

## **GYA International Conference of Young Scientists and Annual General Meeting 2015 at Montebello, Canada**

The International Conference of Young Scientists and Annual General Meeting (AGM) is the annual key event of the Global Young Academy (GYA) and its main meeting in which the members can work together on the goals of GYA. It is the meeting where we implement fundamental constitutional and organization requirements such as selecting leadership, developing our constitution and taking major policy decisions and - even more important - it is the intellectual and preparatory space for all the activities planned for the next year. It is one of the few chances that GYA members from around the world get to work together face-to-face.

The conference brought together 112 registered participants. The majority were young scientists from 30 countries around the world: 69 GYA members, 5 GYA alumni and 1 invited guest, with 28 of them coming from developing countries. A group of volunteers and supporters as well as 26 outstanding representatives of Canadian and international science management and policy joined the young scientists during the conference. Among them was former IAP Co-Chair Howard, who gave a welcome speech on behalf of the IAP as the main donor of the event at the opening session on 25 May.

The conference theme 2015 was 'Innovation for Sustainable Globalization' and provided a rallying point for outstanding young scholars from around the world to consider new mechanisms and initiatives to support innovation for sustainable development in an increasingly global world. The GYA had designed a series of interconnected events to promote such activities.

Highlights were a trip to Ottawa on 26 May where GYA members and their guests first met Canadian DIY scientists from the burgeoning "Maker Movement" at a Science Fair Hack organized by GYA member Andrew Pelling at the National Research Council (NRC). This provided an opportunity for GYA members to learn from the Makers and give feedback on inventions and new ideas for future work.

The Fair was followed by a conversation with two Canadian Members of Parliament on "Leaving the Ivory Tower: making the transition from research to politics. If there is a single lesson that might sum up their presentations, perhaps it is this: that moving from academic to public life does not mean that one must leave one's brain, training, or heart behind. Academics can bring every part of their experience to bring to challenges and can make unique contributions that society needs in much greater measure.

The participants also enjoyed the great honour of being addressed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's representative in Canada, His Excellency David Johnston, Governor General of Canada. With a characteristically Canadian mixture of ceremony and informality, Mr. Johnston spoke about the opportunities associated with innovation. Young scientists have the special responsibility to lead here, Mr. Johnston suggested, by being willing to "break down borders, share our knowledge widely and freely, and encourage new generations of innovators." By doing so, he continued, "your answers, and how you arrive at solutions, has the potential to bring the world closer together". The event is documented on the website of the Governor General at: <https://www.gg.ca/event.aspx?id=1168>

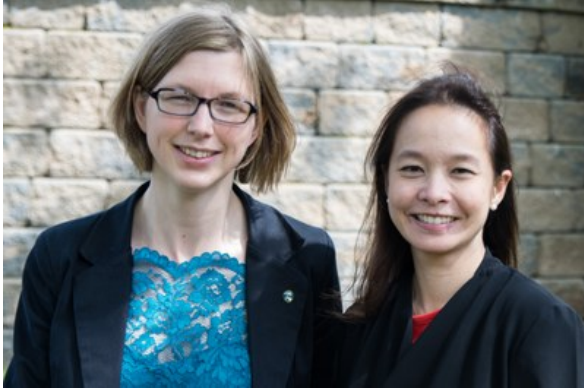
The evening concluded with a dinner speech by GYA Founder Gregory Weiss (USA) on "Going viral with your science": Through contacts made at a GYA trip to Australia Greg had discovered how to "unboil an egg", new methods for a speedier cancer treatment that spurred a lot of media interest.

On 27 May 2015, back at Le Chateau Montebello, Luc Lalande (Director of the Entrepreneurship Hub, University of Ottawa) moderated a discussion session between several active members of the Maker Movement in Canada. Panellists were chosen in order to provide perspectives on the most active areas of the moment, consequences for policy decisions regarding public safety, developing platforms to encourage and foster DIY innovation and a historical perspective on innovation in Canada. Following the panel, all attendees (including the many representatives of Canadian science institutions that had joined, were invited to participate in several productive roundtable discussions on thematic areas relevant to the earlier morning panel session. The goals of the interactive session are to leverage the impressive intellectual capital present at the conference and codify/amplify the perspectives expressed in the roundtable discussions. Discussion leaders from each table not only facilitated the discussions, but also presented the major findings back to the entire audience at the end of the session and wrote blog posts about their discussions that were captured online.

The 2015 Conference' science sessions provided a unique platform for exposing cutting edge research inquiries and findings, conducted by the GYA members. Building on previous years' experiences, this time the science sessions were an exciting opportunity for interacting and exchanging ideas among GYA members and with AGM guests. Titled "Science Policy and Globalization," and "Science and Technology," the two sessions were chaired by Abdeslam Badre and Gregory Weiss, respectively. While the first session covered a wide range of topics and research projects, all crisscrossed the concepts of globalization and policy development; session two was geared more toward experimental studies, aiming at pushing the technological innovations' limits. The TED-Style lectures of the presentations was another successful feature of the sessions' format, allowing up to 7 minutes for each speaker to present their papers and interact with the audience in such a concise and precise fashion. The high quality of the papers married to the eloquent public speaking skills of the speakers made it difficult for the science session committee members, Oded Hod (Israel), Alice Matimba (Zimbabwe), Adewale Adewuyi (Nigeria) and Abdeslam Badre (Morocco), to select the two best talks for a symbolic cash-prize. Eventually, the latter went to our new members: Thomas Edison E. de la Cruz (Philippines) and Lekelia Jenkins (USA).

At the opening session, new members were inaugurated and mingling exercises provided a space for GYA members to get to know each other.

In order to improve the collaboration of members in working groups both at the AGM and beyond, leadership training with a focus on leading virtual teams was provided for the heads of GYA Working Groups. Participants worked on issues such as leadership personae and maintaining enthusiasm after in-person meetings. The training also helped prepare the presentation of the new overarching themes for GYA activities; Research Environment, Science and Society, and Science Education and Outreach.



Also during the AGM, Orakanoke Phanraksa (Thailand) was elected as new co-chair from the developing world and Eva Alisic (Australia) re-elected as co-chair from the developed world. Further elected into the executive committee 2105-2016 were Abidemi Akindede (Nigeria), Anna Coussens (South Africa), Fridah Erastus (Kenya), Ghada Bassioni (Egypt), Mari-Vaughn Johnson (USA) Moritz Riede (UK), Rob Jenkins (UK), Wilfred van der Wiel (Netherlands) and Yusuf Baran (Turkey).

For more information on the meeting, visit: <http://globalyoungacademy.net/events/5th-international-conference-of-young-scientists-and-agm-2015-of-the-gya/>