



D'Amico as INAF President: memories

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Abstract. A contribution to the memory of Nichi D'Amico by a member of the *Consiglio di Amministrazione (CdA)* of INAF.

I “official” met Nichi on November 4th 2015 ... I remember that day well, it was a Wednesday. I already knew him by reputation, and we had met a couple of times in Bologna, where he often came, but nothing more.

A few days earlier we had the news of your appointment as President ... an unexpected news for many, as the role was the most coveted and the competition was fierce. But you certainly did not waste any time with celebrations, nor left too much space for thoughts and reflections on how the new INAF President could have been, you immediately took the wheel and started driving at full speed, a feature that over time I would have discovered to be inherent in your DNA. An operational email from you arrived almost immediately, obviously sent on Sunday and with very few pleasantries. I remember that it took me a little off guard back then, while now, in rereading it with your voice, it simply reminds me of your effectiveness and efficiency:

Ciao a tutti e benvenuti nel CdA dell'INAF, conto di installarmi a Monte Mario fra martedì e mercoledì, e come prima cosa vedrò di fare predisporre l'ordine del giorno della riunione di insediamento del CdA. Intanto vi chiederò di passarmi i vostri recapiti telefonici (anche il cellulare

possibilmente, il mio é xxx xxx xxxx).
Grazie e a presto, Nichi

Hello everyone and welcome to the INAF CdA, I intend to settle in Monte Mario between Tuesday and Wednesday, and first of all I will try to prepare the agenda for the installation meeting. In the meantime, I would ask you to pass me yours phone numbers (even the cell phone possibly, mine is xxx xxx xxxx).
Thanks and see you soon, Nichi

A few days later you wrote to all the employees of the institution, a two-page letter straight to the point as usual and in which you touched on some of INAF's problems, with particular attention to precarious work, literally showing that you have paid attention to this problem as President since your first day. Concerning this “President's inauguration message” I was struck by something to which I did not pay much attention at the time because it is quite typical: the initial and final writings from your hand, in order to warm up the cold typeface. In the following years I have rarely seen again this practice from you and I am sure this is the demonstration of how important that message was for you and how much you cared for your Employees.



Messaggio di insediamento del Presidente

Cari miei e carissimi tutti,

come certamente sapete, mi sono insediato da pochi giorni a Monte Mario e sono già al lavoro su varie questioni, non ultima la predisposizione dell'avvio delle procedure di nomina del DG, e del DS, delle Macroaree, e del CS, e faremo la prima riunione del CdA venerdì prossimo. Ci sono diverse questioni urgenti da rivedere prima della predisposizione del Bilancio di Previsione, e cioè *adesso*, e poi col nuovo anno speriamo di andare a regime e di potere avere frequenti interazioni e "brain-storming" su varie problematiche.

E qui mi fermo. Vi ho semplicemente esposto, di getto, alcune considerazioni su alcune questioni, ma c'è ancora tanto su cui riflettere e su cui lavorare, e intendo farlo con la collaborazione di tutti, condividendo scelte e difficoltà.

Cordiali saluti a tutti e buon lavoro!
Nichi

Fig. 1. The first message of Nichi D'Amico to all the INAF personnel. The text says the following:

Very dear ones [hand written],

as you certainly know, I took my role at Monte Mario since only few days and I am already working on several issues, not last of which the arrangement of the beginning of the procedures for the nomination of the DG, of the DS, of the Macroaree, and of the CS, and we have set up the first meeting of the CdA for the next Friday. There are still several urgent issues to revise before the predisposition of the Budget of Forecast, in practice right now, and then, with the new year, we hope to go up to speed and to be able to have a high rate of interactions and of "brain-storming" about various problems.

Here I stop my writing. I have simply exposed, in one go, some considerations about some questions, but there is a lot about which to reflect and to work, and I intend to do it with the collaboration of you all, sharing decisions and difficulties.

Best regards to all of good work! [hand written]

Nichi

And finally we arrive to November 4th, the day of the installation meeting of the INAF CdA. I had a new dress for the occasion, you were elegant as usual. Your welcome was formal, certainly not warm, and for the first years our relations have always been like this, cold and professional. But then with the increase of the discussions, the confidence also

increased, combined with a few dinners together in the usual Roman restaurants or the sandwich shared in your office, the satisfaction of snatching a few smiles under your mustaches ... but this is a whole other story, which I have had the pleasure of sharing with you and of which all INAF was able to appreciate the results.



Fig. 2. The 4 members of the *Consiglio di Amministrazione (CdA)* of INAF 2015-2019 during the first meeting with the new President Nichi D'Amico on November 4th 2015. From the left: Marco Tavani (now President of INAF), Stefano Giovannini, Eugenio Coccia, Enrico Cappellaro, and Nichi D'Amico.