

SAAFoST BGM 2021 President' Report

President's Report BGM 20 September 2021

Mr James McLean

As we are all aware , these last two years have been extra ordinary, with no signs of return to normalcy before 2022.

Saafost turned 60 this year - an outstanding milestone – with celebrations on hold till we can get together normally again.

Since March 2020 , all of our Council meetings have been conducted virtually ,our offices at the CSIR empty, whilst we bunkered down at home.

Webinars

This led to Irene Burke, membership Officer ,assisted by Tsetse Baloyi , communications officer to develop and promote the excellent webinars program (started in Nov 2018) to a new level in 2020/21 resulting in the great webinars we have been enjoying these past 16 months - thanks to them, and their network of contributors and speakers.

Big thanks Irene, and team.

Membership

Due to the webinar and communication initiatives, we have enjoyed an increase in membership as our presence has grown nationally.

We currently have 2310 members – 1222 members, including Custodians and 1188 students members – a 10% growth over 2 years.

Management

Change is a constant, and so it is with our family - Owen Frisby, Executive Director, retired in December 2019, after 17 years of outstanding service to Saafost, for which we say “Thank you and go well”

Council recently welcomed Susan Featherstone as our new CEO and we wish her every success.

We have not lost Owen's involvement in Saafost, as he , together with Ron Timm, are very instrumental in curating the Saafost archives and history.

Unfortunately , we acknowledge the passing of 4 of our members – Arie Derksen, Noel Barry, Dr Wynand van der Walt and David Watson, with our thoughts going to their families and loved ones.

David Watson's passing left a big void , as he was chairman of , and very integral to the Saafost Foundation and FACS.

Gerda Botha stepped up as FACS chair , and Janusz Luterek as Saafost Foundation chair , so both are in very capable hands,and our thanks for stepping up.

Finances

Saafost finances stalled in 2020 due to members non payment and investments shrink caused by reaction to the virus. Saafost recognizing the gravity of the situation , did not suspend membership in 2020, and can happily report an increase in payment in 2021.

Investments that were negatively impacted have started to rebound.

The stewardship and growth of the finances over the last 6 years have helped the organization bear the virus knock experienced. Our Treasurer, Riette de Kock will provide more detail in her report at the BGM.

Foundation

Saafost continues to support the Foundation , both financially and administratively in it's excellent bursary work for Food Tech students. Janusz Luterek will provide a more detailed report at the BGM.

International Relations

At luFoST ,no changes addressing the poor governance and management issues that prompted our withdrawal in September 2019 have been forthcoming.

Saafost has established an informal grouping with IFT& IFST to maintain and foster international relationships. This initiative is being led by Lucia Anelich, supported by Elna Buys , Gunnar Sigge & Riette de Kock. Further initiatives being led by Lucia are the Rose Spiess Foundation video competition together with New Zealand IFST and IFT-SAAFoST FSRD competition for Students. Saafost's World Safety Day webinar also received a mention in the UN's FAO report recently released.

Saafost sponsored 2 young professionals to attend the (virtual) IFT's Emerging Leaders Workshop in both the 2020 and 2021 conferences, with excellent feedback on the program.

FST Magazine

The FST magazine's move to digital has been completed and under Tricia Fichet's able stewardship maintains it's high quality of content and presentation. Gunnar Sigge and Tricia successfully concluded our ongoing publication collaboration with IFT for magazine content.

mySAAFoST

mySaafost , the Amanda Minnaar initiative for Students and Postgrads has grown in it's identity and scope , ably chaired by Emma Johnson , over the last 2 years. Look out for the initiatives and student activities planned at our Congress.

Emma will be handing over the chair to Vusi Mshayisa after the Congress, and we wish him well in his new role, and thank Emma for her invaluable contribution.

Acknowledgements

These last 2 years have been very challenging and rewarding , made all the more memorable due the outstanding efforts and contribution of Council during these very different times - Lucia Anelich, Gunnar Sigge, Elna Buys, Riette de Kock, Irene Burke, Tsetse Baloyi, Tricia Fichet, Susan Featherstone, Gerda Botha and the Branch chairs – Lisa Ronquest, Madeleine Jansen ,Ingrid Woodrow and Emma Johnson.

Take a bow – you deserve it .

I am very grateful to have been part of such a motivated, competent, involved team and know the organization will grow and strengthen under the leadership of Elna Buys.

Thank you