

## Users Executive Committee meeting minutes for March 20, 2015

The meeting, chaired by Bill Louis, began at 8:30. Bill Louis, Bill Lee, Jesus Orduna, Linda Spentzouris, Marcelle Soares-Santos, Sandra Biedron, Fernanda Garcia, Kim Pearce, Giorden Stark, Ho Ling Li, Carrie McGivern, Pengfei Ding, Daniel Bowring, Rob Fine, Alex Dricla-Wagner, Brian Gordon, and Herman White attended the meeting. Joseph Lykken, Nigel Lockyer, Timothy Meyer, and Roy Rubinstein were also present. Attending via phone were André de Gouvêa, Harvey Newman, Breese Quinn, Andrew Hard, and Andrea Albert.

### **Overview**

The meeting began with the chair report by Bill Louis. He informed the committee that the minutes are now going to all Fermilab employees. Lee Roberts sent the committee written testimony from the executive committee of the High Energy Physics User's organizations and the American Physical Society's Division of Particles and Fields to the U.S. Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee in support of the Department of Energy's Office of Science and the National Science Foundation. The draft of that testimony follows:

'We urge the Senate to provide \$788 M in funding for the Department of Energy Office of High-Energy physics (DOE-OHEP) within the DOE Office of Science. We request that the portfolio of funding for fundamental research be balanced. High-energy physics research is a key part of these programs and yields valuable benefits to our nation as described below. We are the Executive Committees of the Users Organization of the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab), located outside of Chicago, Illinois, the US LHC Users Association, the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory in Palo Alto, CA and the American Physical Society's Division of Particles and Fields. We represent the more than 3,500 scientists who perform research at Fermilab, our country's premier particle physics laboratory; at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN in Geneva, Switzerland; at the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, and on cosmic and astrophysical experiments located around the world. Also known as high-energy physics (HEP), our field is the study of the particles that are the building blocks of the universe, and how they come together to create the cosmos and influence its evolution. Much of the technology we have invented to facilitate these studies, such as the World Wide Web, has proved to be extremely beneficial to our society as a whole.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science and the National Science Foundation support high-energy physics research at U.S. national laboratories and universities. More than 190 U.S. institutions in 45 states host physicists, astrophysicists, engineers, and accelerator scientists who work in high-energy physics. More than half of these institutions are funded through the DOE Office of Science. We urge the committee to provide \$788 M for the DOE Office of High-Energy Physics for FY2016.'

### **Report from Washington**

Leland Cogliani of Lewis-Burke Associates reported on the news from Washington. He reported that the budget resolution was released, and that during the next week the Senate

and the House will be debating the details. There may be infighting within the Republican party; for example between those in favor of defense spending versus fiscal hawks. The Congressional staffers will be tired next week when the UEC trip to DC occurs. By section 301(a) of the Congressional budget act, a budget resolution includes budget totals (spending caps) for the (5) fiscal years covered by the resolution, so the 301(a) process is very important. The upcoming budget will be 1.1 trillion dollars, which is only a 3 billion dollar increase from last year, with two billion dollars of that going to defense. After the 301(a) spending caps are set, the Appropriations committee will decide how to distribute the available money. There are, at least, no major budget cuts to contend with, but we are in a flat budget environment. The House resolution specifically called out core basic research as an area that should be protected against budget cuts. The Senate was silent, except for supporting research on renewable energy, so it is hard to tell their priorities. This Wednesday is the deadline for House members to make requests to the Appropriations Committee. So now is a good time to talk about the importance of high energy physics, providing information that can help Appropriations defend their position on HEP. It is a good time to remind them to include statements about HEP in their drafted letters. People are saying the President's budget is dead on arrival, which is an overstatement. The DOE budget is not controversial, so Congress may want to meet the President's request on energy programs. It is still possible for some trade-offs to be made for the benefit of HEP. Leland says that he foresees some continuing resolutions, but expects some resolution as well. There is funding for homeland security only until mid-February. Last year, all riders were dropped on the DHS bill to get it passed until Oct 1<sup>st</sup> (last year). A repeat of that may be expected this year. The four strengths of the P5 report are: (1) a clear plan; (2) agreement within the community; (3) Press and media interest in the LHC restart, the discovery of the Higgs and the LBNE facility; and (4) HEP is a discovery science, which is favored by the House. They are interested in maintaining a highly skilled work force. He says not to be discouraged by tired staff members. Leland says to ask for support at \$788 M. Ask for this, and only this, not any other amount. Repetition and consistency are very important for getting a message across.

### **Government Relations Sub-Committee**

Sandra Biedron gave the Government Relations sub-committee report. She reported that there were 280 meetings booked with staffers, 91 meetings pending, and 22 negative responses. There have been an unusual number of 'wait and see' responses to attempts to set up meetings. Calling to set up meetings should be continued until the trip. Last year there were a total of 350 meetings, including the committee and executive meetings. Copies of 'Join the caucus letters' will be sent to everyone through email. There is a caucus that members of Congress (and staffers) may join to learn something about science and technology; people on the trip should check if the person they are meeting is on the caucus. If they are, let them know you appreciate their interest, if not, encourage them to join the caucus. Sandra went through the trip logistics in detail, including giving important links for information for the meetings. She encouraged everyone to complete their trip reports promptly after each meeting.

There was a lively discussion with questions, suggestions, and advice for the upcoming trip to DC. Breese reminded people that there are eight important sub-committees, and that we should make sure to visit staffers who work on them. There are two sub-committees each (the same two for the House as for the Senate) under the Appropriations Committee, which are 'Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies' and 'Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies'. There are two important Authorization sub-committees in the House, the 'Science, Space and Technology', and the 'Energy and Commerce' sub-committees. There are two important Authorization sub-committees in the Senate, the 'Energy and Natural Resources' and 'Commerce, Science and Transportation' sub-committees.

Jesus gave an update on the states that are covered so far. He also discussed Fermilab reimbursement rules, important links available to help people prepare for the trip, and emphasized the need to take notes on the meetings. Writing on the back of staffer business cards sometimes works well.

### **Report from the Directorate**

When the DC planning portion of the meeting was over, Timothy Meyer gave an update on the LDRD adjustment. The LDRD program had unintended consequences, namely an extra charge on the cost of village housing. It may be that Fermilab is the only lab not charging user funds in any way for contributions to LDRD resources. Since Fermilab has a unique policy, it was necessary to investigate how to adjust accounting practices for the LDRD program. A solution has been found, although it still needs DOE approval, which will likely be given. There will be a new clause in the user agreement stating users will not participate in LDRD funding. New written agreements will be prepared, so that this will not be an issue in 2016. The site office has been helping to execute this plan, and it is expected to work seamlessly.

News was given from the Campus and Facilities planning board. The Users Office will be getting a team leader to give thought to the customer service aspects of the Users Office. The location of the new Users Office is still undecided between the first floor vending area and an office area on second floor. Construction of the space is expected to start in October. It is recognized that the village needs updating. The Users center could be updated in several possible ways. For example, there could be better, more reliable food service, expanded dining space, updated kitchen and bathroom facilities, and better handicap access. Opinions are requested. The aim is to get the dining space upgraded by the end of year, continuing later with the other areas.

### **Users Meeting Sub-Committee**

Bill Lee reported on the status of preparations for the User's Meeting, which are on schedule. Registration is open. Last year the announcement went out in mid-April. He is waiting for information about funding for graduate students, which is why the announcement is not out yet this year. The names of people who have graduated recently are still needed, and Bill is waiting for spokespeople to provide suggestions for speakers for the agenda as well.

### **Outreach sub-committee**

André reported that the Outreach committee has lined up a speaker for the outreach slot at the User's Meeting; the speaker will be Don Lincoln.

### **Special report on village housing**

Dr. Roy Rubinstein joined the meeting to discuss how housing assignments in the village are done. This is a difficult process since there are far more requests than there are houses. Twice a year housing in village is allocated, once for the summer months, and once for the rest of the year. When the demand is too high, the directorate gets a letter from the housing office specifying the number of requests and the available space. Houses can be for either families or groups of bachelors. Some of the allocation of houses and dorms is assigned to experimental groups at the laboratory. This allocation is discussed with the UEC chair. Running experiments are strongly favored, and knowledge of Fermilab's current and future projects is used to assess the housing needs by experiment (or research effort). The decision goes to the housing office, which then notifies spokespeople about how much housing they have been allocated. Spokespeople then decide who in their collaboration receives the allocated housing. The DOE requires that the village be kept full, or as close to full as possible, before money can go to off-site housing. DOE also requires that the charges are consistent with other housing charges in the area, and the laboratory must break-even with the cost of maintaining the housing. So, allocations need to be for reasonably long time periods, or it would be difficult to keep village housing fully occupied. People are generally notified regarding housing availability in April.

### **Fermilab Student and Postdoc Association**

Rob Fine reported for the FSPA. Since the last report, activities of the FSPA have included the Chinese New Year celebration organized in conjunction with the Chinese Student Association; the Holi celebration organized with the Indian Student Association, planning for the DC trip, and planning for the New Perspectives and the User's Meeting poster session. New Perspectives and the User's Meeting will include a two-hour panel discussion, and about twelve hours of scheduled talks. There is an open invitation to request giving a talk, mostly taken up by local students and postdoctoral associates. It is usually possible to accommodate all requests to present a poster; last year the space was exactly filled. The FSPA is also working to expand the number of parking spots for car pools. Pengfei is heading the village water quality investigation.

The meeting was adjourned.