



International Association of Geoanalysts

<http://geoanalyst.org>

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

September 2009 brought with it the triennial Geoanalysis conference, held in the central Drakensberg region of South Africa. Geoanalysis is the premier conference hosted by the IAG and represents the pinnacle of the three-year cycle upon which our Association is based. As president of the IAG, I am pleased with the broad spectrum of activities and achievements that I have to report on.

IAG Council Elections

During the recent IAG general meeting, held in conjunction with the Geoanalysis 2009 conference, the Association's new council was formally seated. As a result of the call for nominations which went out this past spring, the following members have been elected to IAG's governing council for the period 2009–2012:

PRESIDENT: Michael Wiedenbeck (GeoForschungsZentrum Potsdam, Germany)

VICE-PRESIDENT: Jacinta Enzweiler (Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Brazil)

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Phil Potts (Open University, UK)

HONORARY SECRETARY: Jennifer Cook (British Geological Survey)

HONORARY TREASURER: Christopher Jackson (Ashford, UK)

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Mathieu Benoit (Université Paul Sabatier, Toulouse, France), Michel Grégoire (Université Paul Sabatier, Toulouse, France), Klaus Peter Jochum (Max-Planck Institute, Mainz, Germany), Thomas Meisel (University of Leoben, Austria), Peter Webb (Open University, UK), Edward Williams (CRPG, Nancy, France)

Geoanalysis 2009

In spite of the economic difficulties that have challenged many professional societies over the past year, the organizing committee of Geoanalysis 2009 nonetheless achieved the goal of 112 attending delegates. Over 100 scientists from outside the host country came to South Africa, a number similar to the long-term average for international delegates attending previous meetings. The five-day format selected for the meeting had the wonderful advantage of eliminating (nearly) all need for parallel sessions. Conference highlights included counterpoint perspectives on environmental sampling and uncertainty estimation, invited lectures on the chemical evolution of the Bushveld Complex and strategies for diamond exploration, and recent technical advances related to in situ isotope imaging. One major event of note was a half-day symposium devoted to the IAG's Materials Certification Programme, which commemorated Jean Kane's ten years of leadership of this important IAG initiative. African drumming, wine tasting, and an excursion into the beautiful Drakensberg Mountains were social highlights typical of Geoanalysis conferences and which contribute to the collegial atmosphere that brings a devoted following to these meetings. Highest praise goes to Maggi Loubser and her organizing committee for hosting an excellent event.



Delegates to the Geoanalysis 2009 meeting held on 6–11 September 2009

Certification Committee

Geoanalysis 2009 provided the first opportunity since 2007 for (nearly) all members of the IAG's Certification Committee to meet. The primary function of this committee is to plan and execute projects resulting in the ISO-based certification of new reference materials that enable the chemical and isotopic analysis of geological and environmental samples. The committee's afternoon gathering was intensely busy with many topics being discussed and plans being made regarding certification activities over the coming three years. Issues addressed included the systematic naming of IAG Certified Reference Materials, the status of the production of two CRMs specifically for platinum-group elements, the development of long-term collaboration with sample-production laboratories, the preparation of CRMs designed for the micro-analytical community, and the prioritization of a list of sample types needed by bulk analytical facilities. The next gathering of the entire committee is planned for Geoanalysis 2012 in Brazil, but a subgroup of the committee is expected to meet early in 2010 to finalize the certificates of analysis for the two new PGE-specific materials.



Members of the IAG's Certification Committee working during the Geoanalysis 2009 conference

Quality Assurance Workshops

In recent years, workshops devoted to the fundamentals of quality assurance (QA) in geochemistry have become a major IAG activity. Typically attended by 15 to 20 analysts and data users, these one-day workshops have given many participants their first contact with critical concepts, including uncertainty estimation, modern terminology, and method validation. In 2009 three such workshops were sponsored by the IAG, the first being held in June in association with the Goldschmidt Conference in Davos. In late August IAG hosted a second workshop, in conjunction with the MAPT conference in Edinburgh, this time highlighting issues of importance to in situ microanalysis. Finally, in early September in Johannesburg, IAG's metrology experts hosted a third workshop, immediately in advance of Geoanalysis 2009.



Participants in the IAG-sponsored workshop in Edinburgh. Here, for the first time, a special emphasis on QA aspects related to microanalysis was on offer.

Michael Wiedenbeck