

Minutes of the 2006 DAP Executive Committee Meeting

held from 6:45 - 10pm, April 23, 2006, Hyatt Regency, Dallas, TX.

Attending: Chuck Dermer, Tod Strohmayer, Bernard Sadoulet, Chung Pei Ma, Neil Gehrels, Joan Centrella, Jim Ryan.

APS Guests/Visits: Judy Franz, Mike Lubell, Tom McIlrath

1. **Welcome and Introductions: Sadoulet**
2. **Chuck Dermer gave a summary of the APS Council Meeting.** Of note was an Office of Public Affairs (OPA) declaration of opposition to first use of nuclear weapons. The general opinion of the committee members present is that we endorse such a declaration. In general the APS is in good shape financially. There is a recognition that it is a challenging environment in Washington for science funding, with the NASA space science and astrophysics situation particularly worrisome. There were increases in some agencies however, tied with the competitiveness initiative (discussed by Mike Lubell later in the meeting).
3. **Secretary-Treasurer (ST) report:** DAP is in good shape financially. There was a 6% increase in membership, with the budget stable. Essentially all of DAPs current expenses are associated with the April APS meeting. Fewer number of student grants for this meeting, perhaps due to inadequate publicizing of the program. Will do a better job for the 2007 meeting.
4. **DAP Election:** Due to a combination of the new secretary - treasurer still learning the "ropes," and other committee members having strong time constraints the election did not occur on its usual schedule. DAP needs to elect a new Vice Chair and 2 new executive committee members, to replace outgoing members John Beacom and Steve Boggs. We thank them for their service. A nominating committee was appointed (Steve Holt, Susan Lamb, Josh Frieman), and we now (as of 5/15/06) have a slate of candidates. Candidates have been contacted by the secretary-treasurer, and the election will be held via online balloting in the late-May to mid June timeframe. Once statements are received from candidates this can begin.
5. **Future of the April Meeting:** John Beacom and Joan Centrella participated in the APS forum on the status of the April meeting. Joan summarized those discussions and John also provided written summaries. The committee extensively discussed the issues that have been raised and possible solutions. From the APS viewpoint, the April meeting does not pay for itself, and it has grown less vital than the March meeting, for example. Other units (DPF, DNP DAMOP etc.) are not that happy with the meeting and feel it could perhaps be replaced or just bypassed by other unit-specific meetings. John prepared a nice written summary. We can post that on the DAP webpage (I will ask John). The upshot is that over the long term, APS and other units would like to see some evolution in the April meeting to make it more relevant, better attended and overall have more impact scientifically. The April meeting is effectively DAP's only yearly meeting, so it's health has important implications for DAP's future and relevance. Perceived strengths of the meeting are its broad, interdisciplinary nature, which connects many physics disciplines to astrophysics. This should be maintained. The ability of students to give talks is also perceived as a strength, although the emphasis on talks is at odds with other portions of the astronomy community (as at the AAS meetings). Would improvements such as offering child care support enable more attendance? A location near or periodically in the Nation's capital might improve the importance and relevance (attendance?), but cost is another concern. It has been suggested that the meeting have an overall, unifying science theme. This was thought to be a good idea. Judy Franz summarized APS's position as, no immediate changes, but continuing to search for ways to improve it. Commitments for meetings over the next two years puts some inertia into the system. Although a

- diversity of opinions were represented on the committee, the feeling was that the meeting does "work" at some level, and that the solution might be in smaller scale improvements as opposed to major surgery.
6. **NASA and the Space science/astrophysics situation:** Bernard felt it would be useful for DAP to take some action regarding the dire funding scenario at NASA with regard to space science. One avenue of attack discussed was to try and instigate a National Academies review of the NASA funding situation and its impact on the health of the Nation's science programs. Mike Lubell from the APS Office of Public Affairs was cautiously optimistic that this could be useful, and agreed to help out from the APS side. Bernard was going to get the ball rolling with an email to Michael, laying out the concerns of the community. Mike Lubell also outlined the recent successes of OPA with the competitiveness initiative, and the Capital Hill Quarterly publication.
 7. **APS financial status:** Outgoing APS treasurer Tom McIlrath gave a short summary of the status of APS, and its publications. It appears the APS and its journal are in a healthy financial state. Interestingly, submissions to APS journals, notably phys. rev. letters are strongly up, and tied to increases from China and other international researchers.
 8. **DAP webpages and newsletters:** The secretary-treasurer organized the movement of the DAP webpages, and they are now being hosted by APS. This should facilitate updates and continuity as the committee evolves over time. It was agreed we should come out with the Newsletter, and the webpages need to be brought up to date. I will start to do this and it seems prudent that the Newsletter could be timed to carry announcements from the elections, which should be completed in the June to early July timeframe. The secretary-treasurer would appreciate inputs and assistance from other Executive Committee members with regard to the Newsletter.
 9. **2007 April meeting planning, invited sessions and topics:** There was some discussion and strategy on how to start thinking about organizing sessions and in particular joint sessions with other units. This was mostly for the benefit of Neil, who had to attend the initial program meeting for next year's April meeting the following morning! Early planning seemed to be an important part of the process, and that DAP does not want to get over-committed with too many jointly sponsored sessions.
 10. **Other items:** There was a suggestion that the Committee should hold a regular/semi-regular set of telecons to try and keep abreast of business that needs imminent attention. This was generally thought to be a good idea. The Secretary-Treasurer will investigate and tentatively schedule one for early summer, in association with the election and results.

The meeting adjourned.

Tod Strohmayer, 05/15/06