**EASA CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT: 2018: JOHNNIE HAY**

2018 has been a busy time for EASA and the EASA Exco. A number of activities took place that kept us engaged:

EASA has become 60! A fact that is not known to all our members, is that EASA celebrated its 60th birthday in 2018. It was founded in 1958 in Bloemfontein – and has withstood a number of influences over these 6 decades.

EASA Conference in Durban from 14-17 January 2018: I am sure those who attended will attest to the fact that it was a relaxing and enjoyable, but highly informative conference arranged by prof Labby Ramrathan and his organising committee. The EXCO would herewith again thank the organising committee for hosting us in the space where it is always summer – a memorable occasion!

South African Journal of Education: Under the visionary leadership of prof Ronel Ferreira and excellent administrative support of ms Estelle Botha, this proud product of EASA is going from strength to strength. The impact factor is climbing and more issues are published. The journal has also become a serious source of income for EASA.

Negotiations with SAERA to merge: The SAERA EXCO met with the EASA EXCO on the 12th of March 2018 to re-start negotiations about a possible merger. The EASA EXCO then requested formal correspondence about how SAERA envisions this process to unfold – with all the envisaged advantages and disadvantages. An EASA EXCO response has also been drawn up. This has now served at this Annual General Meeting – and the outcome is known to you.

Constitutional changes: It was time to update the EASA Constitution – and in this regard I want to thank dr Eric Eberlein (in his absence) and the EXCO for applying their minds to really ensure that we stay up to date in terms of our governing document.

Special Interest Groups: I am happy to report that prof Elize du Plessis was co-opted earlier in the year to the EXCO to drive our SIG process. And is she moving! Thank you Elize for the sterling work you have already done in such a short space of time. What we do find, however, is that SIG’s are struggling to keep momentum during the year – most probably because of the pressure that academics is under. EXCO will re-look the operations of SIG’s during the course of 2019, and come back to you with a proposal.

EASA finances: Prof Raj Mestry always jokes about the fact that EASA’s finances are in safe hands when his culture is involved – but that the whole EXCO can attest to. EASA is in a strong financial position currently – and the finances are excellently managed by prof Mestry.

Website – [www.easa.ac.za](http://www.easa.ac.za) : Dr Eric Eberlein has managed the website with distinction the past few years – and if you haven’t visited it recently – please do so! It really provides an accurate picture of what EASA is doing currently. And please see who your EXCO is – by clicking on About Us – Committee. Prof Eldrie Gouws has in the meantime offered to take over the website coordinator duties – thanks Eldrie!

Call for Awards: You may know that the following people were awarded medals at the EASA 2018 Conference: Dr Eugene Machiman (Postgraduate Doctoral Award), Prof Jako Olivier (Emerging Researcher) and Prof Liesel Ebersohn (Research Medal). Congratulations again to them on these big achievements. And please nominate candidates when the call for awardees is distributed during August.

This year we received three nominations, but will only award one medal.

World Education Research Association (WERA) Conference in Cape Town during early August 2018: One of our previous chairpersons, prof Liesel Ebersohn is the WERA Secretary General – and has arranged the WERA Conference. This was a first for Africa, and I trust that some of you managed to attend. EASA remains a proud member of WERA.

WERA Symposium at EASA 2019: Most of you have attended this morning’s WERA Symposium where three colleagues from abroad presented and two South Africans were involved. This is really a first for EASA in the sense that so many WERA delegates were willing to attend our conference. We suspect it is because of the good exposure South Africa received from the WERA Conference in Cape Town.

Challenge of Chairperson 2019: It is with sadness that we have to announce that dr Eric Eberlein resigned from the EXCO and therefore also as Chairperson of EASA 2019. He has taken up a position at a private institution – and the issue of membership of associations seems to be sensitive. You will hear at the last item of the agenda what plan EXCO has come up with to mitigate this situation.

EASA 2019 Conference: A massive thanks to dr Jacob Phetla Sefara, dr Morgan Maphutha and their able organising team from the University of Limpopo for hosting us this year. The arrangements have not been without hiccups, with dr Morgan moving into the Department of Higher Education in August 2018 – and dr Sefara willing to take over at that crucial stage. Fortunately he and his able organising committee and our conference administrator Petra Lawson managed this very well and ensured that everything worked out so well – thanks to you! I can also just say that this is a deliberate drive from the EASA Exco to bring our younger and more rural universities into the fray – this year it was UL and next year we are going to just about our newest university, Sol Plaatje in Kimberley.

EASA 2020 Conference: We are glad to announce that Sol Plaatje University has accepted our request to host the 2020 Conference. A loyal EASA member, namely dr Tony Mpisi will be heading the conference arrangements. This is a proud moment for SPU and EASA – as it will be the youngest university in South Africa to ever host an EASA Conference?

Remembrance: We do not usually do this, but it is a hearfelt need of mine to remember our loyal colleagues who were EASA members for many years – who passed away between the 2018 and 2019 Conferences: Prof Kobus Lombard from NWU Vaal and prof Billy Fraser of UP. Out thoughts are with their relatives.

Colleagues – it has been a massive privilege to lead the oldest general education association in South Africa for the past year. May we steer EASA’s ship in the right direction in the years to come, by strengthening educational research and the training of teachers in our beloved country.



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