



IAU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 113

Bern, Switzerland, May 5th -9th, 2025

Report and Action Items

Participants

Executive Committee Members

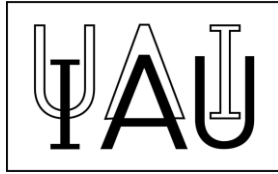
Willy Benz (President; Switzerland)
Diana Worrall (General Secretary; UK)
Brian P. Schmidt (President-elect; Australia)
Laura Ferrarese (Assistant General Secretary; Canada)
Hyesung Kang (Vice-President, 2nd term; Republic of Korea)
Solomon Tessema (Vice-President, 2nd term Ethiopia)
Ilya Usoskin (Vice-President, 2nd term; Finland)
James Okwe Chibueze (Vice-President, 1st term; South Africa)
Gražina Tautvaišienė (Vice-President, 1st term; Lithuania)
Monica Rubio (Vice-President, 1st term; Chile)
Debra Elmegreen (Past President, Advisor; USA)

Secretariat

Maria Rosaria D'Antonio (Head of Administration)
Lina Canas (Membership Coordinator)
Genevieve Marshall (virtual)

Division Presidents: (virtual)

Bonnie Alice Steves (UK)- Div. A
Ana I. Gomez de Castro (Spain) Div. B
Edward Leocadio Gomez (UK)- Div C
Matthew G. Baring (USA)-Div D
Toshifumi Shimizu (Japan)- Div E
Athena Coustenis (France)-Div. F
Merieme Chadid (France)-Div G
Claus Leitherer (USA)- Div. H
Cristina Carmen Popescu (UK)- Div. J



1. The President welcomed participants to the meeting.

2. Participants approved the agenda

3. Membership matters

3.1 Membership update, statistics

The Membership Coordinator made a brief presentation. Some of the statistical information that existed on the old website is being obtained via data-pulls applied to the migrated database. An informative geographical distribution map for new members was shown; map for all members is done, but not public.

3.2 National Membership applications, payment status

The Head of Administration summarized the status: suspended status for some countries; tolerance over some arrears given struggles; challenges where accountable institution is not an astronomy institution.

The General Secretary (GS) asked the EC for approval to poll the National Members (NMs) over Albania's application to become Observer – **unanimous approval by the EC**

Action: GS to poll the NMs over Albania's acceptance as Observer.

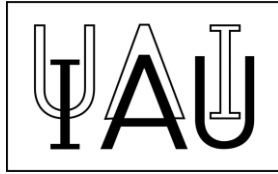
4. Division, Commission and WG matters

4.1 Division President (DP) reports

Overviews were given by the Division Presidents on the structure, activities, scientific bodies, and activities of their Divisions, including Ph.D. Prizes, symposia selection, Division Days at the GA, collaborations with the IAU Offices.

A point picked up for discussion was the uneven number of applications for the Ph.D. prizes across Divisions. Division J, where the number is high, would like an uneven allocation. Division C noted a high proportion of Associates in at least one of its Commissions.

Division B repeated the proposal, considered at the EC one year ago, for a new Commission on Astronomy in Space. This was picked up and discussed later in the EC meeting where it was noted that the comments from last year had not been addressed in the proposal presented. The EC recommended that the first step be a Working Group, with a view to possibly proposing a new Commission in conjunction with the Rome GA. In related discussion, also later in the meeting, it was noted that there is not clear statement in the Statutes, Bye-laws, or Working Rules about when a new Commission can be proposed, although it was the EC view that this is in



conjunction with a GA, when existing Commissions are reviewed. (Relevant references are Statute 21, WR 45, Bye-Law V 20)

Action: GS to write to Division B President describing the outcome of the discussion concerning the proposed new Commission.

Action: GS to review the Statutes, Bye-laws, and Working Rules with a view to suggesting a clarification to the rule for when a new Commission can be proposed.

DPs noted that not all Commissions are very active. It was emphasized that DPs need to provide recommendations concerning the continuation of their Commissions to the EC meeting in the GA year.

Action: DPs to establish better communication with the Presidents of Commissions X1 and H4.

Action: Secretariat to remind DPs in advance of the EC in the GA year that they need to provide recommendations concerning the continuation of their Commissions. The criteria go beyond whether or not an annual report is produced..

4.2 Annual Reports (taken later in the meeting)

The Membership Coordinator summarized the situation. All Division Reports are received. Commission reports are missing from A2, A3, E1, E2, E3.

Action: Secretariat to change the wording to Commission Presidents to include that they should send their reports also to the relevant DP(s) when submitted to the IAU.

EC WG reports were missing from

- Equity and Inclusion
- Exoplanetary Nomenclature
- Pro-Am Relations
- Women in Astronomy
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Action: The secretariat to send reminders for missing reports

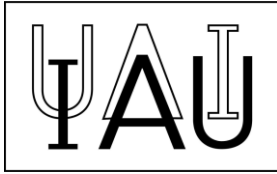
4.4 Executive committee WGs. (taken out of order later in the meeting)

Equity & Inclusion (EC liaison: Debra Elmegreen):

The change in leadership still needs to be finalized. The WG needs to cover the whole IAU.

Junior Members (EC liaison: Grazina Tautvaisiene):

Global Coordination (EC liaisons: President, Grazina Tautvaisiene, James Chibueze):



Kavli is interested in sponsoring another workshop and the topic must be decided quickly.

Women in Astronomy (EC liaison: Hyesung Kang):
The WG has been very active, with online meetings.

Dark & Quiet Skies (EC liaisons: AGS, Monica Rubio):

Pro-Am relations (EC liaison: Ilya Usoskin):
Contact with the EC liaison has been recently restored.

Functional Working groups on Nomenclature (EC liaisons: President and GS):
The EC liaisons have met with the WG leadership

5. Financial matters

5.1 Financial Report 2024

The GS presented the Financial Report.

It was noted that some expenditures will carry over as far as 2026. Some expenditure on the migration will be delayed from 2024 into 2025.

Financial Report approved by the EC

There was a word of appreciation by the President to the GS for the clear presentation of the finances.

5.2 Accounting and external Auditing, Finance Committee report

The annual audit has been completed showing the accounts to be in order. A positive report had been received from the Finance Committee.

5.3. Forecast 2025.

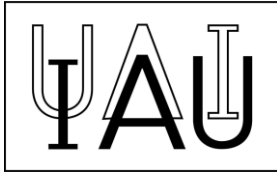
The GS presented the forecast for 2025.

The 2025 Forecast was approved by the EC

6. Discussion from DP meeting

Membership matters were discussed, including contrasting IAU membership categories with those of some national astronomy societies.

The EC considered the idea of changing the term Junior Member to Early Career Researcher worthy of consideration.



Action: The EC liaison to the EC WG for Junior Members to ask for discussion of the name within the WG.

Action: Secretariat needs to advertise the information that members should contact the new NCA or Adhering Organization when they move to work in a new country. (On further consideration within the Secretariat, it would perhaps be better for members to inform the Membership Coordinator who would inform the relevant National Member representative).

A discussion of how to improve recruitment of new members, particularly at the Junior level, resulted in several suggestions, including creating an improved brochure about membership and placing examples on the website of what it looks like to be an IAU member.

A discussion about the Ph.D. prizes confirmed that we should award prizes for all our Divisions, including supporting areas that are less mainstream. While there is no straightforward solution, the goal of maintaining a single prize per area (and therefore per Division) was considered correct.

The EC confirmed that in line with rules for continuation of Commissions, their creation is only in GA years. Working Groups can be created in other years.

7. Fundraising

The IAU fundraiser presented a report. A database has been established and more than fifty potential donors have been identified. Tax work is required before incorporating the possibility of legacies.

EC members raised several points including utilizing current and past EC members to talk to government and foundations, particularly in Africa and South America. The possibility of IAU merchandise was raised.

8. Press Office and Communications

The Membership Coordinator reported having sent out about 200 internal e-mails during the year, including about 120 to Division, Commission and Working Group lists. Announcements on the web site were being approved by the President (about 30 during the year), and they do not automatically trigger an e-mail to members. Using the ESO system, a newsletter had been aggregated from the announcements.

There was a discussion about Catalyst becoming an annual report, and a discussion surrounding the Press Office strategy.

It was recognized that this is an area in which we need to improve, including that the IAU has too little presence on social media. It was acknowledged that the EC meeting



is not a place to solve things and it should be addressed outside the EC meeting.

9. Prizes

9.1 PhD Prizes 2025

The EC was expecting a list from the DPs, including names and countries, for EC approval. Overlap between recipients and TGF prizes was considered not to be a problem.

The FAQ for Gruber Prize applicants was noted as very helpful, and it was suggested that something similar for the Ph.D. prize might be a good idea.

Action: the EC would like to see the statistics of the winners from previous years, including gender and geographical distribution. Membership Coordinator will provide this for EC 114.

Action: Division Presidents should inform the Ph.D. prize winners and advise them of what they are expected to provide for publicity.

Action: Division Presidents should draft FAQ for the PhD prize, perhaps in the breakout session at EC 114.

9.2 Gruber Fellowships 2025 approval

The Chair of the Fellowship Committee described an overview of the process and the three winners. The President addressed an enquiry as to whether the number of prizes might be increased by saying that Gruber had noted the increase in prize money (50 k to 70 k in 2019) and a further increase was not being considered at this time.

10. Scientific meetings

10.1 Symposia 2024-2025 updates

The AGS commented that the oversubscription for symposium grants is challenging. Once the IAU finances are stable it would be appropriate to consider increasing the 20 k euro allocation.

The 2025 symposium that will be virtual will charge a 50-euro registration fee and has committed to publishing proceedings.

10.2 Symposium Selection 2026

The AGS described the process and results.

DPs made some comments on the procedure which they thought would benefit from further clarity at their stage, since they felt DPs had interpreted things differently and some Steering Committees were surprised to see comments being written by other



Divisions.

Action: AGS to provide further clarification to DPs on the Division part of the selection process.

At the time of the meeting, the VPs had agreed on eight of the nine selections. The two most worthy candidates for the ninth slot had been identified, but a decision between them had not been reached. It was decided that the VPs would have a further discussion during a break in the EC meeting. This was done, resulting **in approval by majority of the Symposium Selection by the EC before the end of the meeting.**

10.3 Regional Meetings status, 2025-2026

It was noted that the three regional meetings will be MEARIM, Jordan (2025), APRIM Hong Kong (2026), LARIM, Mexico (2026).

Because the Shaw Foundation is an existing IAU sponsor, it was discussed that we should lead coordination of their potential sponsorship of APRIM.

Action: Our fundraiser to take action over potential Shaw Foundation sponsorship of APRIM.

11. Cooperation with External Organizations

11.1 ISC

The GS summarized the composition of the ISC and reported on having participated in their General Assembly in Oman. The GeoUnions are quite active and have regular meetings. It was noted that the President-elect and AGS are ISC Fellows.

11.2 I-HOW collaborations, COSPAR

The President commented on meetings with the COSPAR leadership. To extend current collaborations concerning I-HOW and COSPAR capacity building, COSPAR is interested in possibly collaborating with the IAU over the future use of archival data and in protection of the moon.

11.3 Other external collaborations

Some existing connections were noted (e.g., the Division G President with UNESCO.) Use of archival data may fit within Sustainable Development goals.

It would be useful to understand which IAU members already belong to external organizations and their working groups/projects in order to be cost-effective and not duplicate efforts, although we should avoid incidents of 'wearing two hats' and conflicts of interest.



12. IAU Digital Platform

12.1 Database, webpage, migration

The Membership Coordinator began a presentation of the migrated system which went live the week of March 25th, 2025. Grants forms have yet to be linked into the system.

The demonstration was derailed because of a complete and unexpected failure of the 'search function'. (The problem was later diagnosed as being a bug with the underlying commercial system upon which our system is built. The problem was that search was failing after an upgrade of the system unless all our web pages were 'republished'. We subsequently used the republishing workaround temporarily, and the system providers then fixed the bug.) Some serendipitous deficiencies of the new web pages were pointed out, as connected to mistakes, missing pages and broken links.

Action: VP James Chibueze will provide support and feedback over a systematic assessment of what is missing and not working, and make recommendations on how to fix things most efficiently.

13. IAU Publications (taken out of order at a later time)

13.1 Past Symposia

CUP still print hard copies, but it will finish once the 2025 volume has been completed.

13.2 Post-meeting Reports

Post-meeting reports are up-to-date and online.

13.3 GA -specific (Astronomy in Focus, Transactions)

A preface is needed for AiF 31 (Jose Miguel editor; the GS will write what is needed). AiF 31 needs publishing to clear the way for AiF 32 from Cape Town. There has been a good response from the Cape Town Focus Meetings and only one will be missing from the issue.

14. GA2030 Agreement

There has been iteration and this is close to being signed. It was noted that the cost to participants of electronic access to a publication is included in the registration fee; this was explicitly stated in the contract.

15. International year of APD.

This is noted to be in 2029. The asteroid passing between the Earth and Moon will be visible to the naked eye. The IAU has already participated in some discussions as part of two working groups. It would be useful to appoint IAU delegates for this who



reside close to the UN but who are not conflicted by already supporting a different entity.

16. EC location – April 2026

After discussion, three possibilities were left on the table for further consideration and decision: Portugal (Lisbon), Ethiopia (Addis Ababa), Lithuania (Vilnius). It was pointed out that the DPs will be attending this EC in person, leading to extra expense. Potential hosts should obtain funding to cover some activities (e.g., coffee breaks, reception, dinner, tour)

17. About the IAU

17.1 Statutes and rules

The GS presented a paper on issues that had been brought to her attention concerning wordings associated with Honorary Members and Associates.

**A minor change to the Working Rules was approved:
Section III, change title from “Individual and Junior Membership” to
“Individual, Junior, and Honorary Membership”.**

Action: Membership Coordinator to update Working Rules on the website to reflect this change

A proposed change to the Bye Laws was presented. This will need approval of the GA:

Section I.4, change “Individual Members, Junior Members and Honorary Members are admitted by the Executive Committee upon the nomination of a National Member or the President of a Division” to “Individual Members and Junior Members are admitted by the Executive Committee upon the nomination of a National Member or the President of a Division; Honorary Members are admitted upon the nomination of a National Member.”

Action: GS to seek approval at the GA in 2027. Bye-law II 7a says the recommendation for this change must be sent to the NMs six months before the GA.

17.2 Org chart

The AGS and President Elect presented an organization chart, new for the IAU. **It was agreed that this would be added to the web site.**

18. CPS Center

18.1 Report from the SC

18.2 Telecon discussion with P. Benvenuti



The CPS Director presented an overview of activities including the work of the Hubs. With respect to COPUOS, 19 delegations have agreed to collaborate in the 'Group of Friends', and CPS is an observer. The CPS MoU needs renewing, and comments from the two founding partners are awaited. Expansion to more partners is proposed.

19. OYA

19.2 Report from the SC

19.3 Telecon discussion with I. Aretzaga/D Mota

The Director summarized activities, highlighting the recent 2024 ISYA school in Algeria. The impact of the schools was highlighted. Schools in 2025 will be in Ecuador and Taiwan. Alumni are tracked; stories were submitted for help in IAU fundraising. The Director and Deputy Director were thanked for their work.

20. Administrative Office Matters

Discussed.

21 AOB

Nothing noted beyond topics already in this report.

22. OAO

22.1 Report from the SC

There have been several meetings online. An in-person meeting is expected in 2026. Budget cuts are a concern.

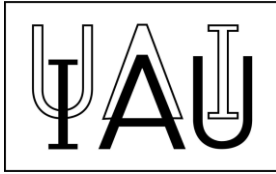
22.2 Telecon discussion with K Blumenthal

The Director described the complementary skills of the new team, with Cyntia having an arts background and being on the side of communication, and Naomi working with Kelly on aspects of professionalization of astronomy. Time is dedicated to specific themes. Following the '100 years of the planetarium' initiative, the IPS is very keen to be involved with the OAO and Division C. Concerning NOCs, old NOCs are advisors to new ones to help with continuity. Many NOCS are not IAU members, and certificates are proposed to help give them recognition. The IAU President confirmed that he would be happy to sign such certificates of recognition.

23. OAD

23.1 Report from the SC

Projects have been approved for 2025, and there has been a long on-line meeting concerning the business plan. An in-person meeting is anticipated in 2026. The call for the 2026 projects and strategic plan for 2021-2027 have been approved. There is a threatened budget cut from NRF.



23.2 Telecon discussion with K. Govender

The Director discussed how projects drive the OAD flagship programs. Charles Takalana, the new Deputy Director, presented himself and was welcomed by the IAU President. Regional Offices are varied in their level of success. They are stressed financially and strengthening is needed. There is need for a national contact in all countries.

24. OAE

24.1 Report from the SC

There are currently 7 Nodes and Centres and many NAECs. The SC met remotely twice and there was a face-to-face meeting in September. The budget relies heavily on grants.

24.2 Telecon discussion with M. Possel

The Director noted that initial funding was for the build-up phase. OAE is now returning to the same funding foundations for support during the consolidation phase. A level of equivalence of the centres and nodes is core for the OAE, but regions do not all align with that. It is expected to select a few new centres and nodes. New OAE working groups have been formed. There has been a sensitive issue concerning one NAEC team. This has been a shock, and the way forward is not obvious; the SC has recommended dissolving the team. The Shaw funding for workshops is running out. These have been viewed as a long-term endeavour. It is desirable to make the on-line format widely accessible, but there are regions for which bandwidth is a problem.

25. Joint Offices and EC telecon

The Offices meet monthly. There is potential considerable overlap with Div. C. Discussion focused on the desirability of closer internal collaboration. On the subject of hybrid requirements, it was suggested that the OAE Director lead a small taskforce to look at needs. The need for IAU fundraising was discussed.

26. Discussion

Integrated elsewhere in this report

27. Org Chart

Noted earlier in this report

28. AOB

Nothing noted beyond topics already included in this report

29. Preparation for GA 2027 in Rome, Italy

29.1 Outline Science Program



The GS presented a generic form of the outline from Cape Town, comprising a 4+4-day meeting with 3 symposia and 6 FMs each week, with slots for Division Days, Office and WG meetings, and plenary lectures.

Agreed: outline as presented

Action: GS will communicate the agreed general outline to the Rome LOC for planning of the convention-centre space.

It was commented that the exhibit space in Rome is likely to be difficult given the facility selected for the convention centre.

29.2 Update on Preparations from R Regazzoni and I Pagano

The numbers registering for GAs were noted to be more than 3000 pre-Covid. For Cape Town the number was lower, but was added to by about 700 online. The LOC for Rome has 2500 as the caution scenario, with 3500 people expected. It was noted that the NOC selects the public talks. Remote participation will be limited, and non-interactive. Live stream on YouTube and channels for participants to interact were discussed.

30 AOB

Nothing noted beyond topics already included in this report.