

REPORT by Piero Macchi on GRC-2010

Dear Gerri

I have finally some time to send you a report of last week conference as you have requested. I think the conference went quite well despite the problems occurred before it. The GRC office should join me thanking Carlo Gatti (immediate past chair), Philip Coppens (also past chair) and Mark Spackman (active participant/lecturer in the previous editions and colleague of Dylan at UWA). They all have been extremely helpful for the organization during the last month.

Concerning the problems we encountered this year, I can summarize as it follows:

- program: Dylan was able to put up a very good program and his personal problems did not affect much this process. There were a few changes due to 2 speakers who had family problems and cancelled ca one month before the meeting (replaced by a co-worker and two poster presenters), one speaker who did not get the VISA in time (replaced by two poster presenters) and one poster presenter who had serious problems just the day before coming (replaced by a co-worker). Thus, Dylan's resignation had no special effect on the program. I saw from comments of the participant that this was in general quite appreciated.
- finance: Dylan and I were able to attract more or less the same contributions as in 2007, although all our applications to special GRC funds were not accepted; after Dylan resigned I asked again Diana about those application, but did not get any news, so I suppose none of those was accepted, despite I did not receive any report. Again I think Dylan's problem did not affect much this process, although in some cases we received confirmation of the contribution quite late (that does not help much the planning). Luckily, all discussion leaders accepted to come even if we could not promise a full refunding (thus saving money to invite students). Eventually, however, I was able to pay back the full registration fee to all discussion leaders, as it is usual.
- participation: we had 106 applications, 95 registrations (but 3 last minute cancellations, due to VISA problems and a personal health problem). Thus the number of participants was at the same level as the previous editions (though slightly less than in 2007). I think that Dylan's resignation had no special impact on this. Possibly, Dylan's problems before he resigned slowed down a little bit the process of inviting young scientists (using the grants obtained) and at least three persons could not come because they did not handle in time documents to obtain a VISA. As we have requested already in 2007 and reiterated now, a conference in Europe would be much more appropriate given the current distribution of research groups in this field. To give you some numbers, in 2008 Carlo and myself (thus, the 2007 and 2010 chairs) organized the "European charge density meeting", which was attended by 170 participants. At this GRC, attendance from Europe was above 70%. Unfortunately, US and North America are not contributing much. European participants are of course limited by the travel costs and this year also the sudden drop of euro against dollar convinced some potential participants not to come. Anyway, based on 2011 fees (and current euro/dollar rate), we calculated that organizing this meeting in Europe with the same participation as this year would cost ca.

10'000\$ less (counting fees and travel) and ca. 30'000 less if 30 more European participants would attend (which is not so unrealistic as I explained above).

- Future of the meeting: the assembly accepted your proposal to switch the meeting on a bi-annual basis, starting from 2013 (thus, in odd years). The 2013 is somewhat mandatory as two meetings are already scheduled for 2012 and this overlap would not be good.

As anticipated above, the Assembly proposed 2 out of 3 sites in Europe and I hope that the GRC office will approve this request this time (of course if another GRC will also be approved).

The next vice-chair will be prof. Wolfgang Scherer (from Augsburg), which I think is an excellent choice given his broad background, the quality of his research and his strong commitment.

- Other comments: from the remarks of the participants, I see that there was quite a good agreement on the quality of the program, beside few complaints on some speakers. I can say that we did all our best to choose as many new valid speakers as possible. There were ca. 20 speakers or discussion leaders who have not spoken before at this GRC, in some cases it was their first participation or anyway it was the first time their research group was invited to speak (in this sense I really could not understand two remarks on "same people" written by the participants)

Some speakers were less than 30 year old, whereas it was not possible to increase the number of women speaking at the conference.

For the first time in this GRC we selected a few poster presenters to speak in the main conference giving 15-20 minutes. I think 3 of them took a good occasion to introduce themselves and their excellent work to this very high quality audience, others did not use entirely this opportunity, instead.

Some remarks concerned the fact that not all poster presenters had possibility to give a 2 minute presentation of their work as it occurred in the 3 past meetings. Beside these comments (very likely written by young poster presenters) I want to defend my choice. In the past meeting other remarks concerned in fact too much time given to very short (often confused) poster presentations given during the time of the poster sessions (so somehow reducing the discussion in front of the posters). I believe it was much better this year, beside the remarks. There was more time for discussion directly

at the poster sides.

let me know if you need more feedback on the meeting

Sorry if I could not phone you last week, but I really had no spare time....

best regards

Piero