



## **Report from the Student Representative on the SAIP Council.**

### **General Remarks**

The South African Institute of Physics (SAIP) offers a unique opportunity for physics students across South Africa to interact with their scientific peers. The increasing numbers of student members to the SAIP shows great promise for the growth and popularity of the SAIP. Thus it is important to keep the student community active member in decisions made which will influence their continued support of the SAIP. Within this respect I would like to commend the council (both SAIP and Student Council) for their efforts.

### **Student Activities at the SAIP conference**

#### ***Scientific contributions***

The annual SAIP conference sets an ideal stage for student members to get recognition for their work. This year feedback from the various specialist groups clearly suggest that the quality of the student contributions took a leap forward.

#### ***Luncheon with Plenary Speakers***

This event should still be refined into a winning formula. Currently the sit-down format is adequate for allowing students' access to the plenary speaker. However, I see this event evolving more to a intimate question and answer session with the esteemed quest speakers.

#### ***Student Meetings***

This platform shows a lot of promise, especially in the last 2 meetings the number of students attending this meeting has increased, and still can. This is a clear indication that student members want to be more active.

#### ***Student Feedback***

An evaluation process of the annual conference has been set in motion. This year was the first such attempt and the results from the conference evaluation that the student members who attended the Student Meeting filled in is as follow:

1. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the conference: **66% Very disappointed**, 33% Satisfied
2. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the exhibits area: **56% Very disappointed**, 41% Satisfied, 3% Very satisfied
3. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the format of the conference (i.e.- morning sessions, breaks, lunch, afternoon sessions/breakouts): 18% Very disappointed, 3% Satisfied, **79% Very satisfied**
4. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the reception and breaks: **56% Very disappointed**, 38% Satisfied, 3% Very satisfied, 3% Not applicable
5. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the facilities: **39% Very disappointed**, 37% Satisfied, 6% Very satisfied, 18% Not applicable
6. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the location of the conference (Westville Campus, Durban): 8% Very disappointed, **72% Satisfied**, 18% Very satisfied, 2% Not applicable
7. Overall, based on your total experience at the conference, will you attend or recommend someone else attend next year's conference? **56% Yes**, 36% No, 5% Undecided, 3% No comment

## **Student Member Activities in South Africa**

### *International Year of Astronomy*

As part of International Year of Astronomy a lot of the students took part in the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) Open nights, hosted twice a month at The Observatory in Cape Town. At the Open nights, members of the public can visit SAAO and attend a talk on an astronomical topic from a professional astronomer. They can also visit the telescopes on-site and engage in stargazing activities on good weather evenings.

## **Future Projects**

### *Outreach*

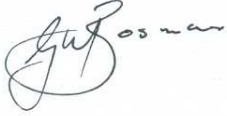
The SAIP Marketing and Outreach manager, Mr. R Botha, has indicated that student members are required for various outreach activities. This was well received by the majority of student members who attended this year's student meeting. At this meeting it was proposed that the administration of all outreach activities should be centralized at the SAIP offices.

Currently student members at Stellenbosch University (SU) and CSIR National Laser Centre (NLC) are also members of the Optical Society of America (OSA), which allows funding for outreach. The OSA student society at SU, has so far participated in numerous outreach sessions with schools in the Western Cape, which focused on the many uses of light and optics.

### *Physics Demonstration Competition*

It was suggested by current SAIP President Dr. P Martinez that students should structure a physics demonstration competition. The aim of such a competition would be to generate enthusiasm for physics and to increase its popularity amongst school learners. These demonstrations should be informative and interactive and should at large be managed and undertaken by physics students. The SAIP Student

Council has taken up responsibility for this event and is aiming to implement this completion at the next SAIP conference at the CSIR in 2010.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'GW Bosman', with a stylized, cursive script.

***GW Bosman***

***SAIP Student Representative***