

Minutes of the Commission 15 Business Meeting
IAU 1997 General Assembly, Kyoto, Japan
Monday, August 25, 0900-1030

PRESIDENT: Michael F. A'Hearn
VICE-PRESIDENT: Vincenzo Zappalá
SECRETARY: Hermann Bönhardt

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Commission Membership

The president opened the meeting, welcoming members and interested guests. There were 29 in attendance, including at least 25 members of the commission. The agenda as previously posted on the commission's WWW site was adopted. The members stood for a moment of silence in honor of the six esteemed members of the commission who had died: M. P. Candy 04/11/94, R.A. Lyttleton 16/05/95, R. Smoluchowski 12/01/96, A. Mrkos 29/05/96, J. Rahe 18/06/97, E. Shoemaker 18/07/97, and V. Vanysek 27/07/97. The commission then elected new members K. Muinonen (Finland), S. Price (USA), and J. Watanabe (Japan). Furthermore, the following IAU membership nominees were elected to the commission pending their confirmation as IAU members at the second session of the General Assembly: J.-P. Barriot (France), T. Bonev (Bulgaria), A. Fitzsimmons (United Kingdom), D. Foryta (Brazil), S. Ibadov (Tajikistan), Y. Ma (PR China), P. Magnusson (Sweden), F. Marzari (Italy), A. Nakamura (Japan), P. Rousselot (France), A. S. Sharma (USA), and J. Zhu (PR China).

Commission Officers

The commission, noting that nominees for president and vice president had already been forward to the IAU Executive Committee, elected officers for the next triennium, doing so by acclamation for president, vice-president, secretary, chairman of the working group on asteroids, and continuing members of the OC. The new officers will be: President - V. Zappalá (Italy), Vice-President - H. U. Keller (Germany), Secretary - K. Muinonen (Finland), Chair of the WG on Comets - W. Huebner, Chair of the WG on Asteroids - E. Tedesco, and Members of the OC - M. Bailey (United Kingdom), R. Binzel (USA), M. T. Capria (Italy), P. D. Feldman (USA), J. Fernandez (Uruguay), C. Lagerkvist (Sweden), A.-C. L'Herminier (France), K. Meech (USA), J. Watanabe (Japan), and R. M. West (Germany).

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Commission Organization and Communication

The president reported on the IAU's plans for greater involvement of the new divisions in the running of the IAU. One major role expected for the divisions is in the screening and ranking of proposals for IAU-sponsored scientific meetings. He also reported very briefly on the structure of Division III - Planetary System Sciences.

No initiative was undertaken to reinstall the former WG on Meteorites. However, this subject matter will still be covered in the triennial report as far as it is related to the commission's interests.

A particular endorsement of the Working Group on Interplanetary Pollution was not deemed necessary by the commission since the report of the WG had been submitted to Division III and they had forwarded it with a divisional resolution to the IAU Resolutions Committee.

The out-going commission officers have initiated the distribution of commission communication via electronic media. The commission web page can be found at www.ss.astro.umd.edu/IAU/comm15/ and can also be reached directly from the IAU web pages. Email addresses are available for almost 80 percent of the commission members for use in internal communication. In the future, the commission newsletters will be disseminated via email in one or more, widely used formats (LATEX, DVI, POSTSCRIPT) and they will be posted on the web pages. Members for whom email addresses are not now available will receive a last mailing indicating that they should respond with an email address or indicating that they do not have email access and must continue to receive printed mailings.

Resolutions

Coma Parameters

The commission discussed the confusion that arises when researchers try to compare water production rates reported by different investigators due to the use of different models and different parameters for the models. It was noted that the problem is more widespread than just indices for release of water, involving a lack of a standard way of reporting release of dust and also the lack of any standard for determining the nuclear magnitude of a comet. After a proposal to create a special working group, it was decided that the Working Group on Comets, augmented as seen fit by the chairman of the working group, should be charged with addressing this problem and the commission passed, unopposed, the following resolution as a charge to the working group:

IAU Commission 15, noting the great confusion that arises when comparing molecular production rates from various papers in the refereed literature and noting that much of this confusion is due to the wide range of models and parameters used therein to interpret the fluxes from emission features, resolves that the Working Group on Comets should appoint a subgroup charged with proposing a standard set of parameters for deducing a water release index. This group is charged with considering both the

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physical correctness of the parameters and the ease of application by astronomers in all situations. The working group should also consider whether other parameters, such as nuclear magnitudes, indices of dust release, and indices of gas/dust ratio, should similarly be standardized. This group will report back to Commission 15 in time to consider resolutions for adoption at the 24th General Assembly.

Minor Planet Center

The funding situation of the Minor Planet Center (MPC) was discussed briefly, noting the cessation of IAU support, the increasing workload at the MPC, the declining subscription revenues, and the temporary support provided by NASA. Although the MPC reports to Commission 20, its work is crucial in enabling the members of Commission 15 to carry out their work and Commission 15 therefore passed a resolution requesting that the IAU provide financial support to the MPC and authorizing the officers of Division III to provide a final wording that would make the actions of commissions 15 and 20 self-consistent. It was noted that a formal financial proposal would be necessary before any action was taken by the IAU and that this would be done through Commission 20 and Division III.

The Leonid Meteor Stream

A resolution supporting airborne campaigns to study the Leonid meteor showers in 1997 was introduced. After considerable discussion, an alternative resolution was passed by a vote of 8 to 4:

Commission 15, recognizing the unique opportunity of the 1998-1999 Leonid meteor showers for meteor studies, for cometary studies, and for studying the hazard of future meteor storms to spacecraft, and considering that this is a one-of-a-kind opportunity both because of the expected intensity of the events and because precession of the orbits will inhibit such intense activity for the foreseeable future (i.e., for centuries), urges all national and international agencies and organizations with relevant resources to encourage, coordinate, and support as wide a range of studies as possible, including airborne and space-borne studies as well as amateur and professional ground-based investigations.

Triennial Report

The further issuing of the triennial report of the commission was discussed. Roughly one half of the commission members present find the triennial report useful for their scientific work. Several options of formats for the report were discussed, consistent with discussions at the IAU Executive committee, *i.e.*, printed report in previous format to become an IAU publication 2-3 pages printed summary supplemented by a reference list sorted by subject for publication by the IAU 2-3 pages printed summary of the report for publication by the IAU every third year supplemented by an annual detailed version to be put on the commission web page.

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The exact format of the next report will be worked out between the responsible commission officers, the president and the vice-president of the commission.

Future Meetings

Due to the increasing number of workshops and conferences related to subjects of interest to our commission, some degree of coordination of the meetings both in subject and dates would be highly desirable for the interested scientists. Several ideas for an improvement of the situation were discussed, *i.e.*, information exchange between the organizers well in advance of the meeting installation of a joint webpage for advertising the meetings of interest keeping a fixed 3 years meeting cycle like IAU GA in year 1, ACM in year 2, other topics in year 3.

The discussion concluded that most likely any type of coordination of meetings is at present difficult to achieve since it may put unwanted constraints on the organizers of the meetings.

The president urged the incoming president to push for at least two sessions for the business meeting at the next General Assembly since it had been impossible to even get to potential new business from the floor at the present meeting which extended fully into the break.

Michael A'Hearn
10/19/1997