

THE MICROSCOPY SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



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Dear MSSA members, past and future MSSA conference delegates and friends

The year 2022 is now in full swing and we are excited to start engaging with our society members for this year. Of course, the most important event for this year will be our return to an in-person conference held at Gold Reef City for MSSA2022. The conference organizing committee led by Prof Genga are hard at work to make sure MSSA2022 will be a memorable, engaging, and FUN experience for all. We look forward to seeing everyone again and we hope you too are looking forward to catching up with old friends and colleagues and forming new connections and collaborations. A special thank you to our generous sponsors, for their support towards MSSA 2022. Please be sure to visit our sponsorship page on the www.microscopy.co.za website under the MSSA2022 tab to find out how these companies could benefit your microscopy.

Abstract submissions for the MSSA2022 scientific programme are now open. The deadline for submissions is 30 June 2022. I encourage all prospective presenters to submit their abstracts sooner rather than later to help our editors produce the best possible scientific programme and conference proceedings. This year we are excited to provide prospective delegates with additional support material to help you with the submission process. You can find this under the MSSA2022 tab on our society webpage. As customary there are prizes for the first time submitted and accepted abstracts. So don't miss out and submit soon.

I am also pleased to announce that applications for Student Grants to participate at MSSA2022 are also open. Student participation has always been at the core of our conferences, and I invite all eligible students to take advantage of this opportunity. Please visit the Student Grants page on our website under the MSSA2022 tab to familiarize yourself with the application requirements. One key requirement is a submitted and accepted MSSA2022 abstract. Grants will be awarded on a first come first served basis for accepted abstracts. Early abstract submission will thus be very important to ensure the best chance for success.

Further information regarding the participation of plenary and invited speakers for our conference programme will be released soon. And as always, we won't forget to announce our various competitions and prizes as part of participation at the conference. This includes the always popular MSSA micrograph competition and best presentation awards.

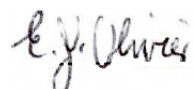
Now for some general MSSA news. In 2021 MSSA hosted and took part in several online teaching and training events which included inviting some of South Africa's top microscopists and scientists to share their recent world-class research with our community. It was truly a privilege to be part of this and we thank Prof Resia Pretorius, Dr Janette Bester, Prof Ben Loos and Dr Anca Savulesco for their time in this regard. As a society, we aim to provide more events of this nature since we believe showcasing South African microscopy excellence is of vital importance to building a strong microscopy community. MSSA was also delighted to form part of the AFINMIC student symposium 2021 hosted from 29 November to 3 December. Close to one hundred students from Africa were given the chance to submit abstracts using our MSSA abstract submission platform and to present their research online in a relaxed learning environment in preparation for MSSA2022. Great prizes were also up for grabs, and we once again thank our sponsors for their generosity. We are planning some exciting online events for the coming months so please be sure to keep a look out for information in this regard.

Finally, would like to notify all society members that the next MSSA AGM will be held as part of the MSSA2022 conference in December 2022. Further information will be provided closer to the conference. In a November 2021 meeting of the MSSA executive committee, it was unanimously decided that it would be in the best interest of the society to institute a deviation of the society's constitution in holding an AGM every second year, to postponing it by one year to coincide with the MSSA2022 conference. This was due to the original postponement of the conference because of the risks and restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a financial report of the society's activities for 2021 has been compiled and will be made available with this letter for download on the society website. A copy of the 2020/2021 annual financial statements can also be made available to any member of the society on request by emailing admin@microscopy.co.za.

I would like to remind and motivate all current and past MSSA members to remain up to date with the payment of our modest annual membership fee. Your contributions go a long way in supporting the day-to-day operations of our society. Membership also entitles you to access MSSA online teaching and training resources, discounted conference attendance rates and eligibility towards MSSA conference student grants and awards. Registration for the MSSA2022 conference will open on 1 June 2022.

Keep checking our website and social media platforms for more information related to MSSA activities and MSSA2022 abstract submission and registration. I wish all our members the best of luck with your research activities leading up to MSSA2022. We look forward to hosting you at Gold Reef City for MSSA2022 for another memorable and exciting conference!!!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Olivier', written in a cursive style.

Dr Jaco Olivier
President of MSSA