

GGI@20, 16-17 March 2026



# The Beginning of a Success Story

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- A little over **20 years ago** (Sept. 2005) we held in this room the **GGI Inauguration Conference** followed by its first workshop (May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006).
- In March 2016, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary, President Nando Ferroni announced INFN's decision to turn the GGI from an international meeting venue into a **National Institute for Advanced Study** adding an important graduate education component.
- Two years later (15.02.2018) that decision had been fully implemented.

# Il GGI diventa Centro Nazionale di Studi Avanzati

15.02.2018



- Alberto Lerda will cover that later part of the GGI story. I will concentrate on the former.
- In between those two events (05.2019) we held a "Pino Marchesini Memorial Conference" to commemorate one of the fathers of GGI.
- Indeed the GGI adventure started much earlier: when it was decided (back in the 90s!) to move the Physics Dept. from Arcetri to Sesto F<sup>no</sup>, some local theorists (Marcello Ciafaloni, Giorgio Longhi, Roberto Casalbuoni...) already thought of creating something else on the site.

- Around 2001-2002 (as the department gradually moved out of Arcetri) the issue **became more urgent** (leaving the premises empty could awake other groups' appetite).
- I first heard about creating an international **Santa Barbara style** Institute in Arcetri from Marcello Ciafaloni and/or from Pino Marchesini, newly elected president of CSN4 (the theory section of INFN).

- Pino and Marcello had their own model for such an Institute but **I was skeptical** about both.
- Why? Lack of a **stable** scientific and admin. **staff**, **distance** from Sesto, **cost** of living/hotels in Florence, **meals**, **transportation** ...
- But **Pino M.** strongly believed in it and his version turned out to be the winner. It had the enthusiastic support of INFN's new president, **Roberto Petronzio**, and the equally important one of **Roberto Casalbuoni** on the UoF side.
- We owe to them if we are here today to celebrate this anniversary!
- I can only claim credit for its name...

- The GGI was officially approved on 9 Nov. 2004.
- A week after, a Launching Committee (LC) was appointed by Roberto Petronzio.
- It consisted of D. Gross, G. Marchesini, A. Mueller, G. Parisi, and myself.
- Roberto Casalbuoni paid a visit to ITP in Santa Barbara to get acquainted with the system there and gave precious advice to the LC.
- The LC reported in early 2005 suggesting an organization structure which was basically approved.

- **Coordinator:** G. Marchesini (ex officio as head of CSN4)
- **Deputy Coordinator:** R. Casalbuoni (ex officio as head of INFN, Florence)
- **Two** rotating international **committees**
- **Advisory Committee:** R. Barbieri, M. Ciafaloni, P. Di Vecchia, A. Mueller, G. Parisi, GV (chair)
- **Scientific Committee** (selecting workshops for the final approval of the AC): G. Marchesini (CSN4 President & chair), Roberto Casalbuoni, Gia Dvali, Michelangelo Mangano, Guido Martinelli, Eliezer Rabinovici, Riccardo Rattazzi, Antonio Riotto, Augusto Sagnotti.

- No GGI-dedicated staff was ever foreseen
- In May 2006. Roberto Petronzio asked me to "supervise" the GGI (originally for 3 y, lasted 5).
- During those years I attended (a good fraction of) each WS and tried to come up with comments and suggestions on how to improve GGI's running.
- As it turned out, very little intervention was needed from my part, only a few tips (e.g. optimizing number of weekly participants and talks).
- The technical problems I feared were "easily" overcome thanks to the skills and dedication of Antonella Pagliai, Margherita Pazzaglia and Antonio Orlando (and, more recently, of Annalisa Anichini, Roberto Baglioni, Mauro Morandini, Mirella Ridi)
- Accommodation, transportation, lunches...easier that I had thought...

- Things **moved fast**. As already mentioned:
- 19-21 sept. 2005: **inauguration conference**
- 2 may 2006: start of **first workshop** (after we decided the fall of 2005 was not realistic)
- In the following **10 years** we had some **30 workshops...**
- The crucial issue turned out to be scientific: **attracting** each year a sufficient number of **good proposals** (in the middle of growing competition even in Europe) and convincing key participants to stay long enough.

- But everything went smoothly:
- More often than not we had to **turn down** (but usually only postpone) some **excellent proposals**.
- **WS organizers** always proved their **dedication** and (most) **participants** claimed **satisfaction**, came back..
- **A & S Committees** were **increased** in size and in geographical/international representation
- 2015: **Simons Foundation** gave **support** (600 K€ for 5 years) at our 1st attempt.
- And I'm glad to hear that it still supports the **GGI** (Simons visiting program + **Visiting Research Teams program\***).

\*) 2-4 researchers working at a common project and staying at the **GGI** for one or two weeks

# My conclusions at the 10th anniversary

- It has been a wonderful experience to follow closely the pregnancy, birth, and childhood of GGI
- I am confident that the next ten years will see it grow from childhood to adult age...

That dream has come true...

Happy Birthday GGI!