

Minutes of the teleconference held on Thursday May 6, 2010

Swiss Commission for Astronomy
(SCFA)

1) Call to Order

The chair, G. Meylan, calls the teleconference to order at 4:00 pm.

Attendance at the meeting :

Present : W. Benz, G. Beutler, M. Carollo, P. Jetzer, G. Lake, D. Pfenniger, W. Schmutz, and G. Meylan (chair).

Excused : G. Burki, T. Schildknecht, M. Steinacher (guest from SER), F.-K. Thielemann, and S. Udry.

2) The First SCFA Student Summer School 2010

The first Summer school for PhD students in Switzerland will be organized in September 2010 by F.-K. Thielemann and G. Meynet. As of today, there are only 5 students who have registered. It is decided to make some vigorous advertisement in order to attract more students. All members of the SCFA are asked to distribute further the existence of this school. Here is some information :

Title : Stars and Stellar Explosions in Galaxies.

Subjects : Stellar Evolution and Nucleosynthesis, Novae, Supernovae, X-ray bursts, Gamma Ray Bursts, Photometric and Chemical Evolution of Galaxies.

Dates : from Monday September 13 to Friday September 17, 2010 (this is the week just before the beginning of the academic semester in Switzerland).

Venue : Hôtel Beausite, St-Luc, Val d'Anniviers, Valais.

For more information, see the SCFA webpage <http://lastro.epfl.ch/> (click on SCFA) and see also the webpage <http://obswww.unige.ch/stluc2010/>.

It is worth mentioning, as a reminder, that this SCFA Summer school is a response to one of the important action items of our Roadmap for astronomy in Switzerland 2007 – 2016.

This SCFA Summer school is expected to be a high-level high-quality master course organized in a way which will allow all PhD students working in Switzerland to attend, with the possibility to gain ECTS credits in the framework of their respective doctoral school. Since it is the first Summer school of its kind, it is hoped that each institute will pay for the expenses (fare and hotel) generated by the participation of its students. We shall look for financial support once this first edition will have been a clear success. It is intended to be a real opportunity to further connect the various astronomical institutions in Switzerland through their PhD students. PhD students from neighboring countries are welcome to attend, although students from Swiss universities will have priorities in case of over subscriptions.

3) The Second SCFA Student Summer School 2011

A few subjects have been already mentioned, during the last two years, for the second SCFA Student Summer School in 2011. The selection of the topics should be done rather soon so that the organization can start as soon as possible. However, it is decided to wait till the registration deadline of the first school, which is on June 30, 2010, to see what is the success in attendance of this first school and its potential impact of the second one.

4) Statistics about people working in astronomy in Switzerland

On April 4, 2010, Daniel Schaerer has sent to all directors of Swiss astronomical institutions a request for “figures on gender in CH astronomy”. There are two questions which come immediately to mind : (i) Who is interested in such Swiss statistics and (ii) For which purpose are these people interested in such statistics ?

About one or two decades ago, the number of women working in Switzerland was quite low. Although not satisfying yet, things have fortunately improved. However, given the low Swiss record, any statistics could be used in a way which may harm Swiss astronomy, intentionally or not.

So far, these statistics were always done by the IAU via the SCFA. The SCFA decides that we continue with the current way to produce such statistics. They should be updated every three years, after the IAU GA, in a unique, coherent, and homogeneous way. Thomas Schildknecht and Georges Meylan will produce all relevant statistics for master and PhD students, postdocs, permanent and non permanent staff, and professors working in Switzerland. This information will be posted on the SCFA web page.

5) Miscellaneous

Nothing.

6) The teleconference is adjourned at 4:35 pm.