

Editorial

Student Activities within ISPRS

It is trivial to mention that advanced graduate and especially postgraduate students generate a significant part of the scientific work developed within ISPRS and constitute the future backbone of ISPRS and its Members. However, for a long period there were no specific ISPRS activities targeted at this important group. It was only in 1996, during the Vienna Congress that the Best Papers by Young Author Awards were established and respective special sessions for presentations of these papers were organised. These awards were since then established and presented in all subsequent Congresses and many Technical Commission Symposia. However, neither other activities regarding students and young researchers were organised nor an organisational structure within ISPRS to host such activities was set up. In parallel to this, most National Societies, members of ISPRS, did not have a provision of student membership and student chapters.

It was during the Technical Commission V Symposium in Corfu in 2002 that some students, mostly from Japan, Greece and Turkey had discussions on having more formal and organised activities within ISPRS. These ideas were warmly embraced by Orhan Altan, the Istanbul Congress Director, who decided to include some special activities within the Congress, under the name „Youth Forum". These activities included special technical sessions, separate best paper and best poster awards, discussions on how to set up a structure for students within ISPRS and also separate social events. The participation of students in these activities was numerous and enthusiastic and some recommendations to the Council on possible structures and terms of reference were formulated. The ISPRS Council responded positively to these ideas and decided to set up a Student Consortium (SC). The main purpose of the SC is to provide a link between students and ISPRS, making ISPRS known to students, attracting them in its activities, and organizing student-specific events either independently or within other ISPRS events, but also providing a platform for communication and information exchange, including cultural one, among the students. Council decided that SC should be led by few active students (Student Coordinators) without intervention from ISPRS. Since student status changes rapidly and to guarantee continuity, the WVG VI/5 „Promotion of the Profession to Students" was established, as a link between the SC and ISPRS. In addition to the permanent link of the SC to ISPRS via this WVG, the President of Technical Commission VI, Kohei Cho, and myself as liaison to the SC from the Council, provided advice and help whenever needed.

The SC started early its work, setting up its structure with currently 4 Student Coordinators and a WEB responsible (see WEB site at <http://www.students.itu.edu.tr/~isprs/>), making internationally known the SC and its aims, recruit-

ing members and starting activities. Its current members are about 130 from almost 30 countries. Although this is impressive, the potential for many more members is not exploited yet, while students from developing countries, who have the largest difficulties and the least contact with ISPRS, are underrepresented. The activities up to now included the organisation of the first very successful Student Summer School, 19-26 June 2005 in Istanbul (see a detailed report on it elsewhere in this issue). These Summer Schools will continue each year, at various regions, with priority cities that enable a high participation of students from developing countries. The material from the Summer Schools will be made available at the ISPRS WEB site, while the same or slightly modified content of the Summer Schools may be used to repeat courses at other places. Council tries to support such activities as much as possible, also financially and sponsored with 8,000 SFr. the Istanbul Summer School. Furthermore, we try to achieve support from other related organisations like ESA, UN OOSA etc.

Further student related actions include the strong encouragement by Council to all organisers of ISPRS events to provide students with 50% participation fee reduction, which was already embraced by the organisers of the forthcoming Commission Symposia and the Beijing Congress, where again a Youth Forum and a Summer Camp will be organised. For the Congress, a high number of stipendia for persons from developing countries, including students, is foreseen. Furthermore, the increased activities of the ISPRS Foundation with first support actions expected in 2006, with have as main beneficiaries young students and researchers. All above show that the ISPRS Council has taken various measures to realise a wider and more active participation of students within ISPRS. The excellent work of the SC up to now is another fact that permits optimism.

We strongly encourage ISPRS Officers, especially Technical Commission Presidents, to take into account the student interests within their activities, especially the forthcoming Symposia. Furthermore, we would like to ask all ISPRS related senior scientists and National Societies to make known to their students and promote the student related activities within ISPRS and of the SC. These activities which are expected to be a major highlight of the 2004-2008 ISPRS programme should become an issue for all of us!

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