



## R157

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE SAIP WITH CHAIRPERSONS OF THE SPECIALIST GROUPS

**DATE:** 26 September 2002

**TIME:** 13h00

**VENUE:** JCC Meeting Room, Potchefstroom University for CHE, Potchefstroom

#### 1. OPENING

Dr. Whitelock chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She invited those present to introduce themselves.

#### 2. ATTENDANCE

| Name                        | Representing                | Email  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| PA Whitelock                | President, SAIP             | <a href="mailto:paw@saao.ac.za">paw@saao.ac.za</a>                         |
| JB Malherbe                 | Council                     | <a href="mailto:malherbe@scientia.up.ac.za">malherbe@scientia.up.ac.za</a> |
| J. Padayachee               | Secretary, SAIP             | <a href="mailto:jpadayachee@bonbon.net">jpadayachee@bonbon.net</a>         |
| JAA Engelbrecht             | SSPMS/MSSA/Council          | <a href="mailto:phajae@upe.ac.za">phajae@upe.ac.za</a>                     |
| H Geyer                     | Theoretical Phys./Council   | <a href="mailto:hbg@maties.sun.ac.za">hbg@maties.sun.ac.za</a>             |
| D. Grayson                  | Council                     | <a href="mailto:graysdj@unisa.ac.za">graysdj@unisa.ac.za</a>               |
| E. Zingu                    | Council                     | <a href="mailto:zingu@julian.mantec.ac.za">zingu@julian.mantec.ac.za</a>   |
| C. Rijdsdijk                | Education                   | <a href="mailto:case@saao.ac.za">case@saao.ac.za</a>                       |
| P.J. Meintjes               | Astrophysics                | <a href="mailto:meintjpi@uovs.ac.za">meintjpi@uovs.ac.za</a>               |
| EG Rohwer                   | Lasers-Optics               | <a href="mailto:egr@maties.sun.ac.za">egr@maties.sun.ac.za</a>             |
| A. Burger                   | Space & Plasma              | <a href="mailto:fskrab@puknet.puk.ac.za">fskrab@puknet.puk.ac.za</a>       |
| G.J. Arendse                | Nuclear, Part. & Rad. Phys. | <a href="mailto:gja@sun.ac.za">gja@sun.ac.za</a>                           |
| M.J. Alport                 | Applied and Industrial      | <a href="mailto:alport@nu.ac.za">alport@nu.ac.za</a>                       |
| D. Raubenheimer             | Applied and Industrial      | <a href="mailto:rbhm-d@pelican.vista.ac.za">rbhm-d@pelican.vista.ac.za</a> |
| <b>Apologies:</b> H. Moraal | Council                     | <a href="mailto:fskhm@puknet.puk.ac.za">fskhm@puknet.puk.ac.za</a>         |

#### 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2001 had already been approved by Council.

#### 4. REPORTS

##### 4.1. Applied and Industrial Physics

The previous Chair, Prof. Alport reported that the Group had been very dormant and accepted that it was partly his fault. He stated that APIG should perhaps function on a more regional level. The new chair, Prof. Raubenheimer, informed the meeting that a steering committee of 3 had been formed and will take the process. Prof Zingu and Prof. Malherbe felt that the past chair should meet with the steering committee and discuss how to proceed. Dr. Whitelock wished them well.

##### 4.2. Astrophysics

The new Chair, Dr. P.J. Meintjes reported that he will contact the astrophysics community in South Africa to discuss how to proceed and undertakes the responsibility to promote closer collaboration between the physics, astrophysics and space science communities in South Africa.

#### **4.3. Education**

Much of the group's time was taken up with the FET Curriculum Statement. Prof. Diane Grayson had forwarded two letters to the panel drafting the new statement outlining the SAIP's point of view, the inadequacies of the statement and the noting the lack of transparency in the process.

During the conference the education group had an extensive discussion on the FET statement. It was decided to ask council to send an official letter to the drafting panel requesting SAIP involvement in the process so as to safeguard the interests of physics in SA.

During the year there were two tours by Zbig Sobierieski: one immediately following the SASOL SciFest in March and the other, a more extended one to the northern parts of SA, in August. Both were organized in conjunction with the IoP who supplied funding and SASOL SciFest who provided the infrastructure and facilitated the tours.

FEST also funded Case Rijdsijk to attend the 33rd International Physics Olympiad, IPhO, in Bali, Indonesia and a full report will be posted on the SAIP website. It is hoped that in the not too distant future SA will be able to compete in future Olympiads.

The SAIP was also involved in facilitating a tour of US students from Pittsburgh HEP group through parts of Gauteng and the Western Cape. This outreach project was initiated by Julia Thompson of the University of Pittsburgh and present feed back indicates that we may well repeat this exercise. Simon Connell was very much involved with the Gauteng leg.

Finally it is hoped that in the course of the coming year the role of the group will become a little more defined and certainly to clarify two aspects of the groups activities: physics education research and educator (teacher) support.

#### **4.4. Lasers, Optics and Spectroscopy**

The chair, Dr. E. Rohwer reported that the attendance at lectures and the number of contributions at this conference have increased significantly. This can be partly ascribed to the efforts of the National Laser Centre (NLC) which has been in operation for two years and its rental pool encouraging activity in the lasers field. There is a process underway to establish an African Laser Centre. In 2003, the Group will hold a Winter School at the annual SAIP meeting.

#### **4.5. Nuclear, Radiation and Particle Physics**

Dr. Arendse reported that he had resigned as chair and that the vice-chair, Dr. Vilakazi, will be taking over. He was also dissatisfied with the lack of guidance in terms of what is expected from the chair of a specialist group. He stated that communication with the Group was mostly via email with little response. Bioteknik has sponsored two cash prizes for the banquet. During the conference there were 16 oral- and 2 poster-presentations in this group. The sessions were well attended. Two prizes were awarded (best MSc presentation and best PhD presentation). There was also a successful Summer School held at the Kruger Park in January 2002.

#### **4.6. Solar, Terrestrial & Plasma Physics**

The Chair, Prof. Adri Burger, reported that two workshops and one conference were held by members of the Group. A workshop on Dusty Plasmas in Durban was attended by about 100 people. A small workshop on Cosmic-Ray Modulation, held in Potchefstroom, was attended by 25 people. A conference (IAEA supported) on the technical aspects of running a magnetic observatory was held in Hermanus and attended by about 45 people. The suggestion for the theme of the Group for next year's conference is "Space Science and Society". There will also be a one hour discussion on the new National Astrophysics and Space Science Programme (NASSP) which will be hosted by UCT from 2003.

#### **4.7. Solid State Physics and Material Science(SSPMS)**

The Chair, Prof. Engelbrecht reported that the Spring School on Magnetism was very successful. Prof. A. Every had been invited to present the non-specialist lecture. The newsletter continued with Dr. C. Theron as editor. Prof. Engelbrecht drew up a document on the status of SSPMS in South Africa for the current "Future of Physics" study. The main activity of the group is the awards program and symposia are being planned.

#### **4.8. Theoretical Physics**

The Chair, Prof. Geyer, congratulated the conference organizers for a well-organised program. He commented that this was the first time that there were posters and students contributions in the Masters category had to be reduced to 15 minutes because of time constraints. The Group is essentially dominated by two institutions, the University of Stellenbosch and the University of the Witwatersrand. A very successful Summer School on String Theory and Quantum Gravity was held in January 2002 and he also described the establishment of the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences which is being driven by N. Turok (Cambridge) and will be managed by the three universities in the Western Cape. Masters courses are being planned. There will be no Summer School in 2003 but one on Nanophysics is planned for 2004. Dr. Whitelock congratulated Prof. Geyer for his Group's success in increasing contributions at the conference.

#### **4.9. Microscopy Society of Southern Africa (MSSA)**

Prof. Engelbrecht reported that MSSA held a successful international conference in Durban from 1 to 6 September. The conference ran for 5 days, with 3 parallel sessions and was attended by ~1 200 delegates. MSSA is also involved in several outreach programs.

### **5. General Comments**

- 5.1. Prof. Zingu reported that the Transformation Committee had recommended that specialist group chairs form part of the Council of the SAIP to have more contact with the specialist groups. Mr. Rjisdijk felt that regular contact with the Council would be a good idea and Prof. Raubenheimer felt that if the Council got too large, then the Specialist Groups would lose their independence. "Dr Whitelock pointed out that the object of involving the specialist group chairs in Council would be to improve communications and to give the specialist groups a stronger say in how the society was run - not to control them."
- 5.2. Dr. Whitelock reported that Council felt that the student prizes awarded by the specialist groups should be limited to paid-up members, since many students took advantage of the SAIP without joining. The SSPMS Specialist Group decided not to impose this requirement on their students but to encourage them to join afterwards. It was agreed that prizes for groups other than SSPMS would be awarded to SAIP members only.
- 5.3. Prof. Burger felt that it was necessary to convey to session chairs that they should stick to the order of proceedings and times advertised.

### **6. CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 13h55.

**Secretary**  
**Ms. J. Padayachee**

**President**  
**Dr. P.A. Whitelock**