

IUPAP restructuring

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Photo by Arpan Chowdhury

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With the Centennial the IUPAP renovated and expanded its aims. Advancing with these new aims is quite challenging.

At the Centennial Symposium and then at the regular officers meetings discussions arose as to whether the current structure of IUPAP was the best to advance with the new aims; also where to put the greatest efforts, how to organize the actions and increase their impact.

I, as president designate, was charged with defining a strategy to transform these discussions into actual changes. As a first step, I convened a committee with officers and EC members which decided to have an external evaluation, but first, to undergo a self-evaluation (see accompanying report).

Different people collected information on different aspects which I then gathered to produce the report that is available with the documents for the GA.

I hope you have read it (or will find the time to read it soon). Based on this report and on previous discussions, I came up with the idea that the restructuring/refocusing of the Union can be separated in two:

-Discussion on how to change some of our current structures and how some activities are organized that can be carried out internally

-More “strategic” questions to be asked to the external evaluation committee.

1) When does it make sense to create a new commission? For what purpose? What to do with current commissions that have a relatively large overlap in their subfields? When and how to merge commissions? Analysis of the current situation

2) What type of activities can be organized/supported to promote the collaboration among commissions? We already have an Interdisciplinary Early Career Scientist Prize. What about having one “large” physics conference, e.g., “attached” to in-person General Assemblies? An IUPAP prize?

3) Some aspects related to transversal issues (development, inclusion, industry, to some extent education, which is “two ways”). What is the best structure to carry out these activities? Gender Champion has produced a proposal for diversity that could be applied to other of these issues.

4) Some aspects related to budget allocation and sponsorship.

Q1) How can IUPAP increase its visibility among physicists, physics students and/or companies with interest in physics? What target audience should IUPAP prioritize for its communications? What means of communication and type of contents would be best to this end? What type of actions should be strengthened and or added to increase IUPAP's visibility?

Q2) IUPAP has traditionally been organized in Commissions that cover subfields of physics and, as such, relate to the physics communities related to those subfields. [...] IUPAP has then started to address transversal issues (physics for development, inclusion and diversity in physics, physics in industry, and, to some extent, physics education). What type of organization/structure do you think we should set up to address these issues and increase the impact of IUPAP's actions? What funding sources can we apply to to further support these activities?

Q3) By addressing the transversal issues referred to in the previous item, we would like to have an impact beyond the physics community, particularly, on policy and policy makers. What type of actions would be best to increase the impact of IUPAP on policy and policy makers both at the national and international levels? Should IUPAP channel these efforts at the international level through ISC or have actions of its own? Which ones? How to better impact on national policies?

Q4) In 2021 we introduced a new membership type, Corporate Associate Member, to incorporate commercial companies or international research organizations[...] So far, we have succeeded in incorporating 5 associated corporate members, only one of which is a company, and the rest are either large research institutions or networks of research facilities. What type of actions would be best to attract the support of companies with interest in physics and/or physicists? How to better reach out to physicists outside academic and research institutions?

Q5) IUPAP has a very small support staff, most of the work is done by physicists who contribute with IUPAP on top of their regular duties at their home institutions. Is it possible to increase IUPAP's visibility and/or impact with this type of functioning? Enlarging the support staff would require additional funds. What sources of additional funding could IUPAP apply to?

Q6) How could we measure the level of knowledge of IUPAP and/or the impact of its actions?

Q7) What other suggestions do you have?

I think it should have about 5 members. These are some options that I've thought of:

- someone from IUPAC
- someone from IAPS
- a renowned physicist
- a recipient of an Early Career Scientist Prize? I don't know
- someone from ISC? Maybe it's not so good to have someone from ISC if we are going to include in the discussion whether to channel some of our initiatives through ISC or not.
- someone deeply involved with IUPAP in the past?
- someone related to "physics and industry", startups, etc.
- someone with expertise in the relation with at least national policy makers (scientists that are members of governmental structures or advise governments)