

SPANet: the São Paulo Astronomy Network

Laerte Sodré Jr.¹

¹ Universidade de São Paulo, Instituto de Astronomia, Geofísica e Ciências Atmosféricas, Depto. de Astronomia
R. do Matão 1226, C. Universitária, 05508-090. São Paulo, Brazil. e-mail: laerte.sodre@iag.usp.br

Abstract. We present a brief description of the SPANet, São Paulo Astronomy Network, an organization aiming to foster activities in Astronomy in the State of São Paulo.

Resumo. Fazemos uma breve apresentação da SPANet, a Rede Paulista de Astronomia, uma organização informal com o objetivo de impulsionar as atividades em Astronomia no Estado de São Paulo.

Keywords. Sociology of Astronomy: networking

1. Introduction

The State of São Paulo has a strong activity in Astronomy, with more than a hundred people acting in research, teaching and/or outreach. Thanks to FAPESP- Fundação de Apoio à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo- many scientific resources are available for the astronomical community in the state. Our community has good collaboration links with colleagues from other states and from abroad, and many researchers participate in several international projects. Additionally, several groups in São Paulo have been successful to get competitive telescope time in facilities like ESO or ALMA. Our scientific interests covers a wide range, from minor bodies in the Solar System to cosmology, and we have a significant participation in the development of astronomical instrumentation in Brazil.

During 2014/2015 FAPESP approved three large projects (worth more than R\$160 million) led by researchers from IAG/USP, the largest astronomical institution in the state and in the country. These projects will support the participation of São Paulo researchers in the Giant Magellan Telescope (GMT), in the Large Latin-American Millimeter Array (LLAMA), and in the ASTRI MINI-ARRAY, a precursor of the Cherenkov Telescope Array.

To assure the best use of this money, FAPESP asked me, as Director of IAG in that occasion, to create instrumentation laboratories (electronics, mechanics, optics) with resources from the institutional technical reserve of these projects. These laboratories are already operational and, in principle, available for the community of the State of São Paulo.

Another requirement from FAPESP was actions to promote the connectivity of the Astronomy in the state to optimize the resources available and to increase the visibility of our science. This is actually the main objective of the *São Paulo Astronomy Network* - SPANet.

2. The SPANet

The SPANet was created in a workshop at FAPESP on March 16th, 2017. Its main objective is to promote networking in Astronomy within the State of São Paulo: connections are necessary to foster new ideas and initiatives by sharing relevant information as well as new opportunities and activities. Examples of successful scientific networks include the International Centre for Theoretical Physics South American

Institute for Fundamental Research, ICTP-SAIFIR¹, at UNESP, and NOVA, the Netherlands Research School for Astronomy².

This has been done by an email list, a website³ and through workshops. These workshops aim to gather people working on a certain subject to a) promote the mutual knowledge of the people involved, b) know what has been done in the area and c) to discuss actions that help the development of the area. The workshops have been organized by post-docs working in the area. Although the prime target of these workshops are scientists, students and post-docs of the State of São Paulo, people from elsewhere are welcome. We had already a workshop on radio-astronomy⁴. Currently another one, on galaxy clusters, is being organized and others (deep learning, time series) are being planned.

An important aspect of SPANet is that it has no money and any activity should be supported by the projects, institutions and/or individuals.

Currently SPANet is being coordinated by a steering committee with Adriana Valio (Mackenzie), João Braga (INPE), Cláudia Mendes de Oliveira (USP), Gustavo de Araújo Rojas (UFSCar), Lucimara Pires Martins (UNICSUL) and Laerte Sodré Jr. (USP).

¹ <http://www.ictp-saifr.org/>

² <http://nova-astronomy.nl>

³ <http://www.spanet.iag.usp.br/>

⁴ <http://www.radioastronomia.net/pt/>