

COMMISSION 27: VARIABLE STARS

(LES ÉTOILES VARIABLES)

PRESIDENT: Jørgen Christensen-Dalsgaard

VICE-PRESIDENT: Conny Aerts

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE: Carla Cacciari, Peter Cottrell, Ed Guinan, Petr Harmanec, Don Kurtz, Jaymie Matthews, Pawel Moskalik, Dimitar Sasselov, S. Seetha, Doug Welch and Patricia Whitelock.

The present report provides brief minutes of the business meeting of Commission 27, which took place on 21 July 2003, starting at 2 pm, during the XXVIth General Assembly in Sydney.

The outgoing President, J. Christensen-Dalsgaard, opened the meeting. The agenda proposed by him was adopted. He then reported briefly on the most important scientific happenings related to the commission in the past three years.

The outgoing President proposed the following new composition of the organizing committee of the commission:

- New President: Conny Aerts
- New Vice-President: Steve Kawaler
- New OC Members: Tim Bedding, Margarida Cunha, Gerald Handler, Peter Martinez
- Remaining OC members: Carla Cacciari, Jørgen Christensen-Dalsgaard (ex officio), Peter Cottrell, Dimitar Sasselov, Seetha Somasundaram, Doug Welch

This proposal was unanimously approved by the participants of the meeting.

The outgoing president expressed his appreciation for all the efforts of the departing OC Members: Petr Harmanec, Don Kurtz, Jaymie Matthews, Pawel Moskalik, Patricia Whitelock, and Ed Guinan.

The outgoing president highlighted the new IAU statutes that were approved at the first General Assembly in Sydney and will be adopted as of the next GA in Prague in 2006. The main change is that the divisions will now be the primary scientific structure of the IAU. Commissions are created by the Divisions, initially for six years, but may then be extended for three years at a time, at the recommendation of the division; existing Commissions, including Commission 27, will start the initial six-year period with the adoption of the new statutes in 2006. A somewhat smaller organizing committee is foreseen than at present for the Commissions; this, and the details of the new bye-laws, must be taken into account in the election of the next organizing committee. The new statutes and bye-laws are available at the IAU web site.

As suggested by J. Christensen-Dalsgaard, the remainder of the meeting was chaired by the incoming President, C. Aerts. She expressed her gratitude to the participants for the confidence in her leading the Commission and thanked all the ex-officers. In particular she acknowledged the large amount of work done by Don Kurtz for the Commission in the past 12 years.

A traditional brief discussion was held on catalogues, naming conventions and data access. The participants chose not to concentrate on the issue of naming conventions. On the catalogues issue, it was felt that the CDS actually does a good job to provide data or links to existing databases through referencing. The important thing is that the owners of databases have to provide their name and contact information to CDS. It is particularly desirable that large consortia take care of this, such that the data become available to the whole community in a flexible way (e.g. including finding charts etc.).

Further, the commission strongly suggested as a general rule that each author adopts an open data policy, i.e. that data become available to anyone requesting it after publication.

The incoming president proposed to create an e-mail list of all the Commission members, including the new ones approved in Sydney, for efficient communication of Commission matters and to get feedback on a number of items from the whole commission. She will take action to construct such a list as soon as the IAU secretariat has updated the member list (likely near the end of September). Moreover, she suggested to update the commission web page in an attempt to turn it into an often-used communication channel. A call for ideas and action items will be sent to the commission members once the e-mail list is operational.

It was suggested to decide on requested commission support to meeting proposals only once per year rather than on a case-by-case basis as was done up to now. It was felt that this procedure is much more objective. This way of working is only possible if the Commission OC is able to rank the proposals and so it must determine its own submission deadline for proposals. It was proposed that a call for meeting proposals, explaining the new selection policy of the commission, will be sent out by e-mail to all Commission 27 members and to the presidents of all other IAU commissions for distribution among their members, early November 2003, with a response deadline of 25 December 2003. This suggestion of proposal ranking was approved by the participants and will be adopted by the organizing committee as of August 2003.

The meeting ended at 3.30pm.

Jørgen Christensen-Dalsgaard
President of the Commission