

# Minutes of the 2007 DAP Executive Committee Meeting

**April 15, 2007, Jacksonville, FL**

**In Attendance:** Jim Ryan (chair), Neil Gehrels (chair elect), Steve Kahn (vice chair), Tod Strohmayer (S-T), Bernard Sadoulet (past chair), Joan Centrella (at large member), Chuck Dermer (APS councilor)

**APS Guests/Visits:** Judy Franz, Joe Serene, Steve Pierson

**Other Visitors:** Martin Pohl (TeV white paper summary)

The meeting began with discussions surrounding the 2007 DAP election. The S-T summarized the status of the election. Results were not yet available at the time of the meeting. This was basically a result of the nominating process, which ran a little longer than anticipated. Voting would remain open until April 20, and results would be known shortly thereafter. Balloting was to fill three positions; Vice Chair (between Gary Zank and Michael Turner), Secretary - Treasurer (between Brenda Dingus and Carl Akerlof), and two at large committee members (amongst Vicky Kalogera, Dave Kieda, Leslie Rosenberg, and Scott Hughes). Participation in the election is at about 21.5%, which is in the typical range for recent polls.

Discussions concerning the election process in general followed. Several members expressed the concern that for many DAP members we may have a "ballot of unknowns," partly due to the diversity of DAP in terms of research fields. So, in the worst case we may have an election based on name recognition alone. It was also expressed that this may be seen pessimistically, that most voters read candidates statements and make an informed choice. One possible way to mediate this concern would be to expand the committee somewhat, the idea of two additional at-large members was floated. This would increase diversity on the committee. The discussions also brought up larger issues of incoming committee members not really being "groomed" for the job. Suggestions included moving up the election process, so that new members could attend the exec. committee meeting BEFORE they assume their duties; and that new nominees be clearly informed of what their responsibilities and duties are (ie. some list of duties for each committee member). Efforts to have a stricter calendar for the election process, nominations, voting etc., would be helpful. In the context of making sure committee members understand responsibilities, it was suggested that a telecon be initiated shortly after the April meeting to get new committee members "up to speed." The S-T agreed to take this on as an action item.

The division is in good financial health, and the membership has grown to 1,979 (growth at the ~4% level). Division assets increased from the previous calendar year, so it seems clear that we could increase our expenditures over the next few years, to, for example, increase membership, expand the student travel grant program and increase the overall visibility of the division. The division is supporting nine Graduate students under the travel program this year. Steve Kahn suggested we produce a flyer or poster for distribution around the country (world?) to relevant academic departments, etc. This was pretty unanimously thought to be a good idea. It was also suggested to "sweeten the pot" for the travel grants program by covering students registration fees. Judy Franz (APS) agreed this could be done, and it was also well supported by the committee members.

New APS fellows nominated by DAP for 2006 included; S. Ritz, B. Dingus, K. S. Cheng, C. Gammie, P. Kronberg, N. Murray, F. Rasio. The fellows nomination process was discussed, and it was concluded that the division does not have enough participation in the fellows process, and the committee is again late in expediting nominations this year. More contact with the membership concerning the need to nominate worthy candidates, and doing it early enough in the cycle, and with specific "how to" information was expressed. A reconstituted

newsletter could help in this regard (see more on this below).

Martin Pohl appeared before the committee and updated us on the status of the DAP-solicited white paper on the future of TeV gamma-ray astronomy. Discussion concerning the preparation and timeliness of the white paper ensued. It was thought that preparation should be moved up in order to be able to strongly influence the decadal survey process. Furthermore, the committee recommended that it ask for a SAG to be formed, which would be an appropriate intended audience for the report. This is because SAGENAP no longer exists and would have had the policy influence and been a likely recipient of the paper. The paper needs to target/create the right funding agency constituency. Related to this, as well as other discussions, it was suggested that the committee could/should consider to invite strategic agency "movers and shakers" either to the APS meeting (NSF, NASA, DOE, etc.), the DAP executive committee meeting, or both.

Chuck Dermer gave a somewhat abbreviated APS council meeting summary (due to the lateness of the hour). He reported that the Council meeting spent considerable time on the issue of whether the APS should advocate or sponsor a discussion/forum on "Reducing the carbon footprint in the US economy." Opinions for and against the APS getting involved in this were presented. Steve Kahn indicated that he thought it just wouldn't have much impact. Others suggested that if the APS issued a report, sticking to science aspects, that it could have an effect.

The status of the division newsletter was discussed. The division has not had a "regular" newsletter for several years. Communication of important issues, dates, etc. with the division has been via email to the membership from the S-T (through the APS). The committee felt that the newsletter should be resurrected. It should be timed so as to have maximum impact on important upcoming needs and deadlines (Fellows nominations, student travel grants), and also contain other relevant news. What format the newsletter should take was also discussed, and will need to be agreed upon (ie. email containing html links, pdf attachment etc.).

Judy Franz, Joe Serene, and Stephen Peirson of the APS visited the committee and gave updates on related APS matters. Judy discussed some future April meeting concerns. The next meeting will be in St. Louis (2008), and will be joint with a high-energy density plasmas group. The historical connections with cosmic rays suggests that DAP highlight this in some fashion. The 2009 meeting is scheduled for Denver, joint with the Sherwood Fusion theory conference, and 2010 will be in Washington, DC. Judy indicated that every third meeting will likely be in DC, but earlier in the year than April. The idea of an overall "theme" for the meetings was discussed (the "universe of physics," was suggested by Neil, for example). Joe Serene gave a short summary of APS finances. In brief the APS is in good financial shape, but concerns exist regarding the future of publishing (open access), and how this could impact revenues. Steve Pierson briefed the committee on the status of the political workings of the APS and the research funding landscape. With the change in control of Congress, it appears that there may be an improvement in the support for basic research and an improvement in the balance between funding to industry vs. labs and universities. Unfortunately, NASA still seems to be outside these various "competitiveness" initiatives.

For the first time in recent memory, the executive committee took the lead on suggesting topics for plenary speakers, invited and joint-invited sessions and a theme for the next April meeting in April in St. Louis. Steve Kahn left with a sizeable list of possible topics. The final topics will be negotiated with the other divisions and forums in the coming months.

Concerning the future of the division, the committee recognized that the demographics of the division is changing in response to the new interests in dark energy, dark matter, gravity research and astro-particle connections and cosmology. Many junior scientists and students in this area should be recruited into the DAP while they maintain, perhaps, a membership in DPF or GGR. This might be accomplished, to some degree,

through better outreach efforts at labs and universities.

It was also thought that we should review the membership of the exec committee to perhaps allow for more at-large members. This would allow a more realistic reflection of the division's membership and demographics. At the same time, the committee agreed that the at-large members must be engaged to a greater degree with duties and responsibilities. This is so, because many duties fall upon the Secretary-Treasurer and the Chair-Elect during the hectic times of preparing for fellowships, elections and next year's meeting. In conversations subsequent to the meeting, it was suggested that an assistant secretary - treasurer position might be very helpful. Details of this, and how to expand the committee will need to be worked out in the coming months.

The meeting adjourned.

Tod Strohmayer, 06/10/07