

Minutes of the 40th AGM



Held 17 January 2014 Fismer Hall Music Conservatoire Stellenbosch University

1. The president, Dr Nox Makunga, opened the meeting and welcomed attendees at 16h05
 - 1.1. Present: Stephen Boatwright, Anthony Magee, Peter Tshikhawe, Khathutshelo Magwede, Nqobile Masondo, Matiego Mothatlego, Nireshnee Naicker, Legodi Mankone, Takalani Mulaudzi, Isaac Ramovlha, PW Mokwala, Ashton Ruiters, Barnabas Daru, NA Masevhe, IC Drabueze, James Rodger, Eleanor Shadwell, Syd Ramdhani, VR Clark, K Balkwill, P Hills, M Scott, Robyn Powell, Luvo Magoswana, Dave Thompson, Nox Makunga, Ida Manduna
 - 1.2. Apologies: Quenton Kritzinger, Patricia Tilney, Juan Vorster, Marnie Light, Hannes van Staden, Karen Esler, Allan Ellis
2. Minutes of the 39th AGM were read and approved after the following corrections:
 - 2.1. Prof Eloff's name should be added to those present at the meeting
 - 2.2. Paragraph 10.2 under Future SAAB Conferences should read: In view of the 2014 meeting being held jointly with AETFAT at Stellenbosch, the 2015 conference will be at the University of Venda
3. President's Report
 - 3.1. The election results of the new Council members was announced. They are: Prof Marion Meyer and Dr Quenton Kritzinger
 - 3.2. The president explained that only two bursaries were awarded this year because the other candidates did not meet the selection criteria
 - 3.3. The president encouraged members to make better use of social networking such as Facebook and Twitter
 - 3.4. The president of the SAAB Student Council, Ashton Ruiters, was thanked for her contributions and the t-shirt designed by the students was acknowledged
 - 3.5. The president thanked Prof Belstedt for providing SAAB with a visible presence at the Conference and for providing for all our requirements. She asked that a formal letter of thanks be drafted and sent to him and his team.

3.6. The president thanked Quenton Kritzingler for managing SAABNet

3.7. The president thanked her fellow Exco committee members: Myke Scott, Paul Hills and Allan Ellis

4. Treasurer's Report

4.1. The treasurer, Paul Hills, said that he was satisfied with the Financial statements compiled by Liz Williamson (C.A.T.S. – Computerised Accounting & Training Services)

4.2. He said that although we have a healthy bank balance, without the income from Elsevier publishers, membership income alone would not be able to sustain us

4.3. If we keep Elsevier happy by submitting our best papers for publication with them, we should be able to maintain our subscription and conference fees at or near the current low level

4.4. He thanked the secretary for providing income and expense data

5. Student Council Report

5.1. The Student Council president, Ashton Ruiters from Univ. JHB, delivered her report in person

5.2. Some of the accomplishments during the past year were: Two newsletters were published, a t-shirt was designed and printed (50 copies), a “bring and share picnic” was sponsored at the Johannesburg Botanical Gardens and the FaceBook page was changed from a Group format to a more flexible open format.

5.3. She gave recommendations for improvements for the Student Council

5.4. As the Student Council was unable to hold an election because of the format of the AETFAT meeting, the members present asked if Ashton would continue on as president until the next election which she agreed to.

6. SAJB Report

6.1. Although the editor-in-chief, Hannes van Staden, was not present to deliver his report, he did supply a digital version that the president went through point by point on the screen

6.2. The impact factor has dropped by 0.25 from the previous year. This is likely due to the increased number of articles published in 2012, with relatively fewer citations.

6.3. In the “Plant Science” category of Journal Citation Reports, SAJB has moved down 16 places (ranked according to Impact Factor)

6.4. The highest number of submissions are received from India, SA and China

6.5. Compared to previous years, the number of downloads continues to increase

6.6. Authors now have the option to publish their article ‘Open Access’ (for a publication fee of \$USD 2500)

7. General

- 7.1. A motion was put forward by Allan Ellis signed and seconded recommending alteration to the existing SAAB bronze medal requirements which read as follows:

Currently only students who received their PhDs before 31 December of the previous year are eligible to be nominated for the Bronze medal (e.g. to receive a medal in January 2015 the PhD needs to have been awarded by December 2013). We propose that this restriction be amended to allow all students who have received their PhDs prior to the Bronze medal nomination deadline (usually in August) to be nominated (i.e. students receiving their PhD before August 2014 are eligible for receipt of the medal in Jan 2015).

As it currently stands students who receive their PhDs in the March or early year graduation ceremonies (which are commonplace) are only eligible for receipt of the Bronze medal 2 years after the receipt of their PhDs (ie students graduating in March 2013 will not be eligible for receipt of the medal until January 2015). This severely detracts from the obvious (and we feel, the most important) benefit of receiving the medal i.e. the positive influence of recognition by SAAB on a PhD graduate's ability to procure funding and/or a postdoctoral position in order to continue in their careers as botanists. We feel that we should endeavour to award the medal to deserving candidates as soon after receipt of their PhDs as possible.

- 7.1.1. The motion was passed with 22 votes in favour, 4 abstentions and no votes against.

- 7.2. The president announced the passing of SAAB member Prof Ramakrishna Bhat earlier this month. He was professor in the Botany Department at the University of Venda.

- 7.3. The passing of Prof Bhat prompted the members to request that an obituary page be added to our website and that obituaries be written up for him and Sarie Parold Kathryn Gordon-Gray and Oswald Makunga who also passed away recently.

8. Future SAAB Congresses

8.1. Venda in 2015

8.2. Possibly University of the Free State for 2016

8.3. A venue near the coast for 2017

9. Closing

- 9.1. There was a round of applause for Nox Makunga as she stepped down as president and handed over the leadership of SAAB to Kevin Balkwill in the traditional "tie-cutting ceremony"

- 9.2. Kevin thanked Nox for being president for an additional year and for her special work with students. He also thanked all those in attendance at the AGM and said he hoped to see everyone in Venda next year.

- 9.3. The meeting was closed by the incoming president at 17h15