

2015 (fgg)

Users Executive Committee meeting minutes for January 30, 2014

The meeting, chaired by Bill Louis, began at 8:45. Bill Louis, Bill Lee, Jesus Orduna, Fernanda Garcia, Thomas Strauss, Sandra Biedron, André de Gouvêa, Fabio Happacher, Vivian O'Dell, Linda Spentzouris, Kim Pearce, Stacey Vassallo, Jon Bakken and FSPA representatives Mateus Carneiro and Rob Fine attended in person. Marcelle Soares-Santos and Lee Roberts, attended via phone. Also present at various times were Carole McGuire (via phone), Joseph Lykken, Timothy Meyer, Nigel Lockyer and Steve Geer. Also present for the DC trip discussion were Alex Drlica-Wagner, Daniel Bowring, Giordon Stark, Souvik Das, Pavanpoot Pandey, Michael Lubell (Director of Public Affairs, APS), Katie Yurkewicz, Herman White, and Nikos Varelas. Attending via phone were Ben Kallen from Lewis-Burke Associates, and Breese Quinn.

Overview

The meeting began with the chair report by Bill Louis. Steve Geer was in attendance to hear a report on a PFX review by Fernanda and Thomas. Everyone was in agreement that the PFX document is a good resource for people new to the laboratory. Fernanda reported on the review of the PFX, and discussed suggestions for the document in detail, with additional comments from Thomas. Steve Geer was receptive and invited Fernanda and Thomas to attend the next meeting about editing the PFX document. Sandra commented that it is important to make sure all Fermilab users are accounted for on user lists. Fermilab should get credit for all the people who come to the lab, or are associated with the lab.

Quality of Life Sub-Committee

Marcelle Soares-Santos reported for the Quality of Life sub-committee. They are working on multiple issues. They are co-organizing a panel discussion with FSPA about career prospects for students and postdocs to be held at New Perspectives. A survey is being prepared concerning the demand for office space and housing space at the lab. The sub-committee also continues to work on how to improve the welcome of foreign nationals to the lab. Stacey Vassallo was invited to update the UEC on this topic. In monitoring transportation issues, it seems all carpool spots are used, and it is desirable to have more of them. The shuttle service to and from the Geneva train station is being monitored. After hearing reports concerning the water quality in the village, they got a suggestion from the FSPA to install water filters, and possibly water dispensing machines. The village pipes are aging, the majority were replaced 10 years ago, but not all old pipes have been replaced. Faucet filters seem possible, but these need to be tested, and housing cannot provide labor for that. This issue should be taken up with lab management to see if there is a way to get the labor needed. Water machines are already on the lab's to-do list. Jon Bakken was invited to update the UEC on the status and options for the village internet.

Jon Bakken, responsible for networking at the lab, including the village, reported on the status of the internet in the village. Initially, and for twelve more years, the village had ADSL service over phone lines. That copper infrastructure is not good for internet service. Originally the plan was to get a commercial ISP to provide service to the village,

but it was not commercially viable, so it has remained in lab hands, which is likely better anyway. About one year ago it became clear the village internet needed to be improved. Known problems due to the copper infrastructure were fixed, the village was moved to VDSL2+ service, with speed typical of what people get in their houses (maximum 50 Mbps upload, and 100 Mbps download) which is not as good as the networking in Wilson Hall. Jon noted that consumer devices such as chromecast devices are illegal in the village and slow down service, and add to the problem. Village service is not as good as networking in the highrise. In order to significantly upgrade service in the village, the copper infrastructure needs to be replaced with fiber; the estimated cost is two million dollars. There is a known issue at 14 Potawatomi where there is no internet at night and on weekends. A new wireless access point is being installed. There are also reports of a slow network at 19 Neququa that is being investigated. While monitoring phone lines, two unstable lines were found (21 and 24 Sauk) and the copper is being replaced for those. There are some coverage issues in the houses, and this is being addressed by adding more wireless access. A coverage survey will be done in late March. Anyone having issues should open a ticket, and then Jon will be able to follow up. Without tickets, problems do not come to the attention of Jon's problem solvers. Jon estimates that the current situation could last for ten more years sustainably before the village will be forced to go to fiber.

Stacey Vassallo, HR services manager (including international services), reported to the UEC. The Directorate has approved a new position (not posted yet) bringing the number of personnel that will be dealing with visa and international issues up to three. The person filling the new position will be a manager of international issues. There is another new full time visa processing position, recently filled by Valerie Stanley. She starts March 16th. Kappy Sherman, who handles J and H visas, will continue as before. Now there will be enough personnel to handle the more unusual cases as well. In the future, Stacey will communicate with the UEC to get suggestions as to what is needed to best serve international users. Her office will do a few seminars a year to provide information on user visa issues. She could find out from people (such as Vivian) what CERN does to help users. Marcelle said taxes and health insurance are areas that people need help with, and that increased support in this area is desirable. It was noted that while Fermilab pays green card fees for employees, they assist users but don't pay the fees for them. Thomas said that email communication could provide more information to users about where in the visa process they are, and what still needs to be done. Stacey noted that university groups who send people (especially on Tier 4 visas) to Fermilab should notify HR so that there are not unnecessary snags.

Users Meeting Sub-Committee

Bill Lee reported on the status of the User's meeting. The public speaker will be Francis Halzen. Requests for NSF and DOE speakers have been sent out. He showed the UEC the almost finished poster, which everyone agreed looks fantastic. Small details like adding the QR code are all that remain to be done. The User's meeting web page is ready to be reviewed for proofreading and editing. The agenda still needs some work. Posters will be sent to all URA institutions as well as institutions that attended the meeting last

year, about 200 posters in all. The 'New Perspectives' posters will be sent out at the same time. Cynthia Sazama continues to have things well in hand.

Government Relations Sub-Committee

Thomas Strauss and Sandra Biedron gave the DC planning meeting report. Thomas went over the wiki (www.fermilab-uec.org/mediaWiki/index.php?title=SpecialUser) and asked that people contact him immediately if they do not have wiki access! He emphasized that the trip reports are important as they help the next group plan their trip. Sandra presented an overview of the structure for the upcoming afternoon DC Trip Planning Meeting. She noted that it is a good time to talk to Congress in the wake of the P5 report, the recent LBNF open meeting, the first funding call for the Accelerator R&D Stewardship program from the DOE Office of Science, as well as the coming report from the HEPAP Accelerator R&D sub-panel.

Sandra reported on the phone meeting with Congressman Foster, and shared his advice for meeting with Congressional staffers during the upcoming meeting. She also reported important points from her conversation with Jason Day, a staffer for Congressman Lipinski.

Other details concerning the trip were reported. The packet of materials needs to be shipped to the URA office in Washington by early March the 9th. Lee Roberts is developing congressional testimony as he did it last year. Comments are needed now on the two-page leave behind document for meetings with staffers. A block of 40 rooms for the hotel has been made under the name URA. Jesus has been analyzing the coverage of our connections to Congress, which is now about 60%. Breese is waiting for committee memberships and leaderships in Congress to be determined so that our planning can be adjusted accordingly. There will be about fifty people total going on the DC trip. The SLUO is sending eight people, the USLUA is sending 7 senior people, including Harvey Newman. There will also be younger people going (such as from the FSPA), and there are some travel funds available for this purpose.

Report from Washington

Micheal Lubell, the Director of Public Affairs for the APS spoke to the UEC. He noted the disjoint between Congress and the White House. There has been an ineffective Congress in past years. Now there is the largest Republican majority since before the great depression, presenting an opportunity to get things done. However, the Tea Party members could be a problem, because they don't agree with their own leadership. He predicted that the Senate will behave very much as it has for the last few years, with no bi-partisanship in either chamber. Congress passed the CROmnibus bill funding most of the government through FY2015. He explained in response to a question that Congress is regularly supposed to pass 12 separate appropriations bills. Some of them can be bundled together (a minibus bill), all of them can be bundled (an omnibus bill), or when 11 out of 12 are bundled with the other on Continuing Resolution it is called a CROmnibus bill. Both parties and the White House had signed off on spending levels, but at the last minute, big banks got language inserted that eliminated the Dodd Frank act, thus allowing banks to speculate. When that happened, ranking members of the

Appropriations sub-committee said the CRomnibus bill was dead. When Boehner got the 'rule' supported but not the bill, Congress went into recess. The President twisted Democratic arms to pass the bill, going against Nancy Pelosi. The President will get little support from either party after this, as that made some Democrats angry. The discretionary part of the budget has been shrinking, from 62% to 38%. R&D maintains some constant percentage of the discretionary budget, but this has been shrinking. There is constrained spending. The Populism movement supports the rights and power of the people in contrast to the privileged elite, and scientists can be perceived as part of the privileged elite. People are suffering economically and are very angry. While 93% of people think science is important, and 68% think it is OK for the government to spend money on science, few see how science affects their own lives, and many think scientists are self-serving. Science is second on a list of programs to be cut, and trust in the government is very low (15-20%). Fifty percent of people want to replace their own representatives. So, those representatives are asking themselves, 'What can I cut that the public cares about least?'. If the public doesn't know what particle physics is about, or cares, then the field is vulnerable to cuts. So, be careful in Washington, it may be hostile ground!

It is important how we state the messages that we want to get across. Make the messages have immediacy. For example, science grows the economy, which in turn provides the public with jobs. We generate new types of business, and then help those businesses create jobs. Tell our representatives that we save lives, not just that we improve healthcare. Rather than talking about fuel efficiency, let them know that we give people more miles to the gallon. When mentioning the internet, emphasize how this invention saves people time and money. People are interested in hearing that we are unraveling the mysteries of our universe, but not necessarily in hearing about finding the Higgs. People remember pictures better than numbers.

How do we justify the USA spending money on an international endeavor? If we had the resources, we would try to do these projects ourselves, but we don't, so we have to collaborate. However, note that while the worldwide web came out of CERN, commercialization took place in the USA because our nation had laid the groundwork for people to innovate. Groundwork was in the form of entrepreneurship, venture capital, and patent protection. Michael noted that scientists should push our technological advancements into the arena of small businesses better; this could be more efficiently done using social media. Federal agencies could help us do this. Give Congress something to think about, rather than simply going in asking for project money. While it may eventually be said that 70% of economic growth is due to science and technology, use it to support an idea, don't lead with it. Don't talk about 'spending' or 'investing' in science, ask for 'support' of science instead.

Carole McGuire phoned in with her report. She said that Congress will stick to the current funding cap. Even if the President's budget looks promising, cuts will be made across the board. During the DC visit, the Appropriations subcommittees that are most important to visit are the 'Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies' and 'Energy and Water' (chaired by Mike Simpson of Idaho) subcommittees. Due to

turnover, there will be a chance to educate people more about what we are doing. Carole urged us to make sure that our message matches the office that we are visiting. Representative Aaron Shock sits on the House Budget committee, and might be a good ally for science. The Appropriations committees are asking for member requests, and it may be a good idea to share our actual funding requests shortly before trip. We requested updated sub-committee member lists from Carole to get before we go to DC. Carole will retire at end of February. She has done a great job, and we will miss her. Leland Cogliani, who is joining Lewis-Burke, will be replacing Carole. Both Carole and Leland will attend the Feb 20th UEC meeting.

Report from the Directorate

Nigel updated the UEC on Fermilab status. From the PAC recommendations, to the Fermilab Institutional Review, to annual lab planning, the picture emerging is that the laboratory does great science. The LHC is the number one priority; Fermilab supports the LHC with the high field magnet program for the high luminosity upgrade, ATLAS, and CMS phase 1 and 2 upgrades. Fermilab will host the world-leading accelerator-based neutrino facility. NOvA, the flagship experiment, is operational. The short-baseline program is coming, with the three detectors, MicroBooNE, LAr1ND and ICARUS. The goal is to have those detectors in the ground, with the world's cheapest building in two years. Next are the cosmic programs, including the Dark Energy Survey (the telescope is working great, and the program is going well). The muon program activities include the g-2 magnet cool down taking place in the next two to three months, and the baseline review of the Mu2e project taking place next week. Superconducting magnet R&D and accelerator science are being emphasized. The IOTA ring project is an opportunity to test new ideas such as integrable optics using nonlinear focusing techniques. There is considerable research going on with SRF, including exploration of new materials, pushing cavity Qs and gradients, and scientific design of processing procedures. There is a huge range of opportunities for advancement there. Facilities goals are centered on the Science Laboratory Infrastructure (SLI) project, which includes extending the highrise horizontally. With luck, the CD-0 will be approved in February. The lab will use what has been learned in last decade about handling large amounts of data, and if possible, connect with light source people.

Tim Meyer and Nigel offered advice regarding the meetings with staffers on the DC trip. Passion and enthusiasm for our science make a good impression. Prepare for the meetings, understand the geography associated with the representative, and any possible commonalities you might have with the staffer. The people you meet may know everything or nothing about the science, so be prepared to deal with either. Have specific examples to add to the conversation, such as what you are working on, what your student is working on, and so forth, to make it more personal. Specific examples of how our technology has impacted the public can be cited where possible; for example, the superconducting magnet wire developed for the Tevatron is now used in MRI machines. Researchers are working on a new wire, which could be equally useful in other applications later. Congress needs to hear that we have tremendous support from the DOE.

Outreach Sub-Committee

The Outreach sub-committee gave their report. They are working on finding an appropriate speaker for the User's Meeting, and would like to have a slot at least thirty minutes long reserved for that speaker. They also would like to offer an outreach prize, perhaps with formal nominations. The prize could be advertised on the UEC page, and maybe by DPF. The prize could be advertised at this year's User's Meeting, and the first one given the following year.

The meeting was adjourned.