

comprehensive introduction to this very active field of research. The lectures can be found at the school website at http://www.astro-udec.cl/phd_school_2007. We were all lucky enough to enjoy a sunny week in Concepción of which the participants of the school could take advantage during the outdoor coffee and lunch breaks, and during the long summer evenings. Many participants were also impressed by the beauty of the campus of the Universidad de Concepción. During the week, many new friendships and working contacts were created among the students, and there was a lively interaction with the lecturers and organisers of the school. The social highlight was the conference dinner which took place in the Canto de Luna restaurant on the shore of the Laguna Chica de San Pedro, a beautiful lake on the southern side of the Bio Bio river which divides



Figure 1: Group photograph of the Advanced School of Astrophysics at the Universidad de Concepción.

Concepción into a northern and southern part. The dancing party extended to well beyond midnight, and several of our invited lecturers showed unexpected skills in this activity as well.

The organisers of the school were Wolfgang Gieren (Chair), Manuela Zoccali (Co-chair), Rene Méndez, Grzegorz Pietrzynski and Ivo Saviane. They were very effectively assisted by Andrea Lagarini who took care of the logistical aspects of the School and helped to make this a week everybody will like to remember.

ESO at the AAS, the AAAS and in Dublin

Henri Boffin, Claus Madsen (ESO)

The great variety of new distribution methods and tools available does not replace face-to-face communication, which remains a most valuable activity in presenting ESO and its future needs. Face-to-face communication, in turn, takes many forms ranging from formal lectures and speeches, through less formal and informal meetings and briefings, e.g. with decision makers or media representatives, to information stands at fairs and conferences. Information stands often provide a physical basis for important personal encounters. In 2006, ESO's Public Affairs Department organised or participated in more than 20 events, involving exhibitions, briefings and VIP visits. This constitutes a marked increase over the previous years, on the one hand reflecting the growing importance and visibility of ESO, and, on the other hand, a neces-

sity, given the need to enlist wide support for ESO's ambitious future projects.

This year for the first time, ESO was present at the 209th Winter Meeting of the American Astronomical Society (AAS) which took place in early January in Seattle, USA. The meeting, which was held jointly with the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Physics Teachers, gathered over five days about 3000 astronomers and hundreds of teachers, and also attracted many journalists. On account of its shear size, the AAS Winter Meeting is one of the astronomical events of the year, especially for years in which there is no IAU General Assembly, and it is thus no surprise that ESO decided to be present with an exhibition stand, featuring a VLT model. ESO's presence was very much appreciated and many astronomers and teachers came by to get the latest information on the most recent developments. In particular interest



Young Japanese scientists at the ESO stand at the AAS.

was high in the Laser Guide Star project, ALMA and, of course, the E-ELT. ALMA was also represented at the AAS meeting on the NRAO stand, our colleagues in this global project. In addition to the exhibition, ESO was present at some of the press briefings, including the one on the discovery of the first triple quasar (see

Photo: H.-H. Heyer, ESO

ESO PR 02/07) and on results from the COSMOS survey. This, in turn, resulted in an enhanced presence of ESO in the media, ironically also on the European scene. ESO's first participation in the Winter Meeting of the AAS appeared therefore well justified and we look forward to attending next year's event in Austin, Texas.

From Seattle, the exhibition stand of ESO was then transferred a little bit further south, to San Francisco, where from 15 to 19 February, the AAAS meeting took place. The participation of ESO in the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, arguably the largest gathering of its kind worldwide, was not in this case a premiere, as ESO was already present at last year's meeting. In addition to the European Commission, another EIROforum member participated, namely the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL). With an estimated 10 000 participants and visitors, it is a privileged place for exchanges between American



The AAAS Family Science Days drew the attention of a large number of youngsters and students who showed a great interest in the information provided at the ESO stand.

and European scientists and science policy makers, as well as an opportunity to get in touch with a large number of science journalists in a very short time-span.

With its 30 m² information stand at these two major events, ESO and its ambitious projects have been well represented across the Atlantic. In Europe, ESO was the key exhibitor at the Astro-Expo 2006



The Lord Mayor of Dublin gets information on ESO's VLT.

event in Dublin in December. Organised by Astronomy and Space Magazine at the Dublin City University (DCU), the event was opened by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Vincent Jackson. With the exhibition and a public talk, ESO had a first chance to present itself to a broader audience in Ireland and there was clearly a strong interest in learning more about the organisation and its current and future projects.

Announcement of the ESO Workshop on

12 Questions on Star and Massive Star Cluster Formation

3–6 July 2007, ESO Headquarters, Garching, Germany



The goal is to bring together two communities: one working on star formation (mostly Galactic) and the other working on the formation of young massive clusters (mostly extragalactic). We will link Galactic with extragalactic work, optical/NIR techniques with sub-mm/mm/radio ones, the formation of stars with that of massive star clusters and observations with theory. Views will be exchanged on topics such as the earliest phases of star and star cluster formation, ultracompact and ultradense HII regions, embedded massive stars and star clusters, stages at which stars and clusters emerge in the NIR and the optical, and culminating with young massive clusters observed in starbursts.

The format is bold and new, aiming to focus attention on 12 critical questions in this area. Each of the 12 questions will be addressed in a dedicated session by all speakers. The session will include an introduction, several short contributions as well as a general discussion (with accompanying posters). The community was requested to propose the 12 questions. We have received over 30 proposals of which 12 have been selected to be discussed at the workshop.

The programme can be found at <http://www.eso.org/star07>

Organisers: Markus Kissler-Patig and Tom Wilson