

USNC-URSI Meeting Minutes
Marriott Boulder Hotel
National Radio Science Meeting
Boulder, Colorado
7:00 pm, Wednesday, January 2, 2008
Prepared by Katie Bowman and Yahya Rahmat-Samii

Members Present: George Uslenghi (Chair), Yahya Rahmat-Samii (Secretary), Umran Inan (Immediate Past Chair), Gary Brown (Accounts Manager), Ozlem Kilic (Cmsn A), David Jackson (Cmsn B), Dev Palmer (Cmsn C), L. Wilson Pearson (Cmsn D), None (Cmsn E), Roger Lang (Cmsn F), John Mathews (Cmsn G), Meers Oppenheim (Cmsn H), David Woody (Cmsn J), Gianluca Lazzi (Cmsn K), Katie Bowman (NA Representative)

Also Present: Jim Cordes (Vice Chair Cmsn J), William Davis, Danilo Erricolo (Vice Chair Cmsn E), Nader Engheta (Vice Chair Cmsn B), Al Gasiewski, Robert Gardner, Tatsuo Itoh (MTT Rep.), Steven Reising (student paper coordinator), John Sahr (Vice Chair Cmsn G), Ross Stone, Tommy Thompson, Ed Westwater (GRS Liaison)

1. **Welcome:** George Uslenghi, Chair of the USNC-URSI, opened the meeting a few minutes past 7:00 pm. This was followed by introductions and circulation of the sign-in sheet. The meeting agenda and copies of the minutes from the previous USNC-URSI meeting, held on July 22, 2007, were also distributed. The Commission Chairs or their representatives received the commission reporting forms as well. These forms will be completed and returned at the USNC-URSI Executive Council meeting on Sunday, January 6, 2008.
2. **Approval of July 2007 Minutes:** A correction was noted to the minutes from the July 22, 2007 meeting. Officers of the USNC-URSI must come from the pool of current and past USNC members (page 6). The minutes were unanimously approved with this clarification.
3. **Discussion of Agenda:** The items to be covered during the meeting were briefly reviewed. No modifications were proposed and the agenda for the meeting was approved as submitted.
4. **Report by the Chair:**
 - a. George Uslenghi reported on the North American Radio Science Meeting (NARSM), held in Ottawa in July 2007. The attendance at this meeting was excellent and included 190 Canadians. This is the highest Canadian representation ever at a NARS meeting. The meeting was a financial success as well, and generated revenue of approximately \$60,000 for the USNC-URSI.
 - b. George also reported on the 2008 National Radio Science meeting. The latest figures were 249 registrations, including 101 students and retirees. George noted that the student travel support program begun under past USNC Chair Umran Inan continued to be extremely successful in increasing student attendance. The attendance numbers used in planning for the meeting were 300, and George reported that this target would likely be reached with walk-in registrants. The meeting is already financially secure as well, without drawing on the \$10,000 "custodial

account” held for the USNC by the University of Colorado, Boulder. George then noted the invaluable efforts of Bill Davis, who generated the abstract submission website for the meeting. He produced the site in two weeks and saved the USNC considerable money it would otherwise have been required to spend on hiring an outside company. Finally, George noted that there had been several changes with this year’s meeting. For the first time, abstracts were presented on a CD, rather than in an abstract book. This change had also saved the USNC approximately \$3,700. Kristine Grossman, who formerly handled the arrangements for the meeting, was no longer the contact with the UC-Boulder conference services. Her replacement is Christina Patarino, who has been assisted by Debbie Cook. So far, the transition has been very smooth.

- c. George then noted that the USNC-URSI had already paid the 2008 U.S. dues to international URSI from the funds received from the National Science Foundation, and that the USNC has committed \$10,000 to URSI to assist with Young Scientist support for the 2008 General Assembly. This is double the contribution the USNC has made to previous URSI GAs.
 - d. George highlighted the importance of the upcoming GA, which will be held in Chicago in August 2008, and urged members to encourage their students and colleagues to attend. He reminded members that the GA is a “semi-open” meeting, and is therefore different from the usual NRS meetings. The numbers, titles, and conveners of the GA sessions have already been decided and many of the papers that will be presented in these oral sessions will also be invited contributions. While this will limit the number of submitted papers that can be orally presented, the space for poster presentations is unlimited.
5. **Report by the Accounts Manager:** Gary Brown briefly reviewed the USNC-URSI finances, including the private account funds and the NSF funds. These accounts are held at the National Academies for the USNC-URSI. The private account includes the income generated by USNC-URSI meetings such as the annual NRS meeting. Summaries of the revenue and expenses from this account, as well as the rates of return generated on these funds, were included. A brief summary of projected expenses from the NSF grant was also discussed. These include contributions toward the student travel awards for the 2008-2010 NRS meetings and the 2008 General Assembly.
 6. **Report by the NAS Representative:** Katie Bowman briefly expanded on the NSF grant that supports USNC-URSI. This grant is competitively submitted by the National Academies to NSF every few years, and covers seven USNCs in the math and physical sciences. The current grant extends through June 2010, at which time the NAS, in communication with the USNCs and their Chairs, will prepare and submit a new funding proposal. She also briefly reviewed the relationship of the NAS to the USNC. The NAS is the official U.S. adhering body to URSI, as it is to many of the other international scientific unions. To fulfill its membership obligations, the NAS convenes the USNCs as standing

committees. The USNC-URSI is thus a standing committee convened through the NAS, with the role of representing the U.S. radio science community to URSI.

7. **Distribution of Commission reporting Forms:** Commission Chairs were reminded that the forms should be completed and returned at the Executive Council meeting on Sunday, January 6. Yahya Rahmat-Samii reminded the Chairs that the USNC reports to the NAS on the names of any new commission members that are elected. He asked the Chairs to please provide detailed information on these new members, particularly their addresses.
8. **Preparations for the URSI General Assembly:**
 - a. Copies of the Call for Papers were circulated to members, and George reported that the announcement had appeared in the IEEE APS magazine and the Radio Science Bulletin. George is serving as Chair of the Organizing Committee, D. Erricolo is Vice-Chair, S.R. Laxpati is Treasurer, S. Hagness is in charge of the Young Scientist program, and S. Reising is in charge of the student paper competition and student travel support program.
 - b. George reminded members that the submission website is open and the current deadline for submissions is January 31. All submissions must include a very brief abstract (up to 600 characters or 100 words), which will be published in the conference book, and also an expanded abstract or summary. This expanded abstract can be 1-4 pages in length (with the exception of Commission H, which requests that all submissions be 1 page).
 - c. As George had earlier explained, the number of submitted abstracts for oral presentation will be limited, but there will be unlimited room for poster presentations. Therefore, George had asked the international URSI commission Chairs if it would be possible to organize special poster sessions. Six of the ten Chairs have responded positively to this idea (B, C, E, G, J, K). Members should let George know as soon as possible if they wish to organize such special sessions so that he can communicate this to the international URSI Commission Chairs.
 - d. George reminded members that student travel support will be provided for the GA. All full-time students at U.S. universities who are first authors on an accepted paper (for either oral or poster presentation) will receive free double-occupancy lodging at the Hyatt for the 10 day period of the GA. The award will therefore be worth over \$1,000. This student travel support is separate from the URSI Young Scientist program. The Young Scientists designated by URSI will all receive free registration and also travel support. International URSI handles the travel support for all non-U.S. Young Scientists, and decides the amount of support based on factors such as the geographic location of the Young Scientist. The USNC will support the attendance of the U.S. Young Scientists. The USNC is not providing travel support to general U.S. attendees to the GA who are not students or Young Scientists.
 - e. George also reported that he is preparing a flier with practical details about traveling to the U.S. and about Chicago. This will be published in the

Radio Science Bulletin and he will coordinate with Ross Stone to publish this in the IEEE APS magazine.

- f. George reported on the U.S. fundraising efforts for the GA. The U.S. Organizing Committee had previously promised the URSI GA Coordinating Committee that it would raise \$200,000, and this effort is well underway. So far, \$5,000 has been committed from the USNC-URSI private funds, \$25,000 will come from the NSF grant, an additional \$20,000 has been promised by the Summa Foundation, an additional \$25,000 has been promised by the Italian Mario Boella Foundation, and \$100,000 will go toward supporting U.S. students to attend the event. George is also in communication with several U.S. companies.

9. Future Meetings:

- a. The committee again expressed its thanks to Bill Davis for his efforts to produce the Boulder submission website under a very tight deadline. Bill reported that 359 abstracts were submitted, an additional 2 abstracts were accepted by Commission Chairs but not submitted through the site, and approximately 43 of the abstracts were duplications. He discussed some of the issues he had encountered in creating the submission site and the ways these could be addressed for future meetings. The joint APS/URSI meeting uses software designed by Bo Yu that handles abstract submission, review, and program generation. The meeting pays Bo a fee of approximately \$5,000 a year for this use. For the 2008 NRS meeting, Bill wrote a C++ submission program, but this program did not include the ability to revise or withdraw submitted abstracts. For future meetings, he has considered the pros and cons of using submissions in PDF format and/or by entering LaTeX into a window. He also noted that the CyberChair software program includes review and program preparation, and that this may be an option to explore. Ross Stone noted that if a meeting has any amount of APS co-sponsorship it becomes eligible to use the PDF Express software, and this may be another possible option.
- b. Bill then presented the list of future joint APS/URSI meetings. These will be: San Diego, 5-11 July, 2008; Charleston, 31 May-6 June, 2009; Toronto, 10-17 July, 2010; Spokane, 3-7 July, 2011; and Chicago, 8-13 July, 2012. It was noted that the APS/URSI meeting sometimes conflicts with the IGARS meeting. The suggestion was made that the joint meetings Chair and the IGARS meeting Chair should better communicate to help coordinate dates. Bill also asked for any suggestions members might have for future locations for the joint meetings.

10 Report on the Student Paper Competition and Travel Support Program:

- a. Steve Reising gave a report on the 2008 Boulder Student Paper Competition. The three finalists, selected by a panel of reviewers, are: a) Gokhan Mumcu, "Miniature antenna design via printed coupled lines emulating degenerate band edge crystals" [B]; b) Harish Rajagopalan, "RF MEMS actuated reconfigurable reflectarray: a novel patch-slot element design" [B]; and c) Songnan Yang, "Reconfigurable multi-band antennas for multi-radio handsets and laptops" [A]. Following their presentations at

the Friday morning session, a panel of judges (made up of the Commission Chairs or their representatives) will select the first, second, and third place finishers. Steve reported that the number of student paper submissions received for this meeting was slightly lower than over the past few years. This year 8 papers were received, with 1 from Commission A, 6 from Commission B, and 1 from Commission J. Steve also reminded members that a student paper competition will be conducted for the 2008 General Assembly. The deadline for receipt of the paper is the same as the regular abstract deadline (January 31). Full details are available on the website.

- b. Steve also noted that student travel awards were being processed for the 2008 meeting (\$600 each). Due to tax considerations, these awards are issued by the NAS as travel fellowships, but students must sign and return a form agreeing to participate in the meeting and agreeing that the support is intended for this purpose. Checks cannot be issued until this form is received. Processing the large number of awards is also complicated by the holidays. Immediately prior to the holidays, 17 students had still not returned this form. If forms are not processed before the meeting, funds can be issued after the meeting as “travel reimbursement”, but this is more expensive and complicated. Next year, it should be possible to have the names of student awardees slightly earlier in the year. Members may also need to follow up with their students to encourage them to return their signed forms in a timely manner.

11. Report on the 2009 NRS Meeting:

- a. George explained that the dates for the NRS meeting are set by the availability of the University of Colorado meeting rooms and also by the need to avoid overlap with a meeting important for Commission J. In 2009, this meeting will be held 7-10 January. Therefore, the suggested dates for the 2009 NRS meeting are 5-7 January, and George will consult with Christina Patarino regarding the UC room availability. Commission F raised the suggestion that the meeting be held in March during the UC Spring recess, since January was not the best time for them. Other preferences were expressed for continuing to hold the meeting in January, however. It was suggested that Commission Chairs could consult their members and report their Commission preferences at the Sunday Executive Council meeting.
- b. For the last 3 years, the NRS plenary lectures and theme have been coordinated jointly by two of the Commissions. The Commission or Commissions that will coordinate this for the 2009 meeting need to be established. Commissions G and H will consider whether they wish to take on this role for the 2009 event.

- 10. 2010 APS/URSI Meeting in Toronto:** George noted that this meeting will be a regular APS/URSI joint meeting, not another North American Radio Science Meeting. However, the Canadian national committee to URSI wishes to encourage continued Canadian participation. Therefore, George proposed that the USNC share of the meeting profit (which will be divided with APS according to

the usual procedures), be then split with the Canadian NC according to the format used by the USNC and CNC at the 2007 NARS meeting in Ottawa. No objections were raised by the USNC to this idea of profit sharing. George also encouraged all of the Commissions to consider participating in this meeting. Ross Stone noted that 8 of the 10 commissions would be participating in the 2008 APS/URSI joint meeting, and reminded the commissions to please decide if they would participate in the 2009 joint meeting, as this information will be needed before January 2009.

11. USNC Elections: George discussed the several categories of elections that need to be conducted.

a. Elections for International URSI:

- i. This coming August the USNC will be in a position to nominate a U.S. candidate for URSI vice-president. At George's request, Chalmers Butler has formed a blue ribbon panel to consider candidates. Once he and the panel have selected a candidate this nomination will be put forward to URSI in the name of the USNC.
- ii. The U.S. should also seek to nominate candidates for vice-chairs of the 10 international Commissions. Chalmers Butler will consult individually with the U.S. Commission Chairs to select nominees. Around March 2009, the Chairs of the U.S. Commissions should receive requests for nominations from the Chairs of the international Commissions. The U.S. nominations will be made by the U.S. Commission Chairs to the International Commission Chairs. Candidates for nomination should be respected scientists who have been active at international URSI meetings.

b. USNC Elections

- i. Yahya will become Chair of the USNC in January 2009, and so the USNC needs to elect a new Secretary. This person must be a current or former member of the USNC. George requested that all members consider nominees and try to give him suggestions by the Executive Council meeting on Sunday, January 6. The USNC Executive Committee will consider all suggestions and select two candidates. An email election will then be conducted among all USNC members. No objections were made to this suggested process.
- ii. George reminded the Commissions that they should all have vice-chairs in place before the 2008 General Assembly, so that these Vice Chairs can participate in the GA. Commission A lacks a Vice-Chair due to the recent resignation of Vijay Nair as Commission Chair, and Commission K also does not currently have a Vice-Chair.
- iii. George informed the committee that six USNC Members-at-Large need to be elected. The USNC Executive Committee would like to return to a staggered election of these Members-at-Large, with 2 Members' terms ending each year. Therefore, the current 7 Members-at-Large will all be considered candidates for re-

appointment. Members should also consider if they wish to suggest additional nominees and give these names to George. All names received (plus the current 7) will be put onto a ballot and an email election conducted. The two nominees receiving the highest vote will receive 3 year terms, the next two highest nominees will receive 2 year terms, and the next two highest will receive 1-year terms. This will re-establish the appropriate term staggering. No objections were raised to this process.

- iv. The USNC also needs to re-appoint the society representatives. George will contact the current representatives to ask if they wish to continue to serve, and will also communicate with the society presidents.
- v. A replacement to Steve Reising must also be appointed to run the USNC student travel support program and student paper competition. The committee expressed its thanks to Steve for his years of excellent service in this role. USNC members should consider candidates, and give these suggestions to George. The Executive Council will consider all of the suggestions and make the new appointment.

12. **Old Business:** No items were raised

13. **New Business:** A suggestion was made that the application form for membership in the U.S. Commissions and USNC should explicitly state that a member needs to be either a U.S. citizen or permanent resident (green card holder). While this is stated on the website, it is not written on the application form and has caused some confusion.

14. **Review of Action items for the Commissions:**

- a. Make commission members aware of student and Young Scientist support for the GA; also make members aware that the GA will include a student paper competition.
- b. Complete the commission report forms and be sure to include the names and organizers of special sessions for the 2009 NRS Boulder meeting.
- c. Clarify any confusion over abstract submissions for the GA. [Submissions must include both a brief abstract and a 1-4 page expanded abstract; the deadline is January 31].
- d. Conduct elections for commission vice-chairs if needed
- e. Encourage participation in the joint APS/URSI meetings and decide participation in the 2009 joint meeting. Note that the submission deadline for the 2008 joint meeting (San Diego) is January 15.
- f. Notify George about organizing any special poster sessions at the GA
- g. Provide George with suggestions for USNC Secretary
- h. Provide George with suggestions for USNC Members-at-Large
- i. Provide George with suggestions for the new USNC student travel and paper competition coordinator

15. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm. The Executive Council Meeting will be held from 6:30-8:00 am on Sunday, January 6, 2008 in room Bugaboo A at the Marriott hotel.