PREFACE

The "First Light Science with the GTC" was held in "tropicool" Miami, Florida from June 28-30, 2006, as the third meeting in the series for the GTC community. The previous workshops were held in Mexico City and Granada, Spain, and this conference represented the first time Florida had the privilege and honor to host the conference. A total of 146 persons attended the meeting, establishing a record for these meetings.

The 10.4-m Gran Telescopio Canarias represents the flagship optical/infrared observatory for the Spanish, Mexican and Floridian astronomical and astrophysical communities. With first light rapidly approaching, the three communities, spread across an equal number of countries, met to finalize plans to maximize the scientific returns from this unique facility. This was achieved through a main conference, featuring 12 invited talks, 48 contributed talks and 66 scientific posters. Additionally, a total of 8 workshops and 3 board meetings followed the main conference. Key and exciting components were the presentations to the University of Florida Hispanic Association and University of Florida Alumni Association night, attended by the Spanish and Mexican Consul Generals, the President of the University of Florida and several other dignitaries, both representing and expressing great interest in the three communities.

The scientific organizing committee consisted of Rafael Guzmán (Chair, UF, USA), José Alberto López (IAUNAM, México), Charles Telesco (UF, USA), Elizabeth Lada (UF, USA), Francisco Garzón (IAC, Spain), Francisco Sánchez (IAC, Spain), Itziar Aretxaga (INAOE, México), Jesús Gallego (UCM, Spain), Jesús González (IA-UNAM, México), Jian Ge (UF, USA), Jordi Cepa (IAC, Spain), José Franco (IA-UNAM, México), José Guichard (INAOE, México), José M. R.odríguez Espinosa (GTC project office, Spain), Luis Colina (IEM-CSIC, Spain), Marc Balcells (IAC, Spain), Mariano Moles (IAA, Spain), Marisa García (GTC project office, Spain), Stanley Dermott (UF, USA), Steve Eikenberry (UF, USA), and Xavier Barcons (CSIC, Spain). The local organizing committee, all from the University of Florida, was Chris Packham (co-Chair), Rafael Guzmán (co-Chair), Anthony González, Vicki Sarajedini, and Stanley Dermott. The web masters were Jorge Pérez Gallego and Bruno Ferreira, also at the University of Florida.

The location for the conference was the beautiful Biltmore hotel in Coral Gables, Miami. This location was especially fitting, as the tower, one of the primary features of the hotel, was built as a replica of Seville's Giralda tower in the GTC's home country, Spain. Second only to the tower was the extremely large pool, which was well used by many of the meeting's participants for scientific discussions.

We are very grateful for meeting sponsorship by the University of Florida Research and Graduate Program and the Department of Astronomy, the NSF, UNAM, GTC, IAC, INAOE, Schott, the Canary Islands Foundation, and the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau. We also wish to express our deepest gratitude to the Conference Department of the University of Florida whose outstanding work formed the backbone of the organization of the conference, especially Heather Tyson, Rebecca Johnson, Liza Causey and Ann Ooton.

The result of the meeting is a continued fusing of the communities, maximizing the complimentary capabilities of the partners, the crucial catalyst to achieving scientific success in the 21st Century. The communities are clearly well poised for realizing the unique potential the GTC affords. An exciting future beckons.

Rafael Guzmán, Chris Packham, José Miguel Rodríguez-Espinosa, & Silvia Torres-Peimbert
Editors of the Proceedings