

SOCIETY FOR ADVANCED CELL CULTURE MODELLING FOR AFRICA AGM 2024

| Minutes |

Meeting:	4 th Annual General Meeting 2024
Date of meeting:	2 October 2024
Time of meeting:	14:00
Meeting room:	Virtual
Meeting chair:	Prof Chrisna Gouws (North-West University) (Executive Committee Chair)
Minutes:	Dr Claudia Ntsapi (University of the Free State) (Executive Committee Secretary)

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- 1 Welcome by Steering Committee Chair
 - 2 Register and apologies
 - a. Apologies received
 - b. Proxy appointments received
 - 3 Approval of the Agenda
 - 4 Approval of the minutes of the 2023 AGM
 - 5 The Chair's report
 - 6 Annual Financial Statements of the Society, 2023/2024
 - 7 Appointment of Professional Accountants or Auditors
 - 8 2025 Conference
 - 9 General business
 - a. Amendments to the constitution (current version attached)
 - b. Membership fees
 - c. Invoicing for the member fees
 - 10 Closing
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1 Welcoming

Prof. Chrisna Gouws chaired the meeting, introduced Dr. Claudia Ntsapi as the secretary responsible for recording the minutes, and welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting (2024) for SACCMA. The meeting was held virtually.

2 Register and apologies

All attendees of the meeting were asked to provide their full names and institutional affiliations in the virtual chat to record their attendance.

Attended

Chair:	Prof Chrisna Gouws	(North-West University)
	Chontrelle Willemse	University of the Western Cape
	Gerda Venter	(North-West University)
	Marguerite Blignaut	(Stellenbosch University)
	Nireshni Chellan	(SAMRC)
	Claudia Ntsapi	(University of the Free State)
	Iman van den Bout	(University of Pretoria)
	Anna-Mart Engelbrecht	(Stellenbosch University)
	Stefanie Klima	(University of Pretoria)

Non-members who attended:	Mandeep Kaur	(University of the Witwatersrand)
	Frikkie Van der Merwe	(Separations)
	Pascaline Fru	(University of the Witwatersrand)
	Mamello Sekhoacha	(University of the Free State)
	Christelle Swanepoel	(Focus Accounting)
	Adele Nel	(University of Pretoria)
	Tash Vogt	(Separations)
	Nadia Levin	(Advanced Laboratory Solutions)

- a. **Apologies were received** from Dr. Beynon Abrahams (University of the Free State), Prof Sias Hamman (North-West University), Prof Minja Gerber (North-West University), Prof Vidushi Neergheen (University of Mauritius), and Industry members from Wirsam Scientific and Precision Equipment (Pty) Ltd.
- b. **Proxy appointments received** from Prof Minja Gerber (North-West University), Prof Vidushi Neergheen (University of Mauritius), and Industry members from Wirsam Scientific and Precision Equipment (Pty) Ltd.

c. **Quorum:** Votes required for quorum was 9, votes represented was 12 so quorum was achieved.

3 Approval of the Agenda:

No changes and additions to the agenda were requested. Approval of the agenda was noted by attending members in the chat box.

4 Minutes of the 2023 AGM:

No changes and additions to the minutes of the previous AGM were requested. Approval of the agenda was proposed by Prof Iman van den Bout and seconded by Prof Anna-Mart Engelbrecht.

5 Chair's report

Prof. Gouws reported a slight decline in society membership, which was expected due to the absence of a conference this year. By the start of the AGM, 23 paid-up members were registered with SACCMA. Despite the lower membership numbers, there was significant participation in the society's activities, including two virtual symposium workshops hosted by Zeiss and CelVivo.

While the exact number of attendees for the CelVivo workshop was not available, more than 70 people attended the Zeiss workshop, including participants from South Africa, the broader African region, and international countries. During the CelVivo online workshop, 'Artificial Tissue Environment', Associate Professor Joji Mercier from the University of Pretoria was announced as the winner of the travel grant. The grant allows attendance at either the Microphysiological Systems (MPS) Conference in Brussels or the SACCMA Conference in Stellenbosch in 2025. A third workshop, presented by Separations, is scheduled for late January or early February 2025. The exact date will be communicated once confirmed.

Unregistered attendees and non-members present at the AGM were encouraged to ensure their updated details were submitted to facilitate invoicing for membership fees to stay up to date. Membership runs from 1 March 2023 to 28 February.

It was noted that the society's mailing list would be stricter going forward, with opportunities communicated exclusively to those on the mailing list.

Notably, SACCMA's Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) registration with the South African Revenue Service (SARS) has been finalised, making the society tax-exempt. This milestone will free up additional funds for travel grants, workshops, and other activities. Christelle Swanepoel (Focus Accounting) was thanked for her tireless efforts and commitment to liaising with SARS throughout the application process.

6 Annual Financial Statements of the Society, 2024

Prof. Iman van den Bout (Treasurer) presented an overview of the financial statement (page 6 of the full financial report) for the year ending 29 February 2024. The report highlighted an estimated revenue of R400,000, with a cost of sales of R350,000, primarily related to financing the 2023 SACCMA Conference.

A surplus growth of R48,000 was noted, despite annual operating costs being slightly higher than in 2023 by approximately R11,000. This left the society with an operating surplus of over R37,000 for the 2024 financial year, which was described as 'very healthy.' Combined with the surplus from the previous year (R57,000), the society now holds a total funding reserve of approximately R94,000.

This reserve could be utilized to support the 2025 SACCMA Conference or contribute towards travel grants if needed. The Treasurer noted that these financial reserves are considerable, especially given the relatively small size and young age of the society. Furthermore, the Treasurer expressed confidence that the current membership fees are appropriately priced, with no immediate need for an increase. This perspective was echoed by the Chair and members present.

7 Appointment of Professional Accountants or Auditors

Prof Gouws motioned for the reappointment of the current accountant and auditors (Christelle Swanepoel from Focus Accounting Solutions). Approval of reappointment was seconded by Claudia Ntsapi. Prof. Gouws thanked Christelle for her exemplary service to the society over the past three years and expressed confidence in her continued contributions as an asset to the society moving forward.

8 2025 Conference

Prof. Chrisna Gouws shared the confirmed date for the 2025 SACCMA Conference, which will be held in Stellenbosch, Western Cape, from 20–22 October 2024. Prof. Anna-Mart Engelbrecht, the conference convenor, expressed enthusiasm and excitement about hosting the event in Stellenbosch, in collaboration with colleagues from Stellenbosch University's Medical Faculty and the SAMRC, including Dr. Marguerite Blignaut.

Prof. Chrisna Gouws indicated that all relevant information, including co-host and exhibitor applications, is now open and will be circulated within the next week or two.

9 General business

a. Amendments to constitution

No amendments or comments to the current constitution were received or suggested in the meeting.

b. Membership fees

Prof Gouws noted that the current membership fees are R 400.00 p.a. for full membership and R 200 p.a. for student membership. In line with the Treasurer's sentiments, no increase is recommended for the next financial year.

c. Invoicing for the member fees

Prof. Gouws proposed the implementation of automatic invoicing for members, noting that this approach is not currently included in the constitution and would not need to be incorporated. This suggestion was presented to the official members in attendance, and the floor was opened for comments and alternative suggestions. No objections were raised, and the proposal was approved by the members. Prof. Gouws emphasised the importance of keeping member information up-to-date, particularly for students who are more likely to change institutions after graduation. It was requested that all members notify the committee of any changes to their institution, employer, or email address. This will allow for the completion of a new member application form with updated contact details, ensuring effective communication and invoicing.

Prof. Gouws shared advertorial information about upcoming events of interest. He highlighted the MPS World Summit, scheduled for June 2025 in Brussels, with further details available on the MPS website. She also shared information on the 3Rs Congress: Integrating Three Worlds. This congress will focus on themes related to 3D technology, with a strong emphasis on its applications, and the importance of finding better ways to maintain the health of people, animals, and the environment, as well as education. The congress will take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from August 31 to September 4, 2025. More details are available on their website. Prof. Gouws noted that these events present excellent opportunities for networking and collaboration.

Prof. Iman van den Bout mentioned that he and Dr. Stefanie Klima had submitted a session proposal to the 3Rs Congress: Integrating Three Worlds Scientific Board Evaluation Committee. Their proposed session focuses on advanced cell culture models in lower- and middle-income countries, with a particular emphasis on Africa. They are optimistic about a favourable outcome; evaluations are currently in progress.

Prof. Gouws mentioned that abstract submissions for the congress will open early next year, with particularly emphasis on the participation of young and emerging researchers. Additionally, Prof. Gouws introduced the NAM Journal, a new open-access journal dedicated to new approach methodologies. The journal will be free to publish in until the end of 2025 and is expected to have a significant impact on the field. While the journal is not yet accredited by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), efforts to secure accreditation are underway. The Editor-in-Chief of the NAM Journal is also the main organizer of the MPS Summit in Brussels.

Prof. Gouws concluded the meeting by thanking all attendees and wishing them a good festive season ahead.