted to have the wisdom to know at which point his real status is “inactive.”

The procedural and programmatic flaws raise numerous legal questions, including:

- Did the 1 April 2003 open letter to all CCMs soliciting response/action from CCMs create a contract (now breached) between the BCCM/Ad Hoc Committee and the CCMs who responded?

- Does AMS or the BCCM have any right to know or solicit confidential information from any CCM that has never had a complaint filed against him/her? AMS has no objective means to assess inadequacies other than as a result of official complaints filed against a CCM. AMS has always had the ability to address such eventualities; the previously existing CCM program already adequately addressed such.

- Should any/all existing CCMs be exempted from changes adopted subsequent to receiving their original CCM credential (akin to the legal “grandfather” clauses used in other credentialing/licens-

ing programs)? This should be openly, fully discussed, not taken for granted one way or the other.

- Has AMS increased its legal liabilities as a result of the adopted changes to the CCM Program?

As a result of our 6 November 2003 request to present our legal questions to AMS legal counsel, we were advised on 10 November 2003 that such questions would not be addressed (see 175-031111.doc), because AMS’s legal counsel was only to embark on a language drafting session to deal with procedure, policy, and standard AMS format for the revisions to the CCM program. Despite repeated request for such, if our legal questions were ever actually addressed, we have yet to obtain answers to any of those questions.

Discussing an earlier “Ad Hoc” Committee, Marsh et al. now state as one argument for recertification: “It is worth quoting from their findings from May 2000. . . . The AMS has a growing continuing education program (i.e., short courses). By strengthening our certification programs as it regards professional development requirements, we are validating those programs, noting their importance and, at the same time, increasing the attendance for those courses and programs.” While all continuing education is to be extolled, including that provided by AMS, we do not agree that increasing attendance of AMS short courses is an appropriate justification to impose a “recertification” requirement upon CCMs.

In the previous existing CCM Program, the AMS stated that it viewed the CCM as having the required qualities of knowledge, experience, and character at the time of certification. That statement

does not make the AMS liable for subsequent actions of CCMs, just like awarding medical, law, or engineering degrees does not make universities responsible for what their graduates do afterwards. If AMS insists on continuous close monitoring of CCMs, perhaps AMS may actually become more legally responsible for the performance of their CCMs. It may be safer for the AMS to trust that the previously existing certification process conscientiously gauges the character of CCMs, including the CCM's conviction that updating knowledge is necessary for any practicing professional.

We are not aware of major professional certifying organizations that do not "require" its officials to be certified or licensed with the same or equivalent credentials that they convey to others. AMS may perhaps not follow that line with regard to the CCM status, because consulting is not the only possible working field of meteorologists. Even so, acquiring the CCM credential is evidence of the continued professional growth of a meteo-

rologist after his/her initial training, academic, or otherwise. If AMS truly wants to elevate the status of CCMs, desiring (not requiring) certification of its own officials should be a higher priority than formal mistrustful documentation of continued professional development.

The Guidelines for Professional Conduct of the AMS Constitution indicate in Article XII.1.B: "Members who are professionally active should endeavor to keep abreast of relevant scientific and technical developments; they should continuously strive to improve their professional abilities." This applies to all professionally active AMS members. If "recertification" is to be required of CCMs, AMS should first require it of all professionally active meteorologists who advertise their services in AMS journals. CCMs have taken the extra steps to voluntarily obtain such credentials; they should not be singled out to formally document their continued professional development.

If AMS's goal is to ascertain that CCMs are in fact continuing their professional development, we pro-

pose that the Society simply add the following statement to the annual form for CCM fees and AMS membership renewal: "I further certify that I have complied with the Continuing Professional Development Section of the Certification Program for Consulting Meteorologists under which I originally received my CCM credentials."

It is our opinion that individuals who have voluntarily sought to become certified as CCMs have the pride and character to strive to keep current in their area of expertise. Such individuals do not need more rules, or a larger, more costly bureaucracy, to oversee that they maintain those attributes.

For the reasons presented above, and in our more detailed submittals, we consider both the process and the product to be flawed, and, by CCM professional standards, find this requirement to be unnecessary, ineffective, and burdensome. Therefore, we respectfully, but urgently, request that the AMS retract the changes scheduled for the CCM program.

Sincerely,

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* *The letter published herein is a very condensed version of the original detailed version of the letter submitted to BAMS, the Ad Hoc Committee, BCCM and AMS Council on 31 January 2004. Anyone choosing to consult the cosigners' more detailed concerns, critical questions, references, and supporting documentation can refer to the original 31 January 2004 letter (175-040131.doc) and supporting documentation at www.schaudt.us/ams/Comments.zip.*

RECERTIFICATION OF CCMs: A SOLUTION LOOKING FOR A PROBLEM?

Should the professional development of CCMs, who have voluntarily spent many hours and considerable sums of money to receive certification, be singled out for scrutiny when continued professional development is expected of all AMS members by the "Guidelines for Professional Conduct" (Article XII of the Constitution of the American Meteorological Society)?

Should CCMs be required to inform their competitors of hours billed when serving as a project manager or principal investigator, when those competitors are serving on AMS committees?

We think not. However, despite strong opposition from many CCMs, the AMS Council approved the "continuing professional development" program in September 2003.

Despite strong opposition from many CCMs, and despite any documented need for change, the program was approved by the Council in September 2003. CCMs have continued to voice concern, but were informed by an AMS

commissioner that it is too late: "The train has left the station." If so, perhaps the Society should be certain that the train is on the right track. That way, we can ensure that the light at the end of the tunnel is not merely an oncoming train.

Recently, the BCCM and the AMS Council objected to this note—originally submitted to BAMS in January 2004—calling the changes "recertification," and stated that the changes are not a recertification program. However, in all of the discussion of the matter recorded in the published council minutes (www.ametsoc.org/amscouncilminutes/council_minutes/), the proposed changes are discussed as either "certification" or "recertification." The only mention of "continuing professional development" is in the formal council resolution. We stand by our wording that this is a "recertification" action rather than a "continuing professional development" program.

We strongly recommend that this recertification program not be implemented as currently struc-

tured and expressed in the BAMS article by Marsh et al. titled, "Recognition of Continuing Professional Development for CCMs." It solves no known problem, does not demonstrably improve the existing CCM program, and will add bureaucratic detail and expense to the AMS and the CCMs. In addition, this new recertification program invites a number of significant questions and concerns:

- There are serious procedural concerns. CCMs are required to follow the Society's Professional Conduct Guidelines in their dealings with clients and fellow meteorologists, including use of the scientific methods. In this administrative action, the BCCM's clients are both the AMS Council and the CCMs.

The first step in such a process should have been definition of the problem. During the course of preparing the program, neither the AMS Council, the BCCM, nor the various ad hoc recertification committees identified a single problem that the existing CCM program

could not satisfactorily address, and did not present evidence of a single complaint against the present CCM program that recertification would address.

In fact, the AMS repeatedly stated that recertification was not proposed to solve any particular problem. For instance, the August 2003 draft proposal stated that: "This is not a response to an existing problem, rather it is a proactive step to increase the value of CCM certification."

In Marsh et al., the BCCM and the AMS Council now say that recertification program is due to: "Numerous changes in the program have led to a situation in which CCMs use subjective and unverifiable means to attest to being active, and to staying atop their rapidly changing field." If a weakening in the program has indeed occurred, then it is the net result of small changes made in the program by the BCCM and the AMS Council without full and open discussion with the CCM membership and/or polling of the membership. The authors of this letter feel that this is yet one more example of a step downward for the program forced upon the CCMs without reasonable discussion and consultation.

As part of the audit provisions of the "continuing professional development" (recertification) plan, CCMs may take credit for time spent as project managers and principal investigators. Marsh et al. state that no proprietary information will be required and the plan only states that those audited will be required to provide "routine documentation—copies of receipts, their own business cards and company directories, etc." To anyone who has been audited, it is obvious that verifiable audit of time

billed as a project manager will require provision of supporting information, such as time sheets, project descriptions, and client contact information. The information required to support a verifiable audit is not "routine" documentation, but is proprietary information. Company directories are generally confidential. Further, private-sector meteorologists, as well as colleagues working for the Defense Department or Homeland Security are often explicitly prohibited by confidentiality agreements from releasing any information about our work, including the name of the client. Finally, provision of such information is potentially harmful since competitors serve as officers and members of AMS committees.

Audits will not be a rare event. At least 5% of the active CCMs will be audited each year. More will be audited as a result of targeted audits. Assume that 7% are audited each year between all audit processes. In four years, the audit process will have been extended to more than a quarter of all CCMs.

The authors of this letter have been accused by the BCCM of not trusting the AMS staff or volunteer members of the BCCM with the proprietary information required to support a verifiable audit. We feel that the AMS Council's decision to audit at least 5% of the CCM's each year is an offensive vote of no confidence by the AMS towards some of its most motivated professionals.

Regardless of whether the AMS proceeds with this recertification plan, audits of a CCM's activities should be conducted only in the event of a filing of a formal official and substantial misconduct complaint.

- The BCCM and the AMS Council say that surveys and results from the various ad-hoc committees are the justification for this program. In developing its plan, the BCCM should have published for review the ad-hoc committee survey results and findings that form the core of the justification for the present proposal. Unfortunately, we understand that the original surveys have apparently been lost along with the associated documentation. Serious concerns, including concerns about conflicts of interest, have arisen because of the lack of documentation and obvious inconsistencies.

For example, Marsh et al. state that: "An Ad Hoc Committee on Recertification solicited a response at this time, publishing an article in the January 2000 *Bulletin* as well as sending out 1200 letters with copies of the article to each Broadcast Sealholder and CCM in the AMS community. The nearly 200 written replies were reviewed in detail; they favored creation or strengthening of recertification for these AMS programs by a 2-1 margin." These pooled results, which are a small sample of the approximately 400 active CCMs and 1200 Sealholders, have then been used to justify changes to the CCM program. The other side has repeatedly cited these results to reflect the opinions of the CCM community, although the results were never tabulated by certification type. It appears that survey provided poor guidance, since all publicly available surveys of the CCMs' thoughts do not support the conclusion of the Ad Hoc Committee. According to Ron McPherson's summary of the comments received on the July 2, 2002 proposal, all CCMs submitting comments

on the recertification proposal opposed the plan. In two broad grass-root surveys (see www.schaudt.us/ams) of approximately one-third of the active CCMs, the majority oppose the program. Apparently, the Ad-Hoc Committee's surveys were not from a representative sample of CCMs.

- The CCM program is entirely voluntary. As such, only those motivated to demonstrate excellence apply and receive a formal certification. This certification is an initiative that only a relatively small percentage of the Society's membership, including the officers, undertake. There is no reason to believe that meteorologists who go through the rigorous CCM certification program will suddenly cease their professional development just because they have been granted a CCM.

Is the addition of a burdensome bookkeeping chore, listing all of the meetings we attend and services we provide to our community, the way we want to improve the public's acceptance and desire for certified professional meteorological service? *We think not!*

Proponents have often stated that the proposed changes will raise the professional status of the CCM program, but most of the professions mentioned in the implementation plan are *by law* required to hold license/credentials to practice (e.g., law, medicine, and engineering).

Some suggest that the AMS on behalf of the CCMs should actively pursue national, state, or local licensing of consulting meteorologists to raise the value of the CCM. This matter has not been investigated since it was dropped as a goal of the CCM program some years ago after more than three

decades as an official goal. Whether licensing would accomplish the CCM program goals remains unknown, but deserves consideration before the AMS Council approves a CCM recertification program.

For some time now, the BCCM and the AMS Council has dangled a carrot—a *marketing program*—in front of the CCMs in return for support of the recertification program. The original proposal was for a marketing program, it then evolved into an “advocacy and marketing strategy.”

Continuing the downward spiral of the marketing program, Marsh et al. now state that the CCM's target audience “are generally not familiar with the process of obtaining a CCM, or the extensive knowledge, experience, and character that one must possess to earn one. Therefore, the CCM community must take it upon themselves to inform their target market and their clients—both internal and external—about the meaning of a CCM designation.” Again, the AMS has pulled the carrot away and shifted responsibility onto the CCM community.

Marsh et al continue: “The same stature granted to certifications in other professions, such as teaching and engineering, needs to be extended to the CCM. To accomplish this, a CCM advocacy/marketing strategy was developed by the Ad Hoc Committee.” The “higher status” ascribed to some professional certifications (e.g., professional engineer (PE), medical doctors, and lawyers) results from state laws that require licenses or credentials to practice those professions, not from recertification programs, and so the committee has been charged with an unattainable target.

At various times during the last decade, the Council has lamented that the private sector has not joined and participated in the Society in the numbers that would be expected given the growth in the private sector. There is a sense among many in the private sector that some in the Society are indifferent or even hostile to the private sector and its concerns. This ill-considered proposed CCM recertification program could reinforce that impression and drive a wedge between the Society and its private sector membership.

Given that the AMS Council has stated that there is no known problem requiring recertification; that an effective CCM marketing plan has not been proposed, and no other membership or other benefit has been proposed; that the benefit-to-cost ratio for recertification is at best undocumented and likely negative, we, the undersigned, call on the Council to reconsider this ill-advised decision to implement this Program for Continued Professional Development Plan As described in this *BAMS* article. The proposed plan is not only potentially harmful to CCMs, but also potentially harmful to the Society, since we believe it will lessen participation in the CCM program.

While some may object to the tone of these letters, the authors remain hopeful that elevation of the professional status of the CCMs is possible. Significantly, the opening paragraph of Marsh et al., the BCCM, and the AMS council states that:

“A Certified Consulting Meteorologist, or CCM, is endorsed by the American Meteorological Society (AMS) as having the necessary knowledge, experience, and character to effectively serve as a meteorologist.”

logical advisor or consultant to business, industry, and the public.”

The BCCM and the AMS Council are drawing a significant distinction between the general

membership and CCMs. Since professionals, agencies, and businesses seeking quality, up-to-date scientific guidance cannot rely on getting the same advice from me-

teorologists who are not CCMs, such an endorsement should be sine qua non for all AMS members advising business, industry, and the public.

Signed,

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REBUTTAL FROM CCM BOARD TO TWO LETTERS ON THE CCM PROGRAM

Readers should carefully consider our article and the supporting documentation on the AMS Web site (CCM program page). Trout et al. and Schaudt et al. do not accurately portray the new Professional Development Program, nor the rationale behind it, nor the fundamental meaning of various communications by the CCM Board, Ad Hoc Committees, and the AMS Council.

The Continuing Professional Development Program, in and of

itself, is not a “benefit,” but it is the basis for benefits to be reaped by active marketing and education about the CCM program. Ultimately, the benefits CCMs themselves derive from participating in certification are based solely on the benefit the public can derive from the program. It will be simple and routine for any active CCM to satisfy the professional development requirements. The combination of increased public benefit and minimal burden on

CCMs themselves is compelling. Misconceptions aside, Trout et al. and Schaudt et al. do not reveal any substantive flaws in the rationale for the program or in its construct.

Surely, the semantic arguments in the letters are not substantive. The new procedure replaces a poorly conceived recertification rite, but the point of naming it “Continuing Professional Development” is to better reflect how the vast majority of CCMs will ex-

perience this new procedure. Few, if any, CCMs should fail to recertify themselves, because this program reflects the normal work of active CCMs; most CCMs will remain continuously certified as before. It probably takes more time to read the two foregoing letters than it does to meet the annual record-keeping obligations of a CCM's portfolio.

Similarly, the authors diminish the constructive purpose of the letters by suggesting that longtime CCMs—but not new CCMs—be exempt from verifying their Continuing Professional Development. We also have little use for the thinly veiled accusations that AMS staff or volunteer members of the CCM Board might unethically use portfolio information for their own financial benefit. These are accusations against the character of *all* CCMs, since *any* of us might at some time serve on the CCM Board.

The repeated requests for a vote, or a public accounting of the database, are moot. None of this was ever promised. We kept the database to help us draft the implementation plan for this program, and it allowed the feedback from our colleagues to be tracked and exhaustively mined. As promised, consensus was demonstrated to our satisfaction and the satisfaction of the AMS Council. It is naive to think that any sort of yes/no vote could reveal the best way to draft a multifaceted plan balancing so many interests expressed in subtly phrased e-mails and private conversations. Crafting a widely-acceptable implementation strategy for enhancing the CCM program entailed navigating a huge range of opinions and ideas; it was not an exercise in “bean-counting” of yes/no comments. Our colleagues are

free to second-guess our deeply considered judgment, but the letter-writers' disregard for basic tenets of our Society's governance is disrespectful of the membership as a whole.

Ultimately, the phrase “the train has left the station” may have been blunt or impolitic, but apparently the message still has not registered with some people in the community. The Council decided, back in 2002, to go ahead with changing the CCM program; our task in soliciting feedback in 2003 was to formulate how to accomplish this change.

The various versions of these letters over the years are familiar to hundreds of CCMs, whose e-mail in-boxes have been frequently inundated with them. In any case, the risk that some good idea in the feedback process was not noticed is very small. Readers are invited—should they choose to make the same colossal investment of time that we made—to study the numerous messages distributed by the lead author of Trout et al., with his constantly shifting demands and arguments, boundless unsubstantiated speculations on cost and motivation and integrity, and the correspondingly proliferating demands for informational responses. One of these messages alone made nearly 100 such demands. In a typical sequence, the author went from demanding legal opinions of AMS Counsel to criticism of such opinions on the grounds that the lawyers weren't scientists, and back to speculations about unanswered legal questions. Many times, this author has insisted that it would be preferable to disenfranchise most AMS members by barring non-CCMs from being Society officers. As with all feedback, we scrutinized

this author's for workable proposals to provide the public with the level of service provided by the plan ultimately adopted, and for points addressing the charter needs of the CCM program with a reasonable level of commitment by participants.

These authors have been consistent in two critical ways, however. First, as in Schaudt et al. here: they do not see that motivated meteorologists actually *want* to be singled out to demonstrate that they are more motivated than their peers. Second, the letters consistently focus on the past: these writers keep searching (as they have in numerous other correspondences) for a problem to solve, but this is futile, beyond the situation explained in our article. We are anticipating the future needs of a vibrant CCM community, beyond its current, relative obscurity. To encourage diverse applicants and to spread word of its strengths, the CCM program needs a fair, accountable basis for appraisal of ongoing professional development, as required by its charter. This point has been recognized unanimously by the AMS Council, the CCM Board, the ad hoc committees, and supported actively by many other CCMs.

Furthermore, no matter if points and portfolios are “arbitrary” or not: they are inherently objective simply by establishing verifiable, exact guidelines for all of us. Naturally, points do not guarantee knowledge, but they mark the playing field. We are confident in this system in part because it has worked for the Qualified Environmental Professional credential program administered by the Institute of Professional Environmental Practice. Regardless of the other differences between the CCM and

QEP programs, the QEP experience suggests that logistics are not an issue here.

In particular, the submittal of proprietary information is not—we repeat, *not*—required for this program. Disclosure of clients or billable hours or any confidential information is in no way mandated. We also point out that only one option among many for gaining professional development points actually requires divulging hours. It was included *at the request of our CCM colleagues*. One can simply choose to earn points another way, if necessary, but we felt it important to incorporate this feedback in the program options. As a practical matter, the vast majority of work in this field is done for government contracts and the court system—all a matter of public record. In those rare cases where a CCM may voluntarily wish to claim professional development points for projects of a confidential nature, there are workable alternatives to use mutually agreed upon third parties to confirm a given assignment. The CCM Board will not allow enforcement to encroach on proprietary grounds, for the sake of Board members as much as other CCMs. The information contained in the portfolios will in most cases be less detailed than that found in a typical curriculum vitae, which for many CCMs are posted on their own Web sites, and for those engaged in forensic activities, are part of the public record.

Trout et al. and Schaudt et al. focus on concerns about past slights and glitches in our remarkably interactive and representative decision process. Yet there is no doubt about the constitutionality of the open, patient, and careful process by which our committees


of CCMs fulfilled the wishes of a unanimous AMS Council in these matters. There is also no doubt as to the intensity with which representative CCMs worked to engage their colleagues over a long period of time to draft the best possible implementation plan. Together we worked hard to protect the prestige of the CCM program, successfully disentangling it from the new Certified Broadcast Meteorologist program, and also retaining the face-to-face board reviews for CCM candidates (our best method of evaluating “character”).

The process speaks for itself: After more than a decade of ongoing discussions of continuing education issues at the annual CCM Breakfasts—our annual opportunity to meet in person and discuss matters pertaining to our program—an Ad Hoc Committee was formed in 2003 to develop the Draft Implementation Plan. Two letters were sent to all CCMs in Spring 2003 requesting comments, and responses were posted on the AMS Web site on 21 May. These comments were used by the Ad Hoc Committee to draft the plans posted on 16 June. Comments received after mid-May, including those on the draft plans, were posted by the AMS on 30 June. These comments provided the basis for second drafts that were posted on 25 July. While these drafts only brought in comments from a few CCMs, the community input refocused the Ad Hoc Committee, who prepared and posted third drafts by 19 August. Again, comments received were used to polish and tune the plans before they were submitted to the entire CCM Board on 27 August and the AMS Commissioner on Professional Affairs on 5 September. Finally, on 8 September,

a final compilation of comments from the CCM community was sent to the commissioner for use by the AMS Council during the mid-September deliberations on the CCM Continuing Education program. Some dissent in the community was inevitably unresolved, but the plan had evolved due to the CCM feedback. While Schaudt et al. and Trout et al. complain about voices unheard, they now basically reiterate old arguments that were, in fact, posted numerous times during the public comment periods.

Most puzzling of all, Trout et al. and Schaudt et al. have consistently proposed measures that would dilute the distinction of being a CCM. We feel strongly that CCMs should remain unique in the AMS. CCMs are the only members that the AMS, as a Society, endorses to the public as having “the necessary knowledge, experience, and character to effectively serve as a meteorological advisor or consultant to business, industry, and the public.” Because the AMS certifies the technical competence of CCMs, it is incumbent upon the Society to ensure that CCMs pursue continuing education so that their knowledge remains “state-of-the-science.” The CCM Board and the Ad Hoc Committee carry out the policy directives of the AMS Council. In this case, the CCM Board and our all-volunteer Ad Hoc Committee unanimously felt that this effort would be beneficial to the CCM Program.

That the Certified Broadcast Meteorologist (CBM) program also has opted for a continuing professional development component was yet another indication that CCMs needed to do the same to maintain our status among col-



leagues. Comparison with the other AMS certification program should *not* be confused as a real rationale, but it *is* a reminder to all of us the lengths that motivated professionals can and should go if the public is to be assured of their motivation.

While CCM credentials are not a prerequisite to holding an AMS office, we point out that the incoming AMS President, Walt Lyons, is a CCM; so is the current Commissioner on Professional Affairs,

John Toohey-Morales. BCCM Chair Stan Marsh is a member of the AMS Council. Additionally, the new AMS Executive Director, Keith Seitter, has a CCM application pending. Clearly, there is a strong commitment from AMS leadership. A marketing plan is finally in the works. A simple and objective Continuing Professional Development process is in place. Whatever inattention the CCM program may have suffered in the

past should be behind us. Our Society is poised to strengthen the CCM designation. With the commitment of CCMs, this certification can grow and prosper—for our own good, for the good of our science, and for society as a whole. A few minutes a year of record keeping is really not much to ask in exchange for demonstrating to the world that we as CCMs are unique, current, and involved in our profession.