

FGSA Executive Committee Meeting

Teleconference 11:00am EDT May 23

Present: Chad Topaz (CT), Karsten Heeger (KH), Kelly Korreck (KK), Tom Tierney (TT), Louise Parsons (LP), Xin Chen (XC), Brian Utter (BU)

Absent: Jennifer Rittenhouse West, Susan Niebur

1. CAM 2003

Meeting began with an update on the CAM 2003 conference by KH. At this stage there is not much complete information. Irving Lerch (in charge of international meetings at APS) is in favor of definitely going ahead with the conference although information from Trish Lettieri and Judy Franz suggests that others at APS are more hesitant. We have been asked to form a program committee and begin planning but to be aware that the meeting may not go ahead. We will use the program committee to get ideas for the meeting which will be written up and forwarded it to APS who will make the final decision (along with the other societies, SMF and CAP) as to whether the meeting will go ahead. The program committee should aim to coordinate with the program committees of the other societies. TT asked whether the meeting will be held in English or if we will require translator services. KH assumed that the meeting (and communication with the other societies) would be in English, and any need for translators would be a decision that could be made once plans were more certain.

It was pointed out that APS usually supports “topical meetings” on scientific issues and may not be willing to support this meeting. The program committee should plan to convince APS that they should support such a meeting (whether this support is financial or otherwise).

TT gave an overview of possible funding sources for CAM 2003. Irving Lerch has possible funds from DOE and NSF and one other source. One issue we may want to consider is how we can centralize the conference topic or theme so that all funding sources are willing to contribute. TT has also pursued funding from Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore Labs. These labs may set aside money for students from the labs to attend the meeting. (It is unlikely that the labs can contribute funds for other students without DOE-HQ approval and since DOE has already agreed to support the meeting this is unlikely). The national labs also have recruitment funds to send recruiters to meetings and we may be able to use the funds charged to recruiters attending the meeting to assist other students. It is also possible that the home country (Mexico) may provide funds to attract students to the meeting.

It is unclear at this stage how much money is needed (since this is the first time such an event has been planned). We need to consider how we might assign travel grants to students (have universities nominate students?).

The formation of the CAM 2003 program committee was discussed and it was agreed that we should open participation on this committee to our general membership as well as FGSA officers. KK offered to put together an email survey to gauge interest in the meeting from our members. CT pointed out that we need to be careful in the wording of this email since the meeting is not a done deal and we are not leading the organization. The number of program committee members needed is unclear. TT pointed out that the program committee for the Four Corners Section has about 10 members (for a conference with around 200 attendees). At this stage we will

open participation to anyone who wishes to help out and choose around 3 people to communicate with the other societies. KK and KH agree to co-chair this program committee and will discuss this further via telephone and email. They will act as key contacts with APS and the other societies.

Ideas for the conference theme or topic were discussed briefly. TT suggested “Physics in the 21st Century”. It was agreed that we could post further ideas to the listserve. The conference should be framed to be useful for graduate students and attractive to funders.

Note from TL: “I’d like to clarify information discussed on the CAM 2003 meeting. APS is very willing to support such a meeting and the only hesitation is that the hosting society (SMF) be allowed to take the lead. Judy and I discussed that we wait for their input so that it does not appear that we are “stealing their thunder.” All three participating societies have approved the idea of the meeting but no logistical commitments have been made. I suggested to Karsten that he get the names of contacts at the other two societies (which he has initiated) before spending a lot of FGSA time and energy on planning. With the FGSA volunteers, APS staff and the other two societies, I’m sure that the CAM 2003 will come together and be a success. If you need more information or assistance, please let me know.”

2. Four Corners Meeting

TT gave a briefing of the ideas for FGSA involvement with the Four Corners Section. The Four Corners Section includes Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah. Their meetings usually attract around 150-200 attendees of which around 10% are students (in fact student representation at sectional meetings is typically higher than other unit meetings). Hence the focus of these meeting is often on students and a student presentation competition is usually held. There is a student representative on the Executive Committee of the Four Corners Section although this person has not yet organized any student events at Four Corners meetings. FGSA has been asked to participate in the Four Corners meetings. One possibility is to host a pizza lunch during which student issues could be discussed. It was agreed that this would be a good idea for the FGSA to be involved with. The issue of how we would fund this event was raised. BU suggested that if we organize the event the Four Corners section might be willing to pay for it. TT informed us that our next installment of money from APS is due in October with membership current through September and the final allocation will be in January for membership through December. CT also suggested that perhaps the FGSA could sponsor the student competition at the Four Corners meeting.

KH mentioned that we might also wish to sponsor events at other divisional meetings as many students attend divisional meetings rather than the March or April meetings. CT offered to find out from APS what student attendance was like at each divisional meeting. KH suggested that we inform divisional heads about the FGSA and offer to work with them. LP offered to contact DFD to set something up for their November meeting (which typically has a high percentage of students attending). KH will attend the DNP meeting in October and TT will attend the Plasma meeting in November and they may try to set up FGSA events at these meetings. The idea of creating a program committee for March, April and divisional meetings was raised although some felt that it may be difficult to get volunteers for this as well as the CAM 2003 committee. The organization of such a committee would ultimately be up to the Program Committee Chair. CT suggested that FGSA officers offer to serve as a contact for various divisions and at this stage we will wait to before soliciting volunteers for a general program committee.

3. Membership

CT gave an update on our membership. In June 2001 we had 258 members. In December 2002 we had 416 and by May 2002 we had 562. Our goal for this year is to have 1000 members by December 2002. CT is preparing a letter to department chairs which will be sent out by Trish and Kathleen. BU has written an email letter to members of SPS which should have been sent out already. CT is going to check that it did go out. BU thought it might be interesting to know how many new APS members joined FGSA recently as opposed to current APS members joining FGSA. CT suggested that the APS Student Application Form should have a line near the top such as "Join FGSA Free Now!". CT plans to write a generic letter to heads of APS divisions to encourage their students to join FGSA. Officers of FGSA can use this letter to communicate with divisions they belong to or have interest in. We will keep a record of who has sent the letter to different divisions. CT also encouraged us to use our personal contacts and word of mouth to recruit new members. He will write a generic email to be used for this purpose. LP asked about the Grad Phi groups (groups of physics graduate students) at some larger universities. KK offered to contact Grad Phi at Michigan and find out about Grad Phi groups at other schools. TT suggested that MIT and Harvard have Grad Phi groups and CT suggested that there may be a website for these groups. LP suggested that a note about Grad Phi groups could go in the letter to department heads. LP will also look into emailing students who attended APS meetings recently.

4. Membership Survey

CT gave a briefing of the purpose of the membership survey. Our goal is to become more aware of the needs of our members and to gauge if we are providing services that they want. We can also use this opportunity to find out more about the types of people that we are being successful in recruiting. LP gave an overview of the technical issues of the survey. It is unlikely that many paper surveys would be returned. A web-based survey would provide anonymity, allow results to be tallied more easily and may be easier to complete and return than an email based survey. In addition the code we use for the survey may be adapted for online voting in our elections. A web-based survey would require some CGI programming. BU, TT and KK offered to look into this as they may be able to help with the programming in some way. To ensure that a member only completes the survey once we might be able to send their membership number with the email. LP will check with APS Tech Support about this.

CT gave a summary of types of questions we may wish to ask including how they heard about FGSA, what are the issues they face as graduate students, what would they like from the FGSA, are they willing to volunteer to help the FGSA and which FGSA services and programming have they used (and how often). TT suggested that we have a separate (ongoing) survey for new members. The membership survey is planned to be released in the early fall. We may be able to get additional information on demographics of our members from Trish Lettieri and use this to target non-member groups.

5. Other Business

KH asked for our opinions on the teleconference. It was generally agreed that it had been very useful and that we should plan to meet in this way on a more regular basis. KK checked for prices online and found quotes between 6c-16c per minute. KH suggested that we express our enthusiasm for participating in more conference calls to Trish Lettieri and Judy Franz (with the hope that they may be willing to fund it).

Meeting concluded at 12:30pm

Summary of Action Items

1. KK and KH will act as co-chairs of the CAM 2003 program committee
2. KK will draft an email survey to gauge interest in this meeting from our members. This email will also solicit participation in the program committee
3. The program committee will create a document to be presented to APS outlining our ideas for the meeting and stating why APS should support this meeting.
4. Officers will post ideas for the theme of the meeting to the listserv.
5. TT will communicate with the Four Corners section about hosting a student pizza lunch and possibly sponsoring their student competition.
6. CT will find data on student attendance at APS unit and divisional meetings
7. LP offered to contact DFD to set up a possible FGSA sponsored event at the DFD meeting
8. KH will attend the DNP meeting in October and TT will attend the Plasma meeting in November and may organize FGSA events at these meetings
9. CT will write a letter to heads of physics departments asking them to encourage their students to join the FGSA. This letter will also ask them to send us information about any Grad Phi groups at their school.
10. CT will also write a generic email that FGSA Officers can use to send to our personal contacts to encourage them to join FGSA
11. CT plans to write a generic letter that could be sent to heads of APS units to encourage their student members to join FGSA
12. CT will check that the letter to SPS was sent out
13. CT will ask for a line such as “Join FGSA for Free Now!” on the general APS student application form.
14. LP will email students who recently attended APS meetings
15. BU, TT and KK will look into programming for the membership survey
16. LP will check with APS technical support about membership survey
17. KH will write a letter to APS expressing our enthusiasm for further conference calls and asking if they would be willing to fund them.