**Minutes of the AsCA Council Meeting 2007:**

**12:20pm 6 November 2007**

**Room 203**

**Howard International House, Taipei**

In Attendance:

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| --- | --- |
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| Mitchell Guss (Vice-President) Australia | m.guss at mmb.usyd.edu.au |
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| Syd Hall (Trustee), Australia | sydney.hall at uwa.edu.au |
| Yuji Ohashi, (IUCr) Japan | yohashi at spring8.or.jp |
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| William Duax, U.S.A. | duax at hwi.buffalo.edu |

1.          President Vijayan welcomed all council members to the meeting, he indicated that an additional item would be added to the circulated agenda, which was a presentation by Ashwini Nangia regarding a bid by India to host the IUCr congress in 2014. He requested presentations be kept short due to the heavy agenda for the meeting.

2.          Prof. Williams updated the financial status of the society, based on the accounts kindly provided by Prof. Ohashi and Prof. Hall, the AsCA trustee. The account in Japan held Y634,800 (about US$50,000), which was little changed over the past several years since the interest rate in Japan was minimal. The Australian account now stood at A$107,061. No major outgoing expenses were incurred in the past year. Prof. S.L. Chang indicated that the Taipei conference was unlikely to yield any profit, however through subsidy from the science council in Taiwan, the costs of the conference would be able to be met. Thus no big change in the status of the AsCA accounts would ensue from the conference. Prof. Hall indicated that in future, it should be possible to generate interest of US$5,000-10,000 from the account without depreciating the principal. This money could then be used to augment IUCr support for young scientists to attend AsCA meetings. Prof. Williams felt that the money in Japan was not inconsiderable and should be more actively managed. One possibility might be to transfer the association's funds from the Japanese to the Australian account, which should benefit from both higher interest rates and a stronger long term currency.

3.          The next item was a report on the AsCA07 conference in Taipei. This was given by Prof. Shih-Lin Chang, Chairman of the Intl. Organizing Committee. He noted that many of the original deadlines for the conference were extended. A total of 337 abstracts were received, 6 plenary, 96 oral and 235 poster. He gave statistics on the distribution of the total 412 attendees from 20 countries. 295 of the delegates were international and 117 domestic from Taiwan. Another breakdown indicated 249 full and 159 student registrants. The distribution on a country by country basis was given; as usual Japan headed the list of non-local participants. Regarding sponsors, 19 booths were set up for companies and sponsoring organizations. The conference web-site had set up a competition for young scientist support based on IUCr funding. This had received 41 applications and 19 awards were made after review by several program committee members. In the event two of the awardees (both from Uzbekistan) were unable to attend the conference. Prof. Martin asked what happened to the balance of the unused funds and Prof. Chang responded that the money was distributed to the other 17 awardees, since several other candidates contacted could not take up the award at a late stage.

4.          The next item was a presentation from Prof. Zhi-Jie Liu on behalf of Prof. Zihe Rao for a bid to host the AsCA09 meeting in Beijing. Prof. Liu indicated this would be run jointly with the Biophysics Society of China, of which Prof. Rao was currently chairman, the Chinese Crystallographic Association and the Institute of Biophysics, Chinese Academy of Sciences. A number of strong arguments for hosting the conference were put forward, including involvement of key personnel, their past experience of conference organization, infrastructure and location, as well as the excellent transportation and accommodation logistics for Beijing. The likely proposed venue would be the Beijing International Conference Centre (BICC), which is just next to the 2008 Olympic site. It was anticipated that this could cope with up to 2,500 people. An alternative venue might be the Beijing Friendship Hotel, which had been used successfully for a Intl. Structural Genomics Organization (ISGO) conference in 2006. Several comments and questions were received. Prof. Vijayan asked Prof. Liu to confirm that the Chinese Crystallographic Association would be involved, since the original concept was a joint meeting with their society's annual meeting. Prof. Guss asked how many local participants would be expected based on past annual meetings. Prof. Liu confirmed that the crystallographic association would be involved and indicated that the Biophysical meeting last held in April 2006 typically had 400-600 delegates. Some concern was raised that small molecule and other crystallographers might be 'swamped' by the large number of bio-physical scientists. Prof. Williams asked what dates would be considered and whether the dates for the national association meetings in 2009 had been set. Prof. Liu indicated that dates for the national meetings were not yet fixed but October/ early November would be most likely times. Prof. Lal supported the bid and indicated that a previous conference he had attended there had been well-run and successful. Prof. Vijayan asked and received the assent of all present to endorse the bid from Beijing to host AsCA09. Prof. Duax strongly urged that the meeting be well advertised and promoted through the IUCr newsletter.

5.          The next agenda item was a presentation by Prof. Se Won Suh of Seoul National University, and President of the Korean Crystallographic Association for 2008-9, for the hosting of AsCA10 by Korea. This had been suggested at the past meeting in Tsukuba. Prof. Suh gave a number of strong reasons why Korea should host the conference, foremost being that no previous AsCA meeting had been held there. It was also noteworthy that the crystallographic community in Korea was growing. Regarding dates for the conference, the period from September-mid December could be considered, but most likely would be late October-early November. The avoidance of other key meetings of interest was important, such as ISDSB 2010, which would be held in Paris. The location of the meeting venue had not yet been finalized but details of several possibilities were presented for consideration; the key issues were primarily a) facilities, location, b) cost, and c) transportation logistics. Easiest for international access would be Seoul, which had two convention centers (COEX and KINTEX) that might be utilized. In general costs for Seoul would be higher than the rest of the country. Hence Busan, Gwangju and Jeju Island in the south of the country were also possible venues, with either cost advantages or tourist attractions. The last of these, Jeju, did have some direct international flights and a convention center. Gwangju had two possible locations including a graduate institute GJIST. In Busan the BEXCO convention center would be the likely venue.

Prof. Suh also mentioned the likely budget for the conference would be ca US$100,000 plus money from IUCr sponsorship and industrial sponsors/exhibitors.� Proposed fees would be kept to a minimum but were anticipated that the needed US$100K revenues would come from 200 x $US300 for full registrants (US$60K) and 200 x US$200 for student registrants (US$40K). The cost of the convention center would vary depending on the location chosen, but estimated to be in the range US$40-60K.

Some discussion followed on the transportation logistics within Korea; Prof. Lal asked whether Daejon would be a possible site and straightforward location connected directly to Incheon International airport near Seoul. Prof. Suh responded that this was not as convenient as supposed, because there are no domestic flights to Daejon and the limosine service from Incheon International airport to Daejon may take two hours or more. Prof. Kobe asked about anticipated Korean student attendance at the proposed venues and Prof. Desiraju commented that it was important that student attendance at the conference should be optimized, so travel and accommodation costs for the chosen venue needed to be carefully considered. In general, most parts of the country could be accessed fairly quickly by either train or via an internal flight following transfer at Incheon to the nearby Gimpo domestic airport. Following brief discussion Prof. Vijayan received the agreement of all those present to endorse the bid from Korea to host AsCA10.

6.          The next item, which was additional to the published agenda, was a short presentation by Prof. Ashwini Nangia on behalf of the Indian crystallographic community for their bid to host IUCr23 in Hyderabad in 2014. Since this would be discussed and voted on at the next IUCr in Osaka 2008 it was felt that endorsement and support of the bid by the AsCA council was fitting and would benefit the proposal. Prof. Nangia indicated that the bid was put together on behalf of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and the Indian Crystallographic Association (ICA). The rationale for hosting the congress in India, and Hyderabad in particular, was from several factors; firstly the IUCr congress had never been previously held there and yet India had a long and rich history in crystallography, with a surge of research in both small molecule and macro-molecular areas since the 1980s. Several centers of excellence could be identified; of these Hyderabad was favored since it had a cluster of universities and institutes and both pharma and materials R&D laboratories. A new international airport had recently opened there, directly served by Dubai, Frankfurt, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur, as well as a state of the art convention centre capable of holding several thousand delegates. Prof. Nangia felt that a large contingent of local and Asian attendees could be anticipated with a realistic target of 2,500 delegates.

Most opinions and comments were highly favorable for the Hyderabad bid and the members fully endorsed it. A question was raised about what competing bids might be presented in Osaka, Prof. Duax confirmed that Canada would submit a bid and IUCr President Prof. Ohashi mentioned that Prague (Praha) from the Czech Republic would also bid. Whilst Europe had hosted several of the recent IUCr congresses, it was understood that there was no fixed order and that, in the end, it would be IUCr delegates who would decide and vote. Prof. Duax welcomed such healthy competition and mentioned that when IUCr was next held in the Americas it might be more appropriate that Latin America (eg Brazil) acted as host.

7.          The revision of country fees was the next item on the agenda. A proposal was received from the AsCA trustee Prof. Hall to both modify the country membership categories and dues. The current annual fees had been kept constant for a long period and it was thought timely to now have some modest increase. Furthermore, to keep paperwork and handling fees low, it was suggested to allow member countries to pay on a triennial, rather than annual basis, with the new scheme as indicated in the Table below.

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| CountryCategory | Annual FeeA$ (old fee) | Triennial FeeA$ | EntitledVotes |
| 1 (I) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 (I) | - (0) | 100 | 1 |
| 3 (II) | 200 (120) | 500 | 2 |
| 4 (III) | 400 (240) | 1000 | 4 |

The old system of categories were I, II and III; currently member countries of category I paid no fees, category II (China, Korea, New Zealand and Taipei) currently A$120 and category III (Australia, India and Japan) A$240. In the new system there would be four categories, with the fee structure shown above. Countries in category I could chose to pay a small triennial fee which would give them some voting rights at AsCA council meeting, category II countries would need to pay A$500 per three years (or A$200 per year) and category III countries a triennial fee of A$1,000 (or $A400 per year), with voting entitlements of 2 or 4 respectively. All member countries, (eg Singapore etc) would be encouraged to 'upgrade' their membership category. After some discussion the new fee and category structure was approved. Prof. Desiraju stressed the need for AsCA to learn from the success of ACA in obtaining private funding from industry and sponsors.

8.          Prof. Ohashi next presented a related topic, which was the issue of national adhering bodies to IUCr. It was thought regrettable that of the entire Asia-Australasia region, only seven member countries paid adherence fees of US$800 per year to the International Union of Crystallography. He proposed that one way to boost the number of affiliated countries was to set up a structure and policy of 'group adherence'. Thus for example several South East Asian countries might act as a single group. This would pave the way for closer country ties to IUCr and allow at least some voting rights at the IUCr congresses. One further tangible benefit might be discounting of IUCr products, such as journals, to several institutions from the new member counties.

Two difficulties remained; first individuals from such countries had to be identified who were willing and able to organize the group structure and secondly the membership fee of US$800 per year had to be found. Prof. Ohashi sought approval from the AsCA council to initially cover the IUCr adherence fee for a group body from the AsCA region. Although several comments were made that this was not an insignificant amount given the relatively low revenues generated by AsCA itself, (item 7 above) assent was given that this expense would be initially covered if a group body could be formed. The new council office bearers would need to work closely with individuals from some of the smaller regional countries, such as Prof. Altaf Hussain from Bangladesh, in order to bring this to fruition by the next IUCr in Osaka.

9.          The election of AsCA office bearers for the next tri-ennium was the next item. Prof. Vijayan said that despite extensive solicitation, no external nominations had been received by either himself, or Prof. Williams, for any of the three positions. However, following extensive informal discussions at AsCA07 in Taipei the following names had been suggested and would now be presented to the council for their endorsement or comment. First, the consensus suggestion for future President was Prof. Mitchell Guss from the University of Sydney, who was currently serving as the Vice-President of AsCA, and the future Vice-President would be Prof. Se Won Suh from Korea. Prof. Suh had already successfully served as Program Chair for the AsCA07 Taipei conference and would be a key organizer for the AsCA10 meeting in Korea. Finally the nominee for new Secretary/ Treasurer was Prof. Haller from Thailand, who had long been active in the society. No dissent for any of these nominations was received and the motion to approve the appointment of all three was carried with the unanimous support of those present.

10. Despite efforts to persuade Prof. Hall to continue in his role as Trustee of the society, he had recently decided to step down and hand over management of the asssoication's accounts to a successor. He mentioned that a candidate for his replacement had been identified. Prof. Hall indicated that Prof. Mark Spackman of University of Western Australia had been approached by him to take over the role and had agreed. It was of note that Prof. Spackman had relevant experience in overseeing the Ted Maslen fund used to support Aus/NZ attendees to international conferences. In addition he suggested that an Associate-Trustee, Prof. Charlie Bond also of UWA, be appointed if Prof. Spackman's nomination was approved. Prof. Hall emphasized that these names were suggestions on his part and if others wished to take on the role they should put themselves forward. In principle the AsCA funds were not mandated to remain in Australia. Prof Williams queried whether there were any negative tax connotations to which the answer was no. The appointments of Prof. Spackman as Trustee and Prof. Bond as Associate Trustee were then confirmed with the assent of the council members.

11. There being no further business, the new president Prof. Guss thanked Prof. Vijayan for his astute and valued leadership of the society for the past three years and the meeting was adjourned, with thanks from Prof. Vijayan for the attendance and contribution of those present, at 2.00pm.