

## CHAPTER VI

### STATUTES, BYE-LAWS AND WORKING RULES

Prague, Czech Republic, 15 August 2006

#### **Introduction.**

#### **IAU XXVI General Assembly revisions to the Statutes and Bye-Laws**

The current Statutes and Bye-Laws were extensively re-written and approved at the Sydney GA in 2003 in order to streamline many of the processes of the IAU and to bring the IAU more into conformity with the structure of other ICSU unions. These revision have generally been well received, however there have been several changes to the Statutes and Bye-Laws that Individual Members and National Members have deemed desirable in the past three years and which have been brought to the attention of the EC. They are the following:

1. Change the Statutes to allow scientific matters to be decided by a vote of individual rather than national members. National Members pay dues and set the policies of the Union, and are the only voting entities in the IAU under the Sydney revisions, contrary to previous IAU policy and tradition. Many Union Individual Members have argued that questions of science are best settled by individuals who participate in debate and discussion because this is a more accurate reflection of how scientific issues are actually resolved in the community. The EC debated this issue and recommended changing the Statutes to once again allow all scientific questions and resolutions to be decided by a majority vote of individual members at the GA. The EC acknowledges that returning the responsibility for voting to Individual Members could be treated as part of an eventual evolution to voting on Union issues by electronic means.

2. Change the Bye-Laws to allow Division Presidents (DPs) to nominate individuals for membership in the Union. The Sydney Bye-Laws do not permit this. The DPs wish for this authority in order to provide for needed expertise in Commission discussions and in appointments to Working Groups. It often happens that needed expertise is not available in areas related to astronomy, and it can happen that individuals with experience useful to the Union, but not known to the National Committees for Astronomy (NCAs), are sometimes overlooked for Union membership. The EC agrees that the increased flexibility of allowing DPs to nominate Individual Members far outweighs any loss of control on the part of the NCAs to control Individual Membership, and it strongly recommended that the Bye-Laws be revised to permit the nomination of individuals for membership.

3. Change the Bye-Laws to allow Division Organizing Committees (OCs) to exceed 12 persons. The Sydney revisions limited the number of individuals on each OC in order to keep them manageable. However, some DPs have felt that their Divisions are so diverse that adequate representation of the many areas requires more than 12 people. The EC sympathizes with this argument, but still believes that it is important to keep OCs from proliferating their memberships. Therefore, it believes that occasional exceptions

to the 12-person limit for some OCs is acceptable, and supported such a revision in the Bye-Laws.

4. Change the Bye-Laws to increase the number of dues categories, reflecting the increasing number of Individual Members in many countries and allowing such countries to be assigned an equitable amount of dues. The maximum dues contribution specified in the Sydney Bye-Laws requires a country with a large number of Individual Members to pay a relatively small dues contribution per Individual Member compared to that of some smaller countries. The only adverse effect to assigning some countries to a larger dues category is the increased number of votes this gives to such countries in Union budgetary matters. The EC discussed this issue and felt that the increased resources that would be made available by increased dues far outweighed the increasing influence the larger countries would have in budgetary votes. Therefore, the EC strongly recommended defining two new dues categories that would be appropriate for the largest national members of the IAU.

The above four revisions were published in *Information Bulletin* No.98, pp.53-61, brought to the floor in the GA First Session in Prague, and discussed and voted upon by the National Members. All of the proposed revisions passed, and went into effect at the end of that Session.

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