

Executive Summary
Workshop III ‘Mentorship Program’

held at the residence of the Austrian Consul General in Los Angeles
28 September 2002

Participants in alphabetic order

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Moderator

Axel Brait

Summary

After a brief introduction, all participants were given the chance to express their opinion concerning a mentorship program led by ASCINA. To summarize our deliberations, ASCINA Pacific South is willing to play a pivotal role in establishing a mentorship program, which might be adapted by ASCINA nationwide. We seek collaboration with other regional groups and ask the Attaché for Science and Technology at the Austrian Embassy, Dr. Philipp Steger, to coordinate these activities and mediate the necessary contacts.

Every member of the group is very willing to assist in the program and every member volunteers to be a mentor for scientists in her/his respective field. ASCINA will also be a platform for contacts to scientists who worked in the USA and returned to Austria or US scientists who worked in Austria or would like to work there.

Besides professional mentoring, our mentorship program will also work on a social level. In this case, the task will be to help visitors getting accustomed to life in the USA, be it with finding a suitable accommodation, a cheap car or be it to learn the finer points of enjoying life in Southern California. It will be important to find volunteers and/or resident American families, who are willing to help newcomers getting used to the

Californian way of life. In this regard, we consider cooperation with the Austrian-American Council West or similar institutions as extremely valuable.

One important challenge for the mentorship program will be to reach out to Austrian scientists who have been tens of years or longer in the USA. These people are of great value to ASCINA as scientific and social mentors. The biggest challenge here is to locate these people and to invite them to actively participate in the activities of ASCINA.

The ASCINA website will be a central part of the mentorship program to serve interested people as the first contact. The website will be set up and maintained for now by the Office of Science and Technology and we were told by Dr. Steger that the website will be up and running within the next 3 months. It may be valuable to add a section “volunteer opportunities” to this website to attract volunteers within the USA. Scientists who go back to Austria should not be lost for ASCINA. In the Austrian chapter of ASCINA they will be able to use their intimate knowledge of the USA to help colleagues who want to pursue research in the USA.

The following action items were defined:

- Establishing a database of all members of ASCINA with areas of expertise and where they live to have a starting point for people who come to the USA for research.
- Establishing a presence on the Internet to give people the chance to find ASCINA and get into contact with us.
- Arranging a follow-up meeting within the next 6 to 8 weeks to check on the progress of the mentorship program and discuss additional items.