PREFACE

The 11th IAU Regional Latin American Meeting of Astronomy, LARIM2005 was held in the southern town of Pucón in Chile from 12 to 16 December, 2005. The meeting gathered almost 300 participants, the largest number of participants in the series of IAU Latin American Regional Meetings that started in 1978 in Santiago, Chile. Half of the participants were either graduate astronomy students or young astronomers from different countries in Latin America. This fact is most promising for astronomy in the region as it shows the great interest of the new generations to devote to astronomical research. Participants came from 20 different countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, United Kingdom, Uruguay, USA, and Venezuela.

The meeting lasted for 5 days and it was held in the Hotel del Lago Conference Center in Pucón. The scientific program involved twenty-four invited lectures and 60 oral presentations. During the afternoon sessions, we had parallel sessions which allowed to accommodate a large number of oral presentations. All invited lectures were scheduled in the plenary session so all participants could attend them. In addition, over 300 posters were set up during four days of the meeting. The sessions of the meeting were concentrated in seven areas, Topic 1: Solar Physics and Planetary Systems, Topic 2: Interstellar Medium and Star Formation, Topic 3: Stellar Evolution, Stellar Activity, and Binaries, Topic 4: Galactic Structure, Local Group, and Stellar Populations, Topic 5: Galaxies, Large Scale Structure, and Cosmology, Topic 6: Compact Objects, AGNs, and High Energy/Cosmic Ray Astrophysics, Topic 7: Science with ALMA and Astronomical Instrumentation. The main topics in which Latin American astronomers are working are Extragalactic, Star and Stellar Clusters, and Star Formation. A highlight of the meeting was the participation of Prof. Riccardo Giacconi as invited speaker. We would like to thank him very much for coming to Pucón.

Two public lectures were given as part of the outreach program of LARIM2005. One was organized in Santiago on December 13, 2005 with Prof. Riccardo Giacconi, Nobel Laureate in Physics 2002, as lecturer. Prof. Giacconi spoke to an audience of about 300 persons who arrived at the Conference Room provided by CTC Telefónica Chile. His conference was entitled: "Astronomy in a Flat World". The second conference was organized in Pucón by Dr. Luis Aguilar from Mexico as lecturer. The Conference room at Hotel de Lago hosted about 100 attendees. The conference was given in spanish and Dr. Aguilar talked on "¿Qué son los hoyos negros?"

On Wednesday afternoon, the participants had a free afternoon and they were able to enjoy many activities, which included for example, swimming in the Villarrica lake, climbing the active Villarrica volcano, rafting in the Trancura River, visiting the volcanic caves or relaxing in the nearby hot springs.

The Scientific Organizing Committee was conformed by Beatriz Barbuy (Brasil), Gustavo Bruzual (Venezuela), Gloria Dubner (Argentina), Mario Hamuy (Chile), Julio Fernández (Uruguay), Wolfgang Gieren (Chile), Lepoldo Infante (Chile-Chair) René Mendez (Chile), Dante Minniti (Chile), Mńica Rubio (Chile-Chair), M. Teresa Ruiz (Chile), and Silvia Torres-Peimbert (México).

The Local Organizing Committee were Felipe Barrientos (PUC), Edgardo Costa (U), Gaspar Galaz (PUC), Doug Geisler (UCon), Roberto Gilmozzi (ESO), Eduardo Hardy (NRAO), Paulina Lira (U, Chair), Sebastián López (U), Mark Phillips (LCO), Amelia Ramírez (ULS), and Malcolm Smith (AURA).

PREFACE

We are most grateful to the following national institutions that made possible this meeting: Universidad de Chile (U), Pontificia Universidad Católica (PUC), Universidad de Concepción (UCon), Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile (MINREL), Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONICYT), Comité Mixto ESO-Gobierno de Chile, Comité ALMA and Sociedad Chilena de Astronomía (SOCHIAS).

We specially thank the support of the following the international organizations: International Astronomical Union (IAU), European Southern Observatory (ESO), National Astronomical Observatory (NOAO), Las Campanas Observatory (CIW), GEMINI, National Radio Astronomical Observatory (NRAO), California Institute of Technology (CALTECH), and NANTEN II which operate observatories in Chile. We greatly thank the important support from Telefónica CTC Chile, Cencosud (JUMBO), COPEX and METHANEX as private sponsors of this meeting.

We would like to recognize and thank the Instituto de Astronomía, UNAM, México, for their support assuming the cost of publications of these proceedings.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to all the participants for a most fruitful, stimulating and enjoyable meeting.

Mónica Rubio & Leopoldo Infante
SOC