



Background Information

Introduction

The South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) was launched in Pretoria on Tuesday, 27 September 2011. The Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Derek Hanekom, inaugurated twenty leading young scientists as Founder Members of SAYAS. The group was selected from among the best scientific minds in South Africa and represents a diverse range of talent in terms of race, gender and scientific discipline.

SAYAS was borne out of the need for young scientists to contribute towards solutions to the important national and global challenges facing society. It will represent the voice of young scientists on national and international issues and give them a platform to influence policy decisions. It is envisaged that SAYAS would become one of the apex advisory structures to government on science and policy matters, along with the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), the SA National Council on Innovation and the Council for Higher Education, amongst other national institutions.

SAYAS also aims to contribute towards the development of scientific capacity in South Africa through mentoring and role-modeling of future scientists, and by fostering opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations between young scientists. In particular, it will bridge the gap between the more senior and well-established ASSAf and the younger scientists who represent future leaders in their fields, but are not part of ASSAf. SAYAS will further promote science awareness among learners, young scientists and society in general. At a global level, SAYAS will link up with the Global Young Academy of sciences to provide opportunities for South African young scientists to interact internationally with other young scientists.

Both ASSAf and the Department of Science and Technology have blessed the formation of SAYAS, recognising the importance of establishing a forum for younger scientists and have provided support for turning the concept into a reality.

The current composition of SAYAS Leadership and Membership

SAYAS Co-chairs

Dr Caradee Wright (CSIR) and Prof Jerome Singh (UKZN)

SAYAS Executive Committee

Prof Aldo Stroebel (UFS), Prof Fulufhelo Nelwamondo (CSIR), Dr Penny Moore (NICD) and Prof Bernard Slippers (UP and non-voting member of EXCO)

SAYAS Members

Title	Name	Institution	Area of Specialisation
Prof	Aldo Stroebel	University of the Free State	Rural development and sustainable agriculture
Prof	Alta Schutte	North-West University	Cardiovascular Physiology
Prof	Andrea Fuller	University of the Witwatersrand	Physiology (thermal physiology and ecophysiology)
Prof	Andrew McKechnie	University of Pretoria	Zoology
Prof	Bernard Slippers	University of Pretoria	Microbiology and Plant Pathology
Prof	Bronwyn Myers	Medical Research Council	Addictions (Psychology/Mental Health)
Dr	Caradee Wright	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research	Environmental health
Prof	Christine Lochner	Stellenbosch University	Anxiety and Stress Disorders; Obsessive-Compulsive Spectrum Disorders
Prof	De Wet Swanepoel	University of Pretoria	Auditory and hearing science
Prof	Fulufhelo Vincent Nelwamondo	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research	Electrical Engineering
Prof	Genevieve Langdon	University of Cape Town	Dynamic response of structures and materials, particularly blast loading
Dr	Jeff Murugan	University of Cape Town	String Theory and Quantum Gravity
Prof	Jerome Singh	CAPRISA	Law, Ethics, Health Policy and Governance
Prof	Mathieu Rouget	University of Pretoria	Ecology; Biodiversity Conservation; Spatial Planning; GIS
Prof	Mpfariseni Budeli	University of South Africa	Law
Dr	Penny Moore	National Institute for Communicable Diseases	Virology
Prof	Rangan Gupta	University of Pretoria	Macroeconomics, Monetary Economics and Time Series Econometrics
Dr	Shadreck Chirikure	University of Cape Town	Archaeology – Iron Age, Heritage Studies, Archaeometallurgy
Prof	Voster Muchenje	University of Fort Hare	Animal Science (Meat Science)
Dr	Yahya Choonara	University of the Witwatersrand	Pharmaceutics