

## Executive Committee

Muzi Maseko (President)

Balindiwe Sishi (Secretary/Treasurer)

Matome Mashudu (Student Rep.)



## Council Members

Sulé Gunter

Lebogang Mokotedi

Annie Mercier

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**MINUTES OF THE 48<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PHYSIOLOGY SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (PSSA), HOSTED JOINTLY by the UNIVERSITY of WITWATERSRAND (WITS) & the UNIVERSITY of JOHANNESBURG (UJ). THIS MEETING & AGM WAS ALSO the 1<sup>ST</sup> VIRTUAL MEETING HELD JOINTLY with the AFRICAN ASSOCIATION of PHYSIOLOGICAL SCIENCES (AAPS).**

**Members present:** member count during virtual (online) AGM not taken.

1. **Welcome by President** Muzi Maseko (MM).
2. **Apologies received:** Prof. Kathy Myburgh (indicated by Prof Erlwanger).
3. **Approval of 2019 minutes:** Minutes of the previous meeting (DEPARTMENT OF PHYSIOLOGY, WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY, 19<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2019). The AGM accepted the minutes (Dr T. Nyakudya, seconded by Dr M. Sekhotha).
4. **Matters arising elsewhere** – none indicated.
5. **President's report**
  - i. *Impact of COVID-19 on PSSA program*

New President (Prof Maseko – elected in 2019) acknowledged the impact of the pandemic on the PSSA annual program, and recognised WITS as willing hosts for the 2020/2021 congress along with the AAPS.
  - ii. *Postponement of the 2020 PSSA*

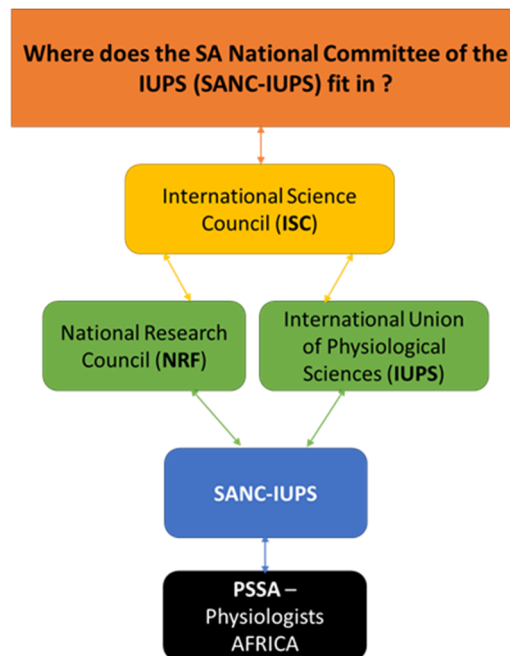
With the postponement of the AAPS/PSSA 2020 congress to 2021, this also came with changes with regards to the already established host institutions due to secured sponsorships for 2022. See point 8 for clarification.
  - iii. *Co-option of council members*

Due to the unavailability of various council members – either due to retirement from academia or personal issues – the President (**MM**), according to the constitution co-opted the previous secretary/treasurer (Dr Balindiwe Sishi) to continue her previous duties in the interim until the next PSSA AGM (2021). The only council members that remained (excluding the president) included Dr T. Nyakudya (term expired in 2020) and Mr M. Matumba (student representative – elected in 2019). Advise was sort first from the previous president (Prof Essop) on the way forward.
6. **Broad issues – Feedback**
  - i. *Honouring Prof Johan Koeslag (Prof Kathy Myburgh)*

Due to Prof Myburgh not being able to make the meeting, Dr Balindiwe Sishi and Prof Essop made a reminder and an emphasis on the importance of this award and what it means. This award will be formalised through an application process for students and/or supervisors to determine whether a student is eligible or not. Students aspiring to enter the competition will form part of the Wyndham competition.
  - ii. National IUPS re-establishment (Prof Faadiel Essop)
    - What is SANC (South African National Committee of the IUPS)? This is a conjugant between the NRF (National Research Council) and IUPS and (International Union

of Physiological Sciences), under the umbrella of the ISC (International Science Council) – which includes all the disciplines of science – 40 international scientific unions and associations, and over 140 national and regional scientific organisations including academies of science.

- The vision of the ISC council is to advance science as a global public good. Scientific knowledge, data and expertise must be universally accessible, and its benefits be universally shared. The practice of science must be inclusive and equitable, also in opportunities for scientific education and capacity development.
- The Mission of the ISC is to act as the global voice for science. This includes:
  - Speaking for the value of all science and evidence-informed decision making;
  - Stimulating and supporting international scientific research and scholarship on major issues of global concern;
  - Articulating scientific knowledge and equal advancement of scientific rigour, creativity and relevance in all parts of the world and;
  - Defending the free and responsible practice of science.
- The IUPS also subscribes to the ISC.



- Michael Sekhota asked where the AAPS fits in the above indicated organogram?
  - MFE responded that it would fit in under the IUPS as the PSSA is mandated by the NRF to reinforce the South African National Council (SANC).
- SANC-IUPS committee (2021-2024):
  - **Chairperson:** Prof. Faadiel Essop (SU – AAPS President)
  - **Vice Chairperson:** Prof. Benedicta Nkeh-Chuang (WSU)
  - **Secretary:** Dr. Lebogang Gafane-Mateman (NMU) (capacity development candidate)
  - Prof. Muzi Maseko (WITS – PSSA President)
  - Dr. Balindiwe Sishi (SU – PSSA Secretary/Treasurer & AAPS treasurer)
  - Prof. Marlise van Staden (UL)
  - Prof Eugene Ndebia (WSU)
  - Dr. Jenelle Govender (UFS) – (capacity development candidate)
- SANC terms of reference established (as per previous discussions with the SANC council members)

- Michael Sekhota asked if there will be a representative from the AAPS in the SANC?
  - MFE responded by indicated uncertainty with the constitution of the NRF as the SANC is a South African organisation governed by the NRF.
- Prof Stijdom indicated that although we've had this committee before, now that it is being re-established, we need to make all effort to advertise, promote, let it be known and the role it plays within the South African science community.

iii. *IUPS 2022*

Balindiwe Sishi (co-opted secretary/treasurer) indicated that the next International Union of Physiological Sciences (IUPS) meeting will be held between 7-11 May 2022 in Beijing, China. Delegates were also informed of the past two (2) PSSA Wyndham winners, and the potential 2020/2021 Wyndham winner who would also qualify for this competition. Only one student Wyndham winner (2018, 2019 and 2021) will be sponsored to attend this congress.

iv. *IUPS 2029*

The president indicated that the PSSA has the opportunity to bid for the 2029 IUPS congress to be held for the first time in Africa, specifically South Africa. There was positive support for this initiative and the AGM agreed that the PSSA should go ahead with the bid.

7. **'Co-opted' Secretary/Treasurer's report – Balindiwe Sishi (BS)**

BS provided feedback on the financials. Two audits were initiated for the periods of 2020 and 2021. The transactional ABSA account after expenses had a positive balance of **R 74 158.51** (end June 2021). Expenditures were allocated to website design/modifications, PSSA travel support (converted to registration grants – **R 14 000**) for students, and auditors (x2 – **R 15 870**). BS also provided feedback on the SATRIX investment account (currently: **R 340 368. 20**) and the profit made from the PSSA-WSU 2019 conference (**R 0.00**). In addition, the PSSA partners (Axiology Labs) sponsored all the PSSA competition prizes (**R 25 000**) excluding travel (Registration) grants for the 2021 congress. Membership fees have not been changed, i.e. **R100** for students, **R200** for postdocs and **R400** for academic/technical staff etc. A PSSA membership number of 112 delegates was noted for 2021 which also contributed towards the PSSA income. The AGM accepted the financial report.

- Prof Strijdom enquired of the number of delegates registered for the joint 2021 congress
- Prof Daniels indicated 215 registered delegates (194 PSSA/AAPS delegates and 21 delegates from industry).

8. **Confirmation of the next PSSA conferences (2022-2025)**

Due to the pandemic, the joint congress of 2020 between the AAPS and PSSA was postponed to 2021. As a result of this postponement, sponsorships were lost, however an agreement was reached between the Western Cape Tourism Department (WCTD) and PSSA that should the PSSA annual congress be held in the Western Cape in 2022, they (WCTD) would sponsor some funds towards the congress. Negotiations were entered into between the next hosts (UKZN) to ascertain whether they would thus host in 2023, resulting in the other host institutions having an additional year to prepare. Considering that UWC last hosted the PSSA congress in 2011 (versus UCT-2016 and SU-2018), the president of the PSSA agreed that UWC should be the next hosts in the Western Cape. **BS** (Co-opted' Secretary/Treasurer) thus confirmed the next following hosts below:

- 2022-UWC
- 2023-UKZN
- 2024-UL
- 2025-NMU

9. **Election of new council members (Dr Nyakudya)**

As previously indicated by the president of the PSSA (point 5-iii), there were several vacant council member positions. The following council members either were elected, re-elected or are current members of council:

- i. **President:** – Muzi Maseko (2019-no vote) - WITS
- ii. **Student Rep.:** – Mashudu Matumba (2019-no vote) - UL
- iii. **Secretary/Treasurer:** – Balindiwe (Bali) Sishi (2021-elected unopposed) - US
- iv. **Council member:** – Annie (Joji) Mercier (elected unopposed) - UP
- v. **Council member:** – Lebogang Mokotedi (elected unopposed) - SMU
- vi. **Council member:** – Sulé Gunter (elected unopposed) – WITS

The AGM agreed on a fair and equal representation of institutions, and thus agreed and approved the newly elected council members. In addition, on behalf of the President of the PSSA, Dr Nyakudya also indicated the newly elected AAPS council members and the following:

- i. **President:** M.F. Essop (South Africa)
- ii. **Vice President:** Y. El-Wazir (Egypt)
- iii. **Treasurer:** B.J.N. Sishi (South Africa)
- iv. **Secretary General:** I. Olatanji-Bello (Nigeria)
- v. **Council member:** M. Sekhotha (South Africa)
- vi. **Council member:** T. Nyakudya (South Africa)
- vii. **Council member:** L. Kaddam (Sudan)
- viii. **Council member:** I. Abi (Nigeria)

- ❖ Dr Nyakudya suggested that a representative of UWC (next PSSA hosts - 2022) become part of the council.
- ❖ **BS** indicated that the chair of LOC from UWC becomes the vice President, thus the 7<sup>th</sup> member of the PSSA council.

## 10. Closing Remarks

There being no further issues, the AGM meeting for PSSA 2021 meeting closed.