

Minutes of the 5 Dec. 2008 UEC Meeting

Attending UEC reps:

Dan Hooper
Matthew Jones
Ashutosh Kotwal
Ron Moore
Kevin Pitts
Heather Ray
Lee Sawyer
Mitch Soderberg
Kirsten Tollefson
Jon Urheim
Tricia Vahle

Attending GSA reps:

John BackusMayes
Tyler Dorland
Gabriel Facini

NOvA Project Status - John Cooper, Project Manager

John Cooper reported on the status of the NovA Project.

FRA-Fermilab must become certified in Earned Value Management System (EVMS) budget procedures. NOvA is the first Fermilab project to go through this process.

NOvA does not compete with the Daya Bay and T2K experiments on the time-scale of the latter, but NOvA is complimentary in physics (long baseline vs. short baseline) to them. The combined reach of the experiments including NOvA is an improvement over the reach of the individual experiments.

Accelerator upgrade work and Minnesota Detector Hall infrastructure work are the critical path items for the NOvA project.

On the detector side, an Integration Prototype Near Detector (IPND) during the R&D phase serves to focus all R&D efforts in one place. The IPND will start taking data in early 2010.

The status of the Critical Decision (CD) Process is as follows:

CD-2 baseline with \$278M approved

CD-3a approved for a limited \$19M set of critical path/long-leadtime items

Project has spent \$16.8M through FY08
CD-3b Review anticipated in summer 2009

Quality of Life Report - Ron Moore

Some users have requested a solution to the issue of getting to/from the Fermilab Village after normal business hours. The security firm is subcontracted through DOE now and it's not clear that they can perform this task. Quality of Life subcommittee representatives will talk with Mike Lindgren about this issue.

No updates are available yet on gym membership renewals.

Washington,DC Trip Update - Dan Hooper

Dan Hooper reported on the planning process for the upcoming joint visit to Congress by members of the Fermilab Users Executive Committee (UEC), the SLAC Users Organization (SLUO) and the US-LHC Users Organization (USLUO).

A date has not yet been set for the Washington, DC trip, given the ongoing transitions in Washington, DC. Scheduling it in late March is a possibility. The length of the trip depends on the possibility of hosting a talk and reception to promote HEP on Capitol Hill.

The focus of the trip is largely defined by what happens in the early days of the Obama administration. Our message depends on whether there is an immediate budget approved with funds for HEP, or there is another continuing resolution.

A UEC meeting with USLUO and SLUO members, for the purpose of planning the upcoming trip to Washington,DC has been scheduled for February 7 and will take place at Fermilab.

Annual Fermilab Users' Meeting Update - Lee Sawyer

Tyler Dorland will be the GSA representative for the Users' Meeting Planning Subcommittee.

Lee has checked proposed dates against the Directorate schedule and meeting schedules. June 10-11 is the time that works so far. Deputy Director Kim would like to have another Project X physics workshop to coincide with the Users' Meeting. The DUSEL community needs to know the Users' Meeting date in order to schedule their own meeting. June 10-11 could conflict with MINOS and/or CDF and efforts are underway to coordinate with these collaborations.

Barbara Book from the Users Office will again help with logistics of the Users' Meeting.

Local Visits Sub-committee - Heather Ray

The charge of this Subcommittee is to recruit Users to meet with their respective elected representatives at their local/regional offices and discuss issues related to basic research and HEP. The Subcommittee also requests Users to communicate this plan to their colleagues. Please contact Heather Ray for details.

Proposal for an Outreach Workshop - Tricia Vahle

The Outreach Workshop is designed to help physicists learn to better communicate our science with students, the public and our representatives in government. The workshop would be held in conjunction with the 2009 Users' Meeting.

The Outreach Subcommittee will work on advertising the workshop and inviting speakers including the keynote speaker.

Meeting with Pier Oddone:

Fermilab Director Pier Oddone met with members of the UEC.

Director Oddone thinks that there is a strong probability of

- A) a large, multi-year stimulus package, and
- B) that a budget will be passed for FY09.

He said that if a budget passes, the prospects for NOvA (and other P5 recommendations) are positive. There is the possibility for additional funding (perhaps \$60M). The current FNAL budgeting process assumes a \$30M increase. If there is another continuing resolution, then the Fermilab budget is overspent.

Director Oddone answered questions from the UEC members attending.

(UEC) Please comment on the JDEM Science Operations Center.

Oddone: JDEM was a part of P5 recommendations. DOE/NASA will provide the needed hardware. There will be an open competition for the science mission. The JDEM Proposal will call for science teams to do investigations. Fermilab hopes to host the Operations Center. This plan is similar to Fermilab providing operations and computing support for HEP experiments.

(UEC) Please comment on the status of the search for the position vacated by Hugh Montgomery.

Oddone: The search is converging. We would like to make an announcement early in the new year. We are also considering a few organizational rearrangements.

(UEC) How does the current workforce align with new projects?

Oddone: We would like to run new projects leanly for the next ~2 years so that the workforce is not over-staffed when the Tevatron shuts down and those people move to the new projects.

(UEC) Do other institutions go through diversity actions like the one Judy Jackson discussed at the last UEC meeting?

Oddone: The APS study was conducted over a short time and therefore may not be conclusive, but it triggered an internal evaluation process at Fermilab. We are taking a deep look at the issues that are troubling people. Three of the ~20 diversity focus group studies have taken place so far. We are trying to create randomly selected focus groups. It could turn out that most diversity issues could be more reflective of management problems.

(UEC) Assuming the budget improves, how do you view smaller-scale projects? Could you compare and contrast the views of the Directorate vs. the Physics Advisory Committee (PAC)?

Oddone: The PAC will probably say that we have too full a program. E906 (Drell-Yan nuclear experiment) was well-motivated and thought-out, so we wanted to do it. We would love to do the g-2 experiment (at their cheaper price of \$25M), but P5 did not support it strongly.

(UEC) UEC tries to advocate for physical sciences in many ways. How do you interact with other laboratory directors in terms of finding ways to promote science?

Oddone: The national laboratories are very different, and often compete for the same funds. The common ground for these laboratories is physical sciences. All laboratories have a basic interest in a strong U.S. science program. Some laboratories (e.g. Bio Energy) are more application-oriented, so they can take the message in a different direction. I have joined the NLDC executive committee to have some influence on these issues.

Submitted by Mitch Soderberg and Ashutosh Kotwal