

## **Report on the Activities of IUPAP Commission 14**

### **ICPE – The International Commission on Physics Education**

**2013-2014**

#### **ICPE Website**

ICPE has a new website <http://iupap-icpe.org/>. The servers for the new site are located in Prague where the site is being maintained by the ICPE Secretary Prof. Leos Dvorak. Links with the old site (based in Kansas) are being maintained for the moment but all relevant information has already been transferred and/or updated and the old site will be shut down in due course. The new site is based on the Drupal open-source content management system and has been designed to facilitate easy transfer in the future. The Commission thanks Prof. Dvorak for his valued work.

#### **PHYSWARE**

The sequence of ICPE-supported PHYSWARE Workshops (to promote low-cost hands-on physics teaching in developing countries) will be continued in January 2015 with a workshop at the Abdus Salam Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste. The workshop is the result of work by several individuals but ICPE particularly thanks Prof. Gorazd Planinšič who has led its efforts in this important area.

#### **Annual ICPE conference**

The Commission's annual conference, ICPE-2014 was held in Cordoba, Argentina, 18-22 August 2014. This was the first ICPE Conference to be held in South America, and it faced a number of challenges arising from the financial problems currently besetting the Argentine economy. The quality of the conference was very high, with an exceptionally rich plenary programme that gave roughly equal representation to university-level and high-school level physics education. There was some disappointment at the number of participants which was less than expected. However, a unique feature of this particular conference was the addition of a highly successful, externally funded, 'Satellite meeting' held in Spanish and specifically aimed at high school teachers who would not have been able to attend or follow the ICPE Conference itself (which was in English). The success of ICPE-2014 was thanks in no small part to the efforts of the Local Organizing Committee, led by Professor Zulma Gangoso. Their hard work on behalf of ICPE is gratefully acknowledged.

Events on the penultimate day of the Conference were dedicated to the memory of Prof Elena Sassi, a greatly valued former member of ICPE and highly regarded international physics educator, who died in the autumn of 2013.

## **ICPE Medal**

As usual a highlight of the conference was the award of the ICPE Medal. In 2014 the ICPE Medal was awarded to Cedric Linder, Professor of Physics Education Research at the University of Uppsala, Sweden, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Educational Physics. Professor Linder gave a presentation on his work immediately after the award ceremony and also made a much appreciated contribution to the Satellite meeting. A press release concerning the award was picked up by the EPS (European Physical Society) and the AAPT (American Association of Physics Teachers), amongst others.

## **Annual face-to-face meeting**

ICPE held its annual face-to-face meeting immediately after the end of the annual Conference. Apart from responses to ICPE-2014, and other matters already mentioned above, the items discussed included:

- 1 Reports on other physics education conferences around the world.
- 2 Plans and priorities for future conferences, particularly the next ICPE Conference, which will be held in Beijing, China in August 2015. (Thanks to Prof. Nianle Wu for his work on this.)
- 3 Plans for the ICPE medal post-2015 (The last of the current stock of medals will be awarded in 2015.)
- 4 Plans for future issues of the ICPE Newsletter.
- 5 Working groups and action items, including a proposal for an international catalogue of physics education systems that might be added to the new website.
- 6 Relations with other bodies, including the International Association of Physics Students (IAPS) and the International Group for Research in Physics Education (GIREP), both of which have agreed to share publicity material and to explore other areas of mutual support with ICPE.
- 7 The 2014 IUPAP General Assembly and consequent changes to ICPE membership. It was noted that Profs. Sila NicChormaic, Michael Vollmer and Nianle Wu would all be leaving the Commission in November 2014. All were thanked for their contributions. Vice-Chair Prof Hideo Nitta thanked the current Chair who will also be retiring from the Commission.

Robert Lambourne

C14 Chair