

# **SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF BOTANISTS**



## **Minutes**

### **SAAB AGM 37th Annual Congress Wednesday 19th January Barratt Lecture Theatre 1 Rhodes University**

#### **1. Welcome**

The president, Prof Jill Farrant, welcomed the members to the 37<sup>th</sup> AGM of SAAB at 17h15.

#### **2. Apologies and attendance**

Apologies were received from L Foxcroft, G Goodman, P Pillay and N Barker

Members present: SJ Bradfield, M Gryzenhout, NP Makunga, MJ vd Merwe, PN Hills, B-E van Wyk, PM Tilney, JS Boatwright, AR Magee, JN Eloff, J Van Staden, K Balkwill, RP Beckett, N Devnarain, HB Papenfus, CBS Hendriks, SS Cilliers, GJ Bredenkamp, CL Bredenkamp, JJM Meyer, BS Ripley, NL Ngobese, C Naidoo, GI Stafford, A Kiyaei, JM Nortje, PPJ Heiman, D Thompson, SM Jacobs, MH Buys, PD Wragg, CH Stirton, AM Muasya, CI Peter, MB Scott, NA vd Merwe, G Prinsloo, H Heyman, J Roux and Q Kritzinger

#### **3. Additions to agenda**

- Announcement of resignation of Treasurer (See General items below)

#### **4. Minutes of the 36<sup>th</sup> AGM**

The minutes of the last AGM were distributed on SAABNet and the website as well as on the notice board at the conference. Hannes van Staden proposed that the meeting consider the minutes in order and as read. Quenton Kritzinger seconded the proposer.

#### **5. Matters arising from previous minutes**

There were no items arising.

## 6. President's report

- The president informed the meeting that the two bursary holders were given financial assistance to attend the conference.
- Statistics provided by the secretary showed that membership was gradually dropping. Some discussion followed from the floor but no resolutions were adopted.
- 

## 7. Treasurer's report

As the treasurer's report was posted on the conference notice board, only the highlights were presented verbally at the meeting chief of which was Council's decision to increase membership fees 10% across all membership categories. Reasons for this are 1) income from Elsevier (the publisher of SAJB and currently our biggest source of income) is tenuous, 2) an additional honours bursary will be given each year, 3) more money will be given to local conference organizing committees to pay airfare for overseas speakers, and 4) our current subscriptions are comparatively low.

## 8. SAJB report

As the SAJB report was posted on the conference notice board, only the highlights were presented verbally at the meeting:

- The editor has asked Elsevier if/when there is a special issue that it will not affect the normal publication of 4 issues. (i.e. a 5<sup>th</sup> issue). Another special issue is planned but he did not say if this would be a 5<sup>th</sup> issue or be in addition to the three normal issues. The Editor explained how papers are rejected, how papers from the various countries match up in quality and warned that plagiarism is on the increase internationally. He said there are 10,000 downloads per month and 913 citations last year. Publishing time from submission to printing is approximately 40 weeks which is relatively low by international standards.
- A plea was made to our top botanists to support botany in South Africa by accepting to share their group papers and to serve on the editorial board of SAJB.
- Although the journal impact factor has dropped only marginally since last year, the journal ranking dropped 20 positions. Unless these factors are improved, we could lose our financial support from Elsevier.
- The editor reminded us that abstracts are valid citations.

## 9. Report back by SAAB student council

Chris Hendriks, the student council president, gave an oral report with the following highlights:

- A constitution has been drawn up and submitted to Council for approval
- A newsletter has been created which is envisioned to disseminate knowledge and news throughout many mail servers encouraging students & other scholars alike to get excited and learn more about the student council, the plant science field and the associated departments and staff.
- An initiative has been created that involves the viewing of educational documentaries related to the plant science field and other related fields. Alternatively students may choose to research a current field of interest and present his/her findings. This provides a platform for discussion, debate and learning.
- The bursary initiative sponsored by the SAAB Council was announced to students.

## 10. Awards

- The president said that awards had been consolidated from 9 to 4: 1) best oral presentation by a PhD student (Van Staden award); 2) best oral presentation by an MSc student (Van Staden award), 3) best oral presentation by a young scientist under 30 (honours award), and 4) best poster. However, Prof van Staden said that he wishes to discontinue his awards in future.
- The adjudication of presentations needs to be better organized in future.

## 11. SACNASP

- Christina Bredenkamp was thanked for making presentations to SACNASP
- A Certificate of Recognition was received recognizing SAAB as a Voluntary Association in terms of Section 26 of the Natural Scientific Professions Act of 2003.

## 12. Future SAAB congresses

- 2012 will be at the University of Pretoria. R15,000 will be available to help defray the costs of travel expenses of overseas guest speakers in addition to the R5000 start-up funds which are repayable.
- 2013: Council will approach UCT. The possibility of a joint conference with AETFAT was mooted.
- 2014: No suggestions were made

## 13. The Constitution

Prof Eloff proposed that the recent revisions to the constitution be accepted. This was seconded by Kevin Balkwill.

#### 14. General

- The Treasurer, Quenton Kritzinger, announced (in an email and in person) that he had to resign his duties as treasurer due to new responsibilities at the University of Pretoria. The secretary will perform these tasks until a replacement is found.
- Marieka Gryzenhout pointed out the common origins and interests between the botanical and mycological disciplines and suggested a joint conference be considered between SAAB and the AMA (African Mycological Association) in future.
- Prof Eloff proposed a vote of thanks to Council.

#### 15. Closure

The meeting was closed at 18h10.

Respectfully submitted,

Myke Scott, Secretary

January 28, 2011