

**Minutes**  
**The University of Texas at Austin McDonald Observatory and**  
**Department of Astronomy**  
**BOARD OF VISITORS**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**Held July 17, 2010 at the McDonald Observatory**

(Audio files of the meeting proceedings are available to Board of Visitors members at the BoV Web site, so the following is an abbreviated form of the minutes, with links to the audio files and, where applicable, to the presentation slides and text reports used by the speakers. To access the files, please direct your Web browser to: <http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/meetings.html> and sign in using the following user name (struve) and password (smith).

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**1. MEETING CONVENES WITH SELF-INTRODUCTIONS**

BoV Chair **David Chappell** called the meeting to order just after 9 a.m. Participants were in the McDonald Observatory Firehouse; some members were participating via videoconference from the Mary Gibbs and Jesse H. Jones Classroom in the Frank N. Bash Visitors Center.

**Chair Chappell** introduced special guests and then asked for self-introductions from all present.

**Audio**

<http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/1-Introductions.mp3>

**2. COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES DEAN'S REPORT**

**Mary Ann Rankin**, Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, began by expressing her sincere gratitude to the members of the Board of Visitors for all they do for the McDonald Observatory, Department of Astronomy, and the College of Natural Sciences. She proceeded to update the Board of Visitors on current issues facing the College of Natural Sciences. **Dean Rankin** reported on the budget cuts facing the university, specifically the College of Natural Sciences. She outlined new ways in which CNS will try to generate revenue. She reported on the progress of the Hackerman Building and the computer science building. And she thanked the BoV for their help in saving the Brackenridge Field Laboratory. She closed saying that BoV interests, involvement, and advocacy provide critical assistance to CNS.

**Audio**

<http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/2-Rankin.mp3>

**5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**David Lambert** began by expressing his thanks for the support of CNS Dean Mary Ann Rankin and The University of Texas Administration. He introduced Dr. Tom Barnes, the new Superintendent of McDonald Observatory. He also introduced Hernán Julio, who was the guide of a Board of Visitors trip to Chile in 2009. **Dr. Lambert** reported on the areas of the Hobby-Eberly Telescope Dark Energy Experiment (HETDEX); the Giant Magellan Telescope; upgrades to the Hobby-Eberly Telescope (HET); and new research results using the HET.

**Audio**

<http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/3-Lambert.mp3>

**Presentation slides**

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10\\_lambert.pdf](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10_lambert.pdf)

6. **SCIENCE TALK**

*Exploring the Planet Forming Environments of Young Suns*

Dr. Christopher Johns-Krull, Associate Professor Physics & Astronomy Department  
Rice University

**Audio**

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/4-Johns\\_Krull.mp3](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/4-Johns_Krull.mp3)

**Presentation slides**

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10\\_johns\\_krull.pdf](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10_johns_krull.pdf)

7. **SCIENCE TALK**

*Three Species of Giant Planets*

Dr. Sarah (Sally) Dodson-Robinson, Assistant Professor, Department of Astronomy, The  
University of Texas at Austin

**Audio**

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/5-Dodson\\_Robinson.mp3](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/5-Dodson_Robinson.mp3)

**Presentation slides**

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10\\_dodson\\_robinson.pdf](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10_dodson_robinson.pdf)

8. **SCIENCE TALK**

*Simulations of Aspherical Core-Collapse Supernovae*

Dr. Sean Couch, Recent Graduate, Department of Astronomy, The University of Texas at  
Austin

**Audio**

<http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/6-Couch.mp3>

**Presentation slides**

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10\\_couch.pdf](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10_couch.pdf)

9. **STAR DATE PUBLIC TELEVISION PRESENTATION**

Bill Moll, President, KLRN-TV

**Audio**

*Due to technical difficulties, audio is not available for this presentation.*

**Presentation Slides**

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10\\_moll.pdf](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10_moll.pdf)

10. SCIENCE TALK

*HETDEX - Closing in on Dark Energy*

Dr. Gary Hill, Chief Astronomer, McDonald Observatory

**Audio**

<http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/7-Hill.mp3>

**Presentation Slides**

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10\\_hill.pdf](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10_hill.pdf)

11. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH REPORT

**Sandi Preston**, Assistant Director for Education and Outreach, reported on the progress of the Education and Outreach office over the past six months. She emphasized that McDonald Observatory is serious about maintaining and funding Education and Outreach programs, and, in fact, last year spent two million dollars on these programs. She gave updates on public outreach at the Frank N. Bash Visitors Center; the dedication of the Wren-Marcario Accessible Telescope; the new McDonald Observatory YouTube channel; the Boy Scouts program which reaches troops from all across Texas; teacher workshops that work to train teachers from Texas as well as across the United States; and scholarship programs. She followed up on the McDonald Observatory logo vote that was held at the February meeting. Based on the results of a focus group study, it has been decided that the logo project will be contracted out to Sibley/Peteet Design in Austin. The new logo should be ready by October. **Sandi** ended by stating that it takes a village to accomplish the efforts of the Education and Outreach program. She and her team appreciate the continued support from the Board of Visitors.

**Audio**

<http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/8-Preston.mp3>

**Presentation Slides**

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10\\_preston.pdf](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10_preston.pdf)

12. DEVELOPMENT REPORT

**Joel Barna**, Development Manager of McDonald Observatory, expressed his deep appreciation to all the members of the Board of Visitors for their dedicated support. He was thrilled to announce that \$27.6 million has been raised out of a \$34 million goal for the HETDEX project. He listed the names of the people who had given to the Education and Outreach Program, and spoke about the endowments that have been set up recently for the program. **Joel** reminded the members of the BoV that this is a really good year to make a gift to The University of Texas Department of Astronomy and McDonald Observatory due to particular tax rules in effect. **Mr. Barna** closed by reiterating the excitement that surrounds the completion of HETDEX. **Joel** encouraged the attendees to take a look at the capital campaign flyer that he put in the meeting folder and to consider the areas where they might feel inspired to give.

**Audio**

<http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/9-Barna.mp3>

**Presentation Slides**

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10\\_barna.pdf](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10_barna.pdf)

## 13. BOARD OF VISITORS BUSINESS MEETING

### Audio

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/10-Business\\_Meeting.mp3](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/audio/10-Business_Meeting.mp3)

BoV Chair **David Chappell** called the Business meeting to order.

**Chappell** handed the floor over to **Steve Bickerstaff** who provided an overview of the work of the Executive Committee on the creation of a foundation to benefit McDonald Observatory. This idea was presented to BoV members earlier this year. This foundation would, among other things, increase appeal to people and groups who have no affiliation with the University. After receiving positive feedback from BoV members, the Executive Committee has decided to move forward with the creation of this foundation.

**Chappell** then called on Co-Chair **James King**. **King** presented the Nominating Committee reports on Membership and Officers. The report was accepted and new members and officers were elected, by acclamation.

### Nominating Committee Reports

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10\\_nominating\\_comm\\_members.pdf](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10_nominating_comm_members.pdf)

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10\\_nominating\\_comm\\_officers.pdf](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10_nominating_comm_officers.pdf)

**Chappell** then asked the BoV members to look over the budget that was provided in their packet. Since this report will be posted electronically there was no review of it at the meeting.

### Budget Reports

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10\\_09-10\\_budget\\_6-30-10.pdf](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10_09-10_budget_6-30-10.pdf)

[http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10\\_10-11\\_budget.pdf](http://www.as.utexas.edu/bov/secure/jul10/jul10_10-11_budget.pdf)

**Chappell** called on **Dr. David Lambert** to provide recognition to donors. **Dr. Lambert** named the BoV members who were receiving silver pins to commemorate a first gift of \$750. He then distributed the Gold pins to honor donors who have given a cumulative gift of \$15,000 or a planned gift of \$25,000 or more. **Dr. Lambert** then recognized the BoV members who were receiving pins to honor long-term giving relationships with the Observatory, in increments of five years.

**Chappell** then called on **Secretary Randy Henry** to discuss selecting the dates for the 2011 July meeting based on the lunar calendar. A vote was taken by show of hands, and it was decided that the next summer meeting would be held July 29 and 30, 2011.

**Chappell** took a moment to thank all the staff who worked to make the BoV meeting a success.

**Chappell** closed the meeting.