Brief report on Science Academies' Lecture

Workshop on Classical Mechanics (December 4-6, 2014)
Organized by Department of Physics, Loyola College, Chennai

Convener: Prof. V. Balakrishnan, Dept. of Physics, IIT Madras
Coordinator: C. Joseph Prabagar, Dept. of Physics, Loyola College
Lecturers: Profs. Arul Lakshminarayan, S. Lakshmi Bala, Suresh Govindarajan and V. Balakrishnan, Dept. of Physics, IIT Madras, Chennai

Inaugural function (Left to Right - Mr. C. Joseph Prabagar (Loyola College), Prof. Suresh Govindarajan (IIT-M), Prof. Arul Lakshminarayan(IIT-M), Prof. V. Balakrishnan(IIT-M), Rev. Fr. Principal (Loyola College)
The Workshop began at 9 am on December 4, 2014 with a short inaugural function. Rev. Dr. G. Joseph Antony Samy SJ (Principal, Loyola College) felicitated the gathering. Dr. P. Sagayaraj (Head, Dept. of Physics, Loyola College) and Dr. S. Pauline, Dept. of Physics, Loyola College welcomed the participants. Prof. V. Balakrishnan in his inaugural address briefed the audience about the Science Education Panel of IASc and the various activities undertaken by the Science Academies in the cause of science education, including the summer student scholarships, refresher programmes, lecture workshops, journal publications, etc.

There were 6 academic sessions in all, 2 per day for 3 days. Each session comprised 2 ninety-minute lectures. Each of the 4 resource persons gave 1 lecture on each day. The details of the schedule and contents of the lectures are attached herewith.
The number of accepted applicants was 124, of whom 116 attended the Workshop. A Workshop kit was given to each participant. This comprised a spiral-bound 200 page note-book with a special cover design, a pen, a file folder and a copy of the Workshop schedule and lecture contents. The participants were particularly appreciative of the notebook and its cover design.
All 12 lectures were of the blackboard-and-chalk kind. The material covered was explained unhurriedly, with careful emphasis on the basic principles of the subject, and with many worked out examples to illustrate these principles. Throughout the Workshop, the participation of the audience was commendable, with frequent interaction between the lecturer and the audience. Though the “course” was an intensive one, audience interest remained high for the entire duration. Questions and free-ranging discussions invariably spilled over into the breaks between lectures and beyond the end of the evening session.
After the final lecture on the last day, there was a brief feedback session. Participants expressed their appreciation for the manner in which the Workshop had been organized and conducted. They expressed their gratitude to the Academies for sponsoring the workshop and thanked Loyola College for organizing the Workshop, and for making excellent arrangements for food and hospitality. Many participants requested that similar Lecture Workshops in the other subjects in the physics curriculum be held. Some teachers who participated in the Workshop also showed their interest in applying for and organizing similar Lecture Workshops in their colleges. Prof. V. Balakrishnan made brief concluding remarks, and urged interested students to go on to higher studies and research in physics.