

## ICA General Assembly 2008

Minutes of the ICA General Assembly, held on Tuesday 2 September 2008 at 15.30 in the Salon Victor Siurana at the Rectorate, University of Lleida, Plaça de Víctor Siurana 1, Lleida, on the occasion of ICA-ECHAE 2008.

### Participants:

Maurice Boland (Chair), Philippe Caron, Philippe Choquet, Brian Dennis, Krystyna Gutkowska, Simon Heath, Jana Kelblerova, Kulli Kogesaar, Pavel Kovar, Anna Lauritz, Jaume Lloveras, Jaromir Nemeč, Doru Pamfil, Michele Perniola, Placido Plaza, Ivana Popovic, Mika Rekola, Eduardo Rosa, Eva Technkova, Martyn Warren and Agnieszka Wojciechowska.

**Apologies:** Andrew Cobb, Pol Coppin, Lisa Sennerty Forssé, Ivana Greco, Per Holten-Andersen, Jan Hron, Mait Klaasen, Jukka Kola, Milan Mesic, Davor Romić, Agust Sigurdsson, Skúli Skúlason and Roland Verhe.

**Invited representatives:** CEDIA: Sean Gaule, IAAS Czech Republic: Michal Novak

### Members entitled to vote as representatives of their institutions:

**CZ**, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Pavel Kovar; **EE**, Estonian University of Life Sciences, Kulli Kogesaar; **ES**, University of Lleida, Jaume Lloveras; **FI**, University of Helsinki, Mika Rekola; **FR**, Institute Polytechnique LaSalle Beauvais (ISAB), Philippe Choquet; **FR**, International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), Placido Plaza; **HR**, University of Zagreb, Ivana Popovic; **IR**, University College Dublin, Maurice Boland; **IT**, Università Degli Studi Della Basilicata, Potenza, Michele Perniola; **PL**, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Krystyna Gutkowska; **PT**, University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, Eduardo Rosa; **RO**, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Cluj-Napoca, Doru Pamfil; **SE**, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Anna Lauritz; **UK**, University of Plymouth, Martyn Warren;

**Proxy votes given to Maurice Boland (Chair)** by the Agricultural University of Iceland, University of Copenhagen, Harper Adams University College, and Holar University College.

### Quorum:

Partner institutions represented: 18

Total number of ICA members who had paid their membership subscription for 2007: 51  
A quorum is achieved when one third of the ICA members who had paid the membership subscription for 2007 are represented = 17 members. The meeting was quorate.

# Minutes

## 1 Opening announcements

Maurice Boland, the President, welcomed the participants to the ICA General Assembly (General Assembly) and thanked Dean Dr Joan Viñes, Rector of University of Lleida for hosting the meeting. Dr Joan Viñes, welcomed the participants to Lleida.

## 2 Minutes of the General Assembly held on Thursday 30 August 2007

The minutes were approved

## 3 Report of the President on behalf of the Board

Maurice Boland presented his verbal report on behalf of the Board for the period September 2007 to August 2008. He outlined the history of ICA from its beginnings in 1988 as the Interfaculty Committee Agraria to its evolving mission as the Association for European Life Science Universities. This year ICA celebrated its 20th anniversary. The Board had addressed a number of issues limiting the development of ICA which stem from insufficient income to meet all the Board's objectives for ICA. The restriction in activities resulting from the lack of funds will have a direct effect on the value placed on ICA by its members, particularly at a time of declining resources.

The Board had also reviewed the management structure of ICA. The ICA Board has responsibility for policy and strategy and the Executive Committee for implementation of the policy. However, the Executive Committee had not been given executive powers and as a consequence could not function effectively. The Board had decided to suspend the ICA Executive Committee and widen the membership of the Board to include not only Rectors, Deans and senior management but also two other members whose role within an institution is not defined. The structure of the Board is now:

- 5 Senior Management members, including the President and Vice president
- Treasurer
- 2 Other members
- President of IROICA

At this General Assembly one senior management person, two other members and the Treasurer were to be elected.

The significant activities undertaken during the year had included the successful ICA-NASULGC Annual Conference 2008, "Moving from the Sciences of Agriculture to the Sciences of Life: an International Perspective" held from 5 to 8 April 2008 at the University of Missouri and the coming conference organised by the ECHAE Standing Committee at the University of Lleida "Developing roadmaps for European Life Science degrees: Competences, Quality, Employability". In addition Ed Rosa has undertaken the redesign of the ICA website.

An ICA-NASULGC Executive Committee was held at the time of the conference in Missouri where an interim International Committee was set up to develop the theme of the ICA-NASULGC Conference 2010 in Europe. A GCHERA Executive Committee was organised by ICA in Gent to plan the GCHERA Conference 2009 and confirmed that the GCHERA Conference 2011 will be held in Beauvais under the Chairmanship of Philippe Choquet, Directeur General, Institute Polytechnique LaSalle Beauvais.

The ICA Board had considered the report of the *ICA Survey of present and future membership* prepared by the ICA Executive Committee and presented to the Board. In the Member survey the *current* ICA activities most highly rated were

- Stimulus and support for education, research and knowledge transfer.
- Professional updating through ICA's conferences and workshops.
- Participation in externally-funded collaborative projects.
- Opportunity for senior managers to discuss strategic issues.

The survey had identified that many respondents below senior management were unaware of the role of ICA. The Board agreed that ICA should continue to have a broad remit and should pay more attention to segmenting the constituency in addressing the specific needs of the different target groups in its activities. In the past this engagement with a wider audience within member institutions had been achieved by the DEMETER/AFANet projects. In respect of improving communications with all levels within the ICA member institutions it was agreed that the ICA Board needed to work with IROICA to provide a robust network of ICA representatives at the institutional level.

The most popular options for *further* improving ICA's value tend to involve networking and creating opportunity, for instance:

- Developing searchable databases of expertise in research and teaching/learning to support development of collaborative activity including grant applications.
- Developing research networks which cross the boundaries of disciplines and of the professional societies.
- International accreditation of degree programmes, including joint and double degrees.
- Interaction with EU – lobbying to promote the discipline area and interests of ICA's members; and informing members of developing European Commission programmes

The Board had agreed that ICA should develop greater contact with EUA with a view to effective lobbying within Europe. ICA should develop to become an organisation to which the EU Commission should naturally turn when wanting expertise and advice in the area of the Life Sciences.

The Board had decided to move to a policy of managing a balanced budget and not to draw upon the ICA reserves to finance the day to day running costs of ICA as had been the policy in recent years. The Board members had continued in the main to subsidise the running of ICA by contributing the costs of attending ICA Board meetings from other than ICA resources.

The Board had met on two occasions since the last General Assembly. One face to face meeting in Dublin and one audio Board meeting had been held by telephone. The audio conference represented a significant reduction in costs in holding a meeting, only 203 GBP for the telephone connection linking Board members in eight countries. Virtual meetings are time efficient for members as there was no travelling time for a two and half hour meeting. Most importantly, an effective and successful meeting had been held with all Board members effectively connected. The audio conference had been easier to arrange to link the Board members than the video conference Board meeting held in 2007. It was proposed in future to hold a mixture of face to face and virtual ICA Board meetings.

Maurice Boland announced that he would step down as President at this General Assembly and that the ICA Board has appointed Per Holten-Andersen as the next President of ICA. Per Holten-Andersen had sent his apologies for not attending the General Assembly owing to a

prior commitment but would later join the ECHAE conference. Simon Heath in the capacity of Secretary General had been given a contract of 50 working days which represented a significant reduction in time compared to the previous years. Kerstin Treib, as ICA Secretary, had continued on a part time basis being responsible for the day to day management of ICA's finances. The position of ICA Secretary would be filled in the next year under the Presidency of Per Holten-Andersen. No Treasurer had been appointed during the year and the role had been undertaken by the Secretary General. However a Treasurer would be elected at this General Assembly.

Maurice Boland welcomed the new members of ICA, Aarhus University, Agricultural University of Iceland and Holar University College. He thanked the Board and Executive Committee for their support, Simon Heath (ICA Secretary General) and Kerstin Treib (ICA Secretary), the ICA members and the University of Lleida for hosting the coming ICA-ECHAE Conference.

The ICA General Assembly approved the President's Report

#### **4 Report of the Secretary General**

Simon Heath presented a verbal report and listed his main activities in the period September 2007 to August 2008. He acknowledged the involvement and support of many others in achieving the outcomes reported and, in particular, thanked Kerstin Treib who had continued to work for ICA in the day to day management of ICA's finances. Apart from general administration he had

- Prepared agenda, papers and minutes for three ICA Board meetings, ICA General Assembly and the ICA-NASULGC Executive Committee
- Prepared the ICA accounts for Audit
- Managed the collection of ICA Membership subscriptions
- Liaised with ECHAE, IROICA and NATURA
- Liaised with IAAS, NASULGC and GCHERA
- Represented ICA President at the ICA-NASULGC Conference *Science and Education of Land Use*
- Attended ICA-NASULGC Annual Conference 2008 *Moving from the Sciences of Agriculture to the Sciences of Life*
- Acted as coordinator of the AMEU and Quality Projects
- Represented ICA in the TEMPUS project *Support Network for Improvement of the Strategic Planning (SuNISP)*

The AMEU project<sup>1</sup> had been completed in March 2008 and had delivered three main outcomes:

- ICA online searchable Portal (database) of Master and Doctorate degree programmes in agricultural and related sciences. [www.ica-europe.info/master-search](http://www.ica-europe.info/master-search)
- Handbook of good practice in the management of the academic studies and pastoral care of international students.
- AMEU Quality Assurance Framework for the assessment of an international Master degree programme delivered by a single university

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<sup>1</sup> AMEU - Enhancing the attractiveness of Master programmes at European universities in agriculture, the applied life sciences and the rural environment

The Quality <sup>2</sup>project would be completed in November 2008 and the main outcomes to date had been:

- Framework for the Quality Assessment of International Master degree programmes for Applied Life Sciences and Rural Environment delivered by two or more institutions
- Guidance Notes for the Quality Assurance of international Master degree programmes delivered by two or more institutions
- Accreditation Decision Rules
- Peer review of two Erasmus Mundus degree programmes
- Feasibility study for the establishment of **European Accreditation Agency for the Life Sciences – for agriculture, food, natural resources, rural development and the environment (EAALS)**
- Developed a protocol for EAALS which covers:
  - the accreditation organisation
  - the accreditation procedures
  - the accreditation standards

Further details regarding the development of EAALS was covered in minute item 6 below.

The Secretary General's report was approved by the General Assembly

## 5 Report of the ICA Treasurer

The following papers had been circulated prior to the meeting, including the signed auditors report for 2006.

Paper 1 Treasurer's Report 2008

Paper 2 Income and Expenditure Account 2007

Paper 3 Balance Sheet 2007

Paper 4 Budget 2008

Paper 5 Auditors report for 2006 and

Paper 6 Auditors report for 2007

Simon Heath presented his Treasurer's Report and the ICA accounts which had been audited by Philip Cain (University of Newcastle, UK) and Edward Majewski (Warsaw University of Life Sciences, PL). Their report made three recommendations two of which had been adopted, but the suggestion to raise the limit on payments from 1000 to 2000 € for which the signatures of two Board members was required had not yet been discussed by the ICA Board.

Simon Heath noted that the total assets of ICA at 31 December 2007 were 79.840 € although 17.000 € of this total represented ICA member subscription debtors. Mika Rekola questioned the presentation in the capital account of the deficit of 11.869 € for the AMEU project, he suggested that this should be considered as a debtor as it was owed by the EU Commission for the AMEU project. This would have the effect of increasing the total assets of ICA by 11.869€. Simon Heath undertook to examine this issue.

The ICA Budget 2008 for the ICA General Account which had been approved by the ICA Board was presented to the ICA General Assembly. This budget did not allow for the writing off of any membership subscriptions, it assumed a net income from membership

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<sup>2</sup> QUALITY - Quality Assurance and Accreditation of International Master degree programmes in Life Sciences and the Rural Environment.

subscriptions of 37.000€. The projected outcome was a surplus of 1150 € in the line with the Board's decision to move to a balanced budget.

Mika Rekola also raised the issue, on behalf of his Dean Jukka Kola (Helsinki), of the sharing of the joint membership subscription of ICA and NATURA who is a member of the NATURA Board. At present the membership subscription for institutions who belong to both ICA and NATURA is 1500€ as agreed in an Annex to the Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations signed in 2005. The Annex sets out the basis for the division of the joint fee, 1000€ to ICA and 500€ to NATURA. Maurice Boland reported that earlier in year the NATURA President, Carmelo Rapisarda, had approached the ICA Board with the request to share the fee equally. The ICA Board had maintained that it did not wish to share the fee equally as it did not wish to reduce its membership fee income. This had always been the position of the previous ICA ExCo in all the discussions with NATURA since about 1998 (before ICA had a Board) and of the current Board. It had been the suggestion of the NATURA Board only to request a fee of 500€ for this joint membership. Maurice Boland had responded to Carmelo Rapisarda to this effect and inviting NATURA to nominate a NATURA member to join the GCHERA 2011 International Committee which is led by Philippe Choquet for ICA.

The Treasurer's Report, ICA accounts for 2007 and ICA Budget for 2008 were approved.

## **6 Proposal to establish the European Accreditation Agency for the Life Sciences (EAALS) – for agriculture, food, natural resources, rural development and the environment**

The following papers had been circulated prior to the meeting

Paper 7 Summary paper

Paper 8 EAALS Business Plan

Paper 9 EAALS Statutes

Paper 7 set out the proposal to establish the European Accreditation Agency for the Life Sciences (EAALS) – for agriculture, food, natural resources, rural development and the environment. Simon Heath outlined the case for the establishment of EAALS, including defining the relationship between EAALS and ICA to ensure independence of action for EAALS. He put the following proposals to the General Assembly to:

- a. agree to establish in principle the **European Accreditation Agency for the Life Sciences (EAALS) – for agriculture, food, natural resources, rural development and the environment.**
- b. approve the EAALS Statutes
- c. approve the establishment of an Interim Board. As the Statutes were not yet in place it had not been possible to hold a formal election. It was proposed that the following should be installed as an Interim Board with formal elections in 2009. The proposed members were:
  - i. Andrew Cobb, Harper Adams University College
  - ii. Vincent Dolle, CIHEAM
  - iii. Wim Heijman, Wageningen University
  - iv. Paavo Pelkonen, Joensuu University
  - v. IAAS representative
- d. approve a grant from ICA reserves to cover the start up costs.

The ICA Board had approved the above proposals on the conditions that



- i. EAALS will only become active when at least four degree programmes have signed up with EAALS for review. Four reviews will be required to cover the overhead costs.
- ii. The start up costs will be refunded to ICA in due course.

The proposal was discussed by the General Assembly. Martyn Warren highlighted the issue that ICA would need not only to support the start up costs as presented in the Business Plan but would also have to fund the running costs in the first year of up to 27.500€ per degree programme because of costs incurred before payments were received. If no payments were delivered until the conclusion of the minimum of four reviews, the maximum risk would be in excess of 100.000€ which was greater than ICA's current reserves. Simon Heath responded that there would be a need to minimise such risk by part pre-payment, say 30%, at the signing of the contract between the Agency and the institution at the start of the review process.

The establishment of EAALS under the conditions set by the ICA Board was supported by Philippe Choquet and Eduardo Rosa. The four proposals, a) to d) above were approved by the ICA General Assembly.

## **7 Presentation of the ICA-NASULGC Conference 2009 – Water Policy 2009, water as a vulnerable and exhaustible resource**

Pavel Kovar presented the forthcoming 2009 ICA-NASULGC conference and circulated the first Newsletter which called for contributed papers by 31 December 2008. Maurice Boland thanked Pavel Kovar on behalf of the General Assembly for this initiative and wished him and his colleagues all success in arranging a valuable conference to further develop understanding between Europe and the US.

## **8 The new ICA Website**

Ed Rosa presented the development of the new ICA Website. The new design was welcomed by the General Assembly. The new website would be released in due course.

## **9 Report of the Standing Committees and associated Networks**

Reports from AGRIMBA and IROICA were tabled.

Sean Gaule (CEDIA) made a presentation outlining the aims and activities of CEDIA – the European Confederation of Agronomist Associations which was founded in 1987. There are associations from eleven countries in the association. He addressed the continuing need for the general practitioner as well as the need for the specialist which he compared to the medical general practitioner and specialist medical consultant. Among other points he also addressed was the need for continuing professional development accreditation. Further information about CEDIA is given at their website [www.cedia.eu](http://www.cedia.eu) Sean Gaule indicated that CEDIA would like to co-operate with ICA in the development of new initiatives and activities.

## **10 Election of ICA Board members**

Nominations had been received as follows for one senior management (rector, head of college/school, or dean) position and two other Board members:

- Philippe Choquet, Executive President, Institute Polytechnique LaSalle Beauvais, France
- Professor Krystyna Gutkowska, Vice Rector, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Poland
- Dr Irene Mueller, Pakistan-Austria University Office, Austrian Exchange Service, Vienna, Austria

- Professor Roland Verhe, Head of Department of Organic Chemistry, Gent University, Belgium

An election was held with anonymous voting by the representatives of the ICA member institutions present and by Maurice Boland using the four proxy votes. Each representative could give three votes, although one voter did not use the three votes. The votes cast were Choquet (18), Gutkowska (16), Mueller (12) and Verhe (7). Philippe Choquet, Krystyna Gutkowska and Irene Mueller were duly elected.

The election for Treasurer was by a separate election. Martyn Warren, Director, Rural Futures Unit, Faculty of Social Science and Business, University of Plymouth, Plymouth, UK, was elected unopposed for the post of ICA Treasurer

#### **11 Ratification of proposals for new members of ICA**

The following had applied for membership of ICA since the last General Assembly in 2007, their membership was ratified by the General Assembly.

- Aarhus University Denmark 2008
- Agricultural University of Iceland 2007
- Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) 2008
- Holar University College, Iceland 2007

Approved by the General Assembly

#### **12 Ratification of suspension of members not paying subscriptions**

The following universities were in default of paying their membership subscriptions for 2006 and 2007 and their suspension at 31 December 2008 was approved if they had not paid their membership subscription by that date

- Universite Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) (BE)
- Cranfield University of Silsoe (UK)
- University of Newcastle upon Tyne (UK)

It was noted that the following members had resigned: University of West Hungary, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, Writtle College (UK)

Approved by the General Assembly

#### **13 Appointment of Auditors for the 2008 accounts**

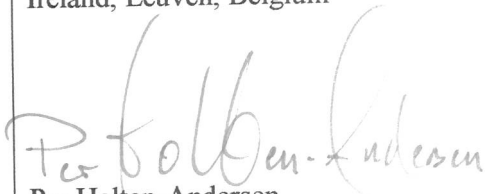
Simon Heath reported that Edward Majewski (Warsaw University of Life Sciences, PL) had completed his two year term as auditor and had been thanked for undertaking this task. Unfortunately as Philip Cain resided in the same country as the newly elected Treasurer he was no longer eligible to continue as a Auditor under the rules set out in the ICA Statutes. At the time of the General Assembly no replacements for the auditors had been identified although replacements with the agreement of the ICA Board would be appointed to audit the 2008 accounts prior to the next General Assembly.


#### **14 Closure**

Maurice Boland thanked everyone present for their contribution and closed the General Assembly.



Minutes approved at the ICA General Assembly held on 10 June 2009 at the Leuven Institute for Ireland, Leuven, Belgium

  
Per Holten-Andersen  
Chair

  
Simon Heath  
Secretary General