

24 October 2006

Dear Professor Summerhayes

To: the Executive Director, SCAR

APPLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMICAL UNION (IAU) FOR UNION MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON ANTARCTIC RESEARCH (SCAR)

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) was founded in 1919. Its mission is to promote and safeguard the science of astronomy in all its aspects through international cooperation. Its individual members are professional astronomers all over the World, at the Ph.D. level or beyond and active in professional research and education in astronomy. The IAU maintains friendly relations with organizations that include amateur astronomers in their membership. National Members are generally those with a significant level of professional astronomy. The IAU is composed of nearly 10,000 Individual Members in 85 different countries worldwide out of which 62 are National Members (according to statistics of August 2006).

For information about IAU, please see our web site at <http://www.iau.org>.

As you will know, there is rapidly growing interest throughout the world astronomical community in the potential of Antarctic sites for astronomical observations. Astronomers are already active in various forums which consider Antarctic science. We already know from the close interactions between our communities that much of the astronomical and astrophysical science that SCAR scientists do in Antarctica would be of interest to IAU, and that SCAR might well benefit from the advice of IAU in the development and operation of SCAR's astronomical and astrophysical science research programmes, such as AAA (Antarctic Astronomy and Astrophysics). IAU would therefore like to be represented at the SCAR Science Week in July 2008, in St Petersburg, Russia, and the XXX SCAR Delegates' meeting during the following week, in Moscow, in the capacity of Observer. Our proposed Observer is Dr. John Storey from the University of New South Wales, Australia.

IAU has substantial interests in astronomical and astrophysical research in the Antarctic, and has had a long established inter-Divisional Working Group on Encouraging the International Development of Antarctic Astronomy chaired by Michael Burton of the

University of New South Wales. Members of this Group have been working actively with other SCAR members on areas of common interest.

Bearing in mind that the Union members of ICSU are eligible also to be Union members of ICSU's Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), and that IAU is a Union Member of ICSU, IAU would also like to apply to be a Union Member of SCAR, and would greatly appreciate it if its application could be considered as part of the business of the Delegates meeting in Moscow. This application has the unanimous support of the IAU Executive Committee.

On behalf of IAU may I say how much we look forward to working closely with SCAR in the future, to take astronomical and astrophysical science forward in the Antarctic context.

Yours Sincerely,

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