

Global Astronomy Survey : United Arab Emirates

First submission : Hamid M.K.Al-Naimiy [see human resources section] 18 July 2009

SPoC Approval : Yes

1. Professional (Research) Astronomy:

1. Number of universities offering Astronomy (and their names)

Three: 1- United Arab Emirates University (UAEU).

2- Sharjah University (UoS).

3- American University at Sharjah (AUS).

The three Universities are offering an elective Courses in General Astronomy as a University requirement and Astrophysics course in Physics Department.

1. Number of universities offering Physics (and their names).

Many :

- 1- United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) .
- 2- Sharjah University (UoS) .
- 3- American University of Sharjah (AUS).
- 4- Ajman University for Science and Technology
- 5- Khalifa University of Science and technology and Research
- 6- Zayed University
- 7- Dubai University
- 8- Abu-Dhabi University
- 9- Manipal University / Dubai
- 10- Wollongong University / Dubai
- 11- Ras al Khaimah University

12- Al-Ghurair University / Dubai

1. Number of academics who have been trained in Astronomy (ideally with their names and levels of qualification)

2.

1- Professor Hamid M.K.Al- Naimiy / Professor of Astrophysics, PHD in Astrophysics from Manchester University (UK), 1978. Now he is president of the Arab Union for Astronomy and Space Sciences and an active member of IAU.

2- Professor Nidhal Quessoum / PhD in Theoretical Astrophysics from University of California (UAS), 1988.

3- Dr Illias Fernini /Associate Professor of Astrophysics /PhD from University of New Mexico Albuquerque (USA), 1991.

1. Number of astronomical facilities (observatories, telescopes, etc) and as much detail about each as possible (websites/contact details)

No observatory up to now, but there is few Meade telescopes of around 12-16 inches distributed in many universities. But in JUNE the first 2009, the UAE Government has decided to establish Astronomical Observatory and telescope for scientific research, to create an interest amongst the community in astronomy, astrophysics and space sciences, to strengthening the astronomy base in the UAE, enabling regional and international joint astronomical research projects, and also to advance the tourism sector along with public awareness in Astronomy and Space Sciences. Professor Hamid M.K.AL-Naimiy (alnaimiy@sharjah.ac.ae)has been

appointed as a projects scientists and we are in process of calling the vendors for the proposal of the astronomical observatory and at the same time we started looking for a site and preparing for site testing

1. Self evaluation (according to the different phases above, how would you rate your country in terms of Professional Astronomy? Please include any other relevant information to motivate your choice.)

I would classify UAEU in term of Professional Astronomy in Phase 3 showing *strong potential* in the form of physics/mathematics research and outreach communities, and we are willing to drive the development of astronomy strongly. The starting steps for developing astronomy are very good.

2. Public Understanding of Astronomy:

1. What governmental astronomy/science outreach programmes for the public take place (co-ordinated either by government departments or national facilities) .

Only in Universities as mentioned above programmes for the public take place and some time at secondary schools, there are a handful of scientists involved in the Astronomy & Astrophysics fields at some UAE universities and they teach the subject through official classes, besides they organizing workshops in astronomy for school teachers and public. The Emirates Institute for Advanced Science and technology started to establish and Astronomical Observatory and facilities for research and for puplic.

1. What non-governmental astronomy/science outreach programmes for the public take place (NGO activities or international programmes that your country is involved in)

There are three amateur astronomy groups one of which is in Dubai and the other two in Abu Dhabi. The amateur groups facilitate activities of astronomical nature including training and star gazing. Both science and amateur groups showed great interest in developing astronomy in UAE.

1. Comment on the presence of astronomy in the media (TV, radio, newspapers). Is it very prominent? Are there specific programmes on astronomy? Is the media generally willing to publish news on astronomy?

The UAE Media organizes from time to time TV, Radio program on Astronomy, interviewing astronomers or amateur astronomers to talk about astronomy in general or in specifics astronomy topics, beside many astronomers and amateur astronomers' writing articles in astronomy in news papers and nearly every day. It is prominent and overall the media always willing to publish news on astronomy.

1. Comment on the presence of astronomy/science in the general culture of the people. Are there any specific challenges or setbacks? Is astronomy a welcome subject of conversation?

At present, the Astronomy community in the UAE is relatively small and Astronomy culture is not wide spread, but those involved are very enthusiastic about the field. There are specific challenges some times from few amateur astronomers. Astronomy always is most welcome subject of conversation.

1. Self evaluation (according to the different phases above, how would you rate your country in terms of Public Understanding of Astronomy? Please include any other relevant information to motivate your choice.)

At present, the Astronomy community in the UAE is relatively small and Astronomy culture is not wide spread, but those involved are very enthusiastic about the field. The public understanding of Astronomy in general not bad. Yet I would classify UAEU in term of Public understanding of Astronomy in Phase 3 showing *strong potential* in the outreach communities, and we are willing to drive the development of astronomy strongly

3. Astronomy in Schools:

1. What governmental astronomy/science education and outreach programmes for schools take place (co-ordinated either by government departments or national facilities)

In the governmental secondary schools an astronomy education and outreach programmes are taking place but not strongly .Some schools are started to include many astronomical programs for students but still weak.

1. What non-governmental astronomy/science education and outreach programmes for schools take place (NGO activities or international programmes that your country is involved in)

In the privet secondary schools an astronomy education and outreach programmes are taking place but not strongly (weaker than the Governmental schools) .Also some schools are started to include many astronomical programs for students but still weak.

1. Comment on the presence of astronomy in the school curriculum. Is it part of the school curriculum? Is it very prominent? What age groups?

There is astronomy in the secondary school Physics curriculum and Geosciences in grad 11 and 12 of age between 15-17 years .

1. Comment on the status of astronomy/science in schools. Are there any specific challenges or setbacks? Sufficient number of students studying maths and science? General interest in maths/science/astronomy in schools?

The status of astronomy/sciences in schools, not excellent or very good but good and fair. The challenges are small. Nearly all the students in sciences program studding math's and science, it is compulsory. The general interest in math's / science / astronomy is not bad.

1. Self evaluation (according to the different phases above, how would you rate your country in terms of Astronomy in Schools? Please include any other relevant information to motivate your choice.)

I rated as in Phase 3. Schools and students need more encouragements toward astronomy and we are trying for this.

Any other general comments or information that you feel would be useful for this survey?

I'm the president of the Arab Union for Astronomy and Space Sciences which have 18 Arab countries as a member in this union, most of the Arab astronomers and the amateur astronomers and the societies are members in this union. The Union is following the development of AASS in most of the Arab countries through its members, the astronomical societies and institutions. UAE is one of them.

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