

Minutes of the IPSEC VIII Session

Lublin, 5 September 2011

Present:

Szymon Bauch	Polish Physical Society
Artur Dobrowolski	Polish Physical Society
J. Raul Grigera	APS
Piotr Golkiewicz	Elsevier B.V.
Chin-Kun Hu	Physical Society of the Republic of China (Taiwan)
Wiesław A Kamiński	Polish Physical Society
Jan Kozłowski	Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education
Sergei Kilin	Belarus Physical Society
Vasily Klimov	United Physical Society of the Russian Federation
Maciej Kolwas	EPS and Polish Physical Society
Yoshio Kuramoto	Physical Society of Japan
Vladimir Litovchenko	Ukrainian Physical Society
Jaroslav Nadrchal	EPS – CEI and Czech Physical Society (chair)
Kazys Sadauskas	Lithuanian Physics Society
Leszek Sirko	Polish Physical Society and Institute of Physics PAS
Beth Taylor	Institute of Physics

1. Opening of the session

Wiesław Kamiński, President of the Polish Physical Society (PPS), welcomed participants to the meeting and invited Jaroslav Nadrchal to chair the meeting.

Jaroslav Nadrchal invited any comments on the proposed agenda for the meeting. J Raul Grigera noted that he wished to address the question of how the APS could better serve Polish members and work more closely with the PPS. Although 25% of APS members live outside the USA, a survey one year ago had identified a perception that the APS is “too American” as the main concern of overseas members.

2. Signing of MOU between the Physical Society of Japan (PSJ) and PPS

Yoshio Kuramoto and Wiesław Kamiński signed a memorandum of understanding between the PSJ and the PPS.

3. Presentation on the Physical Society of Japan

Yoshio Kuramoto gave a presentation on the activities of the PSJ. Questions raised in discussion included:

- Support for open access – government laboratories are happy to offer financial support but it is difficult to cover the costs of publications from researchers who are not their employees;
- Membership – some 50% of members are academics, and some 15% are students. The remainder come from other professions in business or school teaching;

- Sources of income – membership fees account for some 50%, and journals some 25%. The remainder is made up of government grants for specific activities, and draw-down of reserves;
- Links with government – the main links are with the Ministry of Education;
- Association of Asia Pacific Physical Societies – the next meeting will be held in Japan;
- Prizes – the PSJ does not traditionally award prizes, the exceptions being awards for the best paper and best young scientist;
- Connections with the Physics Olympiad – the PSJ is concerned about declining numbers of physics students. They include junior sessions in their annual meetings, and train high school students for the Olympiad.

4. Presentation on the Ukrainian Physical Society

Vladimir Litovchenko gave a presentation on the activities of the Ukrainian Physical Society (UPS). Questions raised in discussion included:

- Membership numbers – the UPS has some 450 individual members and associated members;
- Sources of income – members provide some 50%, with support from the Ukrainian academy of science and the EPS, and income from conferences.

Vladimir Litovchenko presented an agreement for signature by the Polish Physical Society, and a gift from the UPS to the PPS.

5. Methods of evaluation of scientific institutions

Piotr Golkiewicz gave a presentation on the Scopus database, and its potential use as a tool to evaluate scientific output. Scopus is a commercial product. The main markets for its use in research evaluation are university heads of research, and government funders of research.

In discussion, it was noted that the use of impact factors measured journals rather than authors, and inevitably penalised national journals. Alternative approaches include the h index.

Jan Kozłowski presented a government view of research evaluation, noting that reliance on peer review alone was coming under increasingly frequent criticism. Research funding in Poland is currently distributed both by institutions and by project. The government's aim is to strike the right balance between the two.

Issues raised in discussion included:

- Economic impact – no current system for evaluating economic impact appeared to be perfect. Whatever system is chosen needs to be open, transparent and not pseudo-quantitative. Funders must accept that research projects by their nature have a high risk of failure. Impact measures should contain a mix of different relevant factors;
- The need to reconcile different views of Ministers and scientists on the value of research;

- Frequency of funding rounds – annual funding rounds are too frequent to allow a proper perspective on research outcomes. Commitments for, for example, a four year period are to be preferred.

6. Any other business

6.1 Proposal for international session

Chin-Kun Hu noted that the APS meeting has an international session, and the PSJ is introducing an English-language session. Taiwan already includes a session in their annual congress where speakers can present in English. It would be helpful for international attendees if the PPS could introduce a similar session.

It was noted that this would be difficult because many attendees are school teachers, for whom Polish-language presentations are essential.

6.2 Shared issues

Kazys Sadauskas suggested that there may be issues which we could promote or resolve working together as physical societies. There was general support for this proposal but questions were raised about how such issues should be identified.

Issues raised in discussion included:

- The percentage of PhD graduates going into teaching – Yoshio Kuramoto suggested that it would be useful to compare statistics for different countries;
- APS videos of March and April meetings – participants were invited to view the videos on the APS website and forward comments;
- Public engagement – it is very important to ensure that the general public appreciates how physics underpins modern technology, e.g. by producing films to illustrate examples.

Beth Taylor

1 December 2011