



## Minutes of the Fermilab UEC Meeting September 14, 2012

### **Attending:**

Mary Anne Cummings, Craig Group (remote), Sergio Jindariani, Daniel Kaplan, , Greg Pawloski (remote), Breese Quinn, Lee Roberts (remote), Mandy Rominsky, Gregory Snow, Nikos Varelas, Bob Zwaska (*Absent: Ryan Patterson*)

**GSA officers:** Chris Prokop, Brian Tice

**Guests:** Michael Cooke, Barb Book, Pier Oddone

### **Introduction - UEC Procedures and Administration – Barb Book**

The UEC is administered through the International Services Office. Barb is our primary contact, helping organize travel, the monthly meetings, the Washington visit, and the Users Meeting.

### **News from the Directorate – Pier Oddone**

Starting with politics, the Director noted that funding is likely to be tight in all scenarios. Congress is in the process of passing a continuing resolution for 6 months. Sequestration is still out there as a possible 8% cut January 1, though it is hoped that Congress will act to modify it in some way out of economic concerns.

Lab-wise, today is the day for the reduction in force. 27 people had volunteered previously. About 30 additional slots were reduced by natural attrition and releasing contractors. 22 employees were released involuntarily today. These reductions put the lab's workforce at an appropriate level for the anticipated FY13 budget. Detail-wise, the budget works out mostly well for the lab's program: muon campus construction, LBNE, g-2 (almost).

Positively, DES has achieved first light, NOvA has put its first block in place, and there are numerous initiatives moving forward. If it were not for the budget, the Lab would be in a good place. There was a drastic, potentially damaging cut in accelerator R&D because of the ILC and other reductions to maintain the LBNE funding steady. The Director is attempting to restore some of the cuts to SRF R&D to support the lab's various other initiatives.

The Director has just returned from the European Strategy Session in Krakow. The LHC is obviously the highest priority in Europe. Japan made a strong pitch that it would like to build the 500-GeV ILC, putting up half of the cost. Europe is debating what role it will play in the ILC. Japan is talking a very aggressive schedule. The US will also have to debate its role in this potential machine.

The question is whether CERN should build its only long-baseline neutrino beam to Finland. That is financially questionable for Europe, given its other priorities. However, Europe is not willing to embrace LBNE as the US can be viewed as an unreliable

partner. The Director feels that LBNE would be much more attractive if the detector were initially underground, so there are attempts to be clear on what that would require.

Mary Anne asked why the budgets seem to diverge from the administration talking points on the issue of basic research. The Director responded that OMB interprets the President's preference to be for applied research, so basic research is continually squeezed in the budget process. A lot of policy is being determined in OMB.

It is curious how HEP and NP are disfavored within the Office of Science budget, whereas they are greatly supported in Japan and Europe. In the US, basic research has been redefined to have an end-use aspiration.

On the other hand, the interest in the Higgs has been very great. The Director gave a speech invited by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee of the Senate, and he was told it was the best attended speech in 5 years. Fermilab can stake out the intensity frontier as Europe is taking care of the energy frontier and Japan is interested in the ILC.

Dan asked about muon colliders. The Director responded that the program is going along well at Fermilab through MAP (the Muon Accelerator Program), but is being hamstrung by very expensive obligations for MICE. Dan clarified the question towards a Higgs factory. The Director indicated that there was very little discussion about a muon-based Higgs factory at Krakow. It is likely easier to achieve with electron-positron collisions. For the near future, the Director does not see these major initiatives (ILC, Higgs Factory, Muon Collider) affecting the near-term Lab program. On the other hand, there has been some recent attention for nuStorm, which is not presently part of the lab's program, but could fit well.

Breese asked about how well ORKA is advancing. The Lab is presently preparing the CDF hall to be useful and decommissioning CDF to the extent needed to make ORKA possible, but there is not much else happening. If and when ORKA happens depends on the budget outlook in the next few years.

There was a broad discussion on projecting the appeal of science, including its direct economic impact, concrete examples, training of young scientists, inspirations, etc. It is clear that there is a lot of competition for who is the most responsible for advancing the case for scientific research. There was discussion of commissioning an independent academic study of the economic impact of particle physics. Also, it is quite useful for outsiders (e.g. Augustine) to make the case to Congress. URA could be useful in mobilizing support. The Director suggested particularly that the URA could be useful in organizing a bureau of the most effective speakers and effective materials. Nikos responded that DPF has been considering something similar.

Nikos asked about the impact of the UEC's Washington visit. The Director responded that it is always positive. The best way he sees to improve the impact is to visit legislators in their home offices. Breese mentioned that the UEC had attempted a second meeting in year's past, and it was marginally useful.

### **Summary of UEC Activities – Dan Kaplan, Chair**

First order of business is to elect a Chair and to organize subcommittees. This is discussed later in the meeting.

The UEC homepage is managed by the UEC Chair. It is a little out of date, and a few updates were discussed. Useful areas are the present members, committees, and constitution.

The UEC meets monthly for a half day, typically on a Friday afternoon. Dates of later meetings have not yet been determined. Meetings typically include remarks from the Chair, a view from the Directorate, a view from Washington, a special guest, and subcommittee reports. The GSA usually sends a few representatives.

Much of the UEC's work is done through subcommittees. New subcommittees can be created if desired.

The Government Relations subcommittee organizes the Washington trip and otherwise promotes communication with government agencies, Congress, and the Administration. The Washington visit is done in conjunction with the SLAC Users Organization, the USLHC Users Organizations, and DPF. Lee asks about how the coordination is achieved. Congressional visits are determined by who is the closest to a particular congressperson, but a second person accompanies. The accompanying person is usually matched so that pairs are from different labs or at different stages of their careers.

The Non-U.S. Users subcommittee deals with issues of international users.

The Outreach subcommittee determines activities to improve outreach both within and outside the lab. Nikos mentioned that the university profiles was something they specifically restarted last year. These have been very positively received, even from the funding agencies. This subcommittee also deals with media exposure and organizing demographic data / studies.

The Quality of Life subcommittee deals with numerous issues regarding life for users at Fermilab.

The Local Government subcommittee has not operated for several years, but in principle is responsible for organizing local visits to congressional representatives.

The Users Meeting subcommittee organizes the annual meeting, which is obviously a central activity.

Other UEC activities include a "Meet the UEC" coffee break, a holiday party, involvement with the NUFO exhibition in Congress, suggesting names for the PAC,

changing the constitution if necessary, etc.

The UEC Chair has numerous responsibilities, among which are organizing the monthly meetings, serving as the public face of the committee, and reporting to FRA and its boards. The Chair can serve for more than one year if s/he and the committee so desire - but is elected every year for one year at a time.

The GSA is looking to expand into a grad student & postdoc association. They have sent a letter to the Director to that effect.

Pier Oddone is stepping down as Director next summer. A search is being formulated. This is the first search being performed by FRA. There was discussion of what UEC representation there would be. Greg S. offered to contact members of the FRA board to inquire on this issue.

Bruce Chrisman has stepped down as Lab COO. Jack Anderson is the new COO and will come to speak to the UEC at some point.

#### **Lewis-Burke Report – Carole McGuire**

Congress is in the process of passing a continuing resolution for 6 months, freezing spending at FY12 rates. There will be a slight (<1%) decrease overall to match the budget caps. It is not clear how this increase will be allocated.

Also, Congress passed a law requiring the President to report on the effects of the sequestration. That report was issued today. It would make across-the-board cuts, mostly to discretionary programs; 10% to defense and 8.2% to non-defense. Additionally, military service salaries would not be cut, so the effective defense cut for other areas would be larger. Congress wants to avoid the problems associated with this and the possible tax cut expiration at the same time. The attempt to resolve the issue would likely be after the election.

There were a number of questions on the likelihood of resolution of the sequestration, particularly under different political situations. Carole indicated that there is ample impetus for almost all politicians involved to find some resolution, so it seems likely, though certainly not assured. Carole would be shocked if there is not some resolution.

#### **Quality of Life Report – Michael Cooke (outgoing QoL Subcommittee Chair)**

The after-hours shuttle was instituted to accommodate people attending the colloquium and Wine & Cheese. Dave Carlson started a test implementation of this service and Jeff Irvin is the present contact. There was never substantial ridership, so it was discontinued in August 2012. Discussion noted that ridership was low because it was summer and a shutdown.

Transportation off-site is another significant issue for village inhabitants. The Users Office found that 50% of village inhabitants have no automobile transportation. Zipcar was investigated, but there were several impediments to implementation (driver

restrictions, etc.). There are other services that are still possibilities.

Transportation for commuters to the Lab is an issue for those attempting to use public transportation, such as the Metra trains. Fermilab has a carpooling / vanpool program that could partially address these needs. Using Fermilab vehicles off-site to go to train stations has been a perennial question. In the past, there were various objections, but it may be possible to overcome them. Mike thinks it is worth raising the issue again.

Argonne puts together a career fair focused on matching postdocs to industrial jobs. There was a proposal to the Directorate to make this career fair joint with Fermilab. This could be more convenient because public access is much simpler at Fermilab than Argonne. The proposal had additional requests to transport Fermilab students to the Argonne fair and seminars/workshops to improve interviewing skills and resume building. There has been no response on this proposal, but 40 Fermilab users are planning on carpooling to Fermilab for this year's fair without Fermilab support. That would be a selling point for continuing to pursue the proposal. There may be some costs with putting on a fair - mostly time of people who would have to organize use of the atrium. There was discussion that this is something that should be pursued, especially as Fermilab and Argonne should be working more closely together as Chicago is managing both.

With a tight budget, keeping the swimming pool open may be an issue next year. The pool fees are actually high compared to some facilities outside the lab. Therefore, there is the possibility that reducing fees could greatly increase usage. Mike suggests a poll on fees.

### **GSA Report – Brian Tice**

Brian has been working with the education office on setting up an informational session on Sept. 26 to get people involved in science education / outreach. It will be a lunch meeting where they provide pizza to draw people in.

The GSA election will occur before the next UEC meeting, so we should anticipate new GSA representatives.

### **Election of UEC Chair**

Nikos Varelas was unanimously elected as the UEC Chair for 2012-13.

### **Discussion of subcommittees**

All UEC members should email Nikos with their preference of which committees to join and perhaps lead.

The issue of new, reinvigorated committees was also raised: local government and non-local outreach.

Next UEC meeting date: October 19

*Scribe: Bob Zwaska*