

Users Executive Committee meeting minutes for May 29, 2015

The meeting, chaired by Bill Louis, began at 8:45. Bill Louis, Bill Lee, Sandra Biedron, Jesus Orduna, Thomas Strauss, Linda Spentzouris, Marcelle Soares-Santos, Mateus Carneiro, Rob Fine, Alex Drlica-Wagner, Kim Pearce, and Lee Roberts attended the meeting. Timothy Meyer, Joseph Lykken, and Nigel Lockyer were present representing the Directorate. André de Gouvêa attended by phone. Griselda Lopez was present to give a report on the status of the User's Office business.

Overview

The meeting began with the chair report by Bill Louis. He provided a recap of issues the UEC has been working on and gave the current status. An issue that has recently come to the attention of the UEC is the 128 megabyte size limit for Fermilab emails for non-employee users. This is not enough storage capacity, and it is desirable to increase it. Discussion continued from the last meeting on the issue of returning international users not being allowed on site after hours because their Fermilab IDs expire concurrently with their VISAs. First time users have fewer problems, because their new housing access information is available to the guards. Returning users are unknown to the guards. It is possible to request that the guard call the Communications office, where a user's status as an on-site resident may be known, and access approved. Solving this site access problem for returning international users may be a matter of streamlining communications.

Another site gate item was noted. The east gate does not open in the morning until 5:57 am, so that on-site residents (including the Director) who need to catch an early flight must use the less convenient gate to exit. There is no simple way to get the gate open earlier, and this is likely to remain a site parameter for the foreseeable future. The last UEC meeting for this term is scheduled for June 12th.

Users Meeting Sub-Committee

Bill Lee reviewed the completed task list of preparations for the 48th User's Meeting. All the announcements are out, but one final reminder to spokespersons will be sent out in hopes of getting more people registered for the meeting. There are 245 people registered for the meeting so far. An additional 50 speakers will attend who do not register. The website for the User's Meeting has contact information for daycare arrangements at the bottom of the page (http://www.fnal.gov/orgs/fermilab_users_org/users_mtg/2015/). Judges have been obtained for the New Perspectives poster session. Marcelle has processed the URA visiting scholar applications for graduate student and postdoctoral researcher travel support to attend the User's Meeting. A total of 11 graduate students and 1 postdoc have been awarded travel support. The list of session chairs will be determined later today. The VIPs need reminding that they have reserved parking so that they do not have to walk a long way when they are coming to give their talks. Bill Lee plans to ask Paul Czarapata to issue an email invitation to engineers to attend the User's Meeting. This may help encourage more engineers to attend.

Report from Washington

Leland Cogliani of Lewis-Burke Associates reported on the news from Washington. A lot has happened since the last UEC meeting with the appropriations process; there is

now more clarity on funding levels. The Energy and Water Development fiscal year 2016 Appropriations Bill has been approved at 35.4B by both the House and the Senate. The House has requested 776M for HEP, a 10M dollar increase from the last fiscal year. The HEP efforts have all been funded at the requested level. The LBNE effort has been allocated 22M, as it was the previous year. The Accelerator Stewardship program request was reduced to 5M. The House passed the 'America Competes' reauthorization, which includes (among others) some funding for NSF, NIST, NASA and DOE. The ARPA-E renewable energy and biologics programs funding levels were cut in the recent allocation. The Senate has requested 788M for HEP, a 22M dollar increase from the last fiscal year. The LBNE request was increased to 30M, with 10M reserved for the South Dakota rock handling system. The Senate has not passed the 'America Competes' reauthorization.

The Appropriations committees for Commerce Justice, Science have recommended allocations for NSF with only small increases from the previous fiscal year, much less than the President's request. The geological and social science portions of the NSF budget would be significantly cut. The recommended allocation is 370M total for the four physics related programs of Math and Physical Sciences, Engineering, Computer Information Science and Engineering, and Cyberinfrastructure. There is a significant difference in the recommended level of support for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor project (ITER) between branches of Congress. The House would increase support by 300M per year to keep up with the schedule, and the Senate recommends large cuts signifying withdrawal from the project. There is concern about poor management of the project, and very large increases in cost over what was initially projected. The required funds would impact progress in other areas of science. However, withdrawing from an international project is a sensitive matter that could impact other international projects of interest to the USA.

The President has threatened to veto the budget approved by Congress unless there is some relief offered on the cuts to top-level items of the budget, such as defense. However, HEP is expected to obtain the requested budget allocation. The P5 report and the trip to DC to show unified support of the P5 priorities have played a positive role in maintaining needed HEP funding.

Government Relations Sub-Committee

Sandra Biedron gave the Government Relations sub-committee report. The Government Relations sub-committee will provide a few charts describing the DC trip results for Bill Louis to present at the User's meeting. People at the Users meeting will be encouraged to contact their representative's home offices in August to stress the points of the message given during the DC trip. The people who went on the trip to DC will be asked to encourage colleagues who live in the districts of the offices they visited to follow up in this way as well. Approximately 45 people went on the trip to DC, including members of the UEC, USLUA, FSPA, and SLUO. One of the positive indicators since the trip is that in the last few weeks representative Doris Matsui from Sacramento is working with Andrea Albert to arrange a SLAC visit. Also, on a recent visit to CSU, Eric Colby

mentioned that the letter with more than 2000 signatures had a big impact. The effort of our community together with the P5 report has made a difference in support for HEP funding.

Report from User's Office

Griselda Lopez presented the User's Office survey that will become available in conjunction with the User's Annual Meeting. The purpose of the survey is to inform the User's office about what services are important to users, and where efforts to evolve services should be concentrated. The survey will be submitted electronically only. An email message to encourage submission of the survey will be sent out soon, then again the day before users arrive, and then again a business day or two later. There will be an article in *Fermilab Today* to introduce the new User's Office staff that will also include a link to the survey. It was recommended that Bill Louis mention the survey when he addresses the users at the meeting. Send any feedback on the content of the survey to Griselda.

Report from the Directorate

Tim Meyer checked in with the UEC to discuss items of potential concern to users. He asked if the committee thought that the formats for the Users Meeting and the UEC meetings are appropriate. While the committee had no recommendations for changes to the format of the Users Meeting, Sandra brought up the point that another preparation meeting for the DC trip with funds to fly in a few key people from other users groups (such as Harvey and Andrea) would be very beneficial. It was generally agreed that this would be a good move. The question of whether additional UEC meetings would be beneficial was also raised. These additions could be either continued meetings through the summer, or one more meeting around the time of the Users Meeting. This idea was discussed again later, and is still on the table for consensus. Another Users Meeting item raised was the possibility of having vendors displays or tables there. Currently the space is not configured for this, but it may be desirable to make the needed adjustments. Inclusion of vendors at the Users Meeting would have to be discussed further to reach agreement on whether to pursue this objective.

An update was given on efforts to procure additional resources for user summer housing. IMSA declined to make their dormitories available to Fermilab during the summer; they use that time for maintenance. The Directorate is looking for a systematic approach to finding more summer housing nearby. It may be possible to do a routine check with nearby universities or similar institutions to find out if there is any housing available to Fermilab. Continued funding support of the Fermilab village must be justified, so the Director's Office is working on a document to support our need for the village. Marcelle volunteered to provide a survey to users on this issue. It was recommended that the Quality of Life sub-committee coordinate with Griselda in the Users office regarding acquiring this additional documentation. Tim emphasized that Griselda's role is evolving, and that she can become the standard point of reference for us. She may take over some of Roy's work on housing.

The 128 MB storage limit for FNAL email and the after-hours site access problem for returning international users were brought to the table. Tim informed us that site access is currently under scrutiny from the DOE. That agency wants to insure that security is adequate. So, the lab must review the site access policy, and will include the concerns of the UEC in the evaluation.

Nigel informed us that in the campaign to make FNAL a top international center for science, it is important to stop using the term 'foreign' as in 'Foreign National'. Marcelle pointed out that this is a legal term with a very specific meaning, and has the advantage of being absolutely clear in its meaning to international users. However, there are many places where the designation 'foreign' may be easily replaced with a more appropriate one.

There are several plans at differing funding levels for a Users Center upgrade. There is a 10M plan, 100M plan, and so forth. The Directorate is looking at a series of phased upgrades, starting with installing windows in Chez Leon. It is still unknown when the kitchen will be upgraded. Questions remain as to how best improve the bar, décor, and dining areas. Another step is to look at the business model for Chez Leon. It would be good to increase patronage of the Users Center by Wilson Hall. A UEC member said that it would be great to have a small convenience store in the village that includes some basic pharmaceutical items.

Quality of life report

Marcelle summarized the activities of the Quality of Life sub-committee, which has engaged with the lab to welcome international visitors. Contact with the VISA office was established, and this should be followed up on in the fall. The internet in the village is improving, but is still an issue. Rob reported that the internet has slowed down this week. This is perhaps due to the increasing summer population. The number of carpool parking spots has doubled, definitely improving the situation prior to the summer rush. There is more trouble finding an empty spot again now that summer is here. PACE reported the general monthly shuttle ridership is rising, going from 126 to 442 in the 1st monitored trimester. However, there are no specific FNAL ridership numbers, which are still typically low. The sub-committee helped FSPA organize the New Perspectives panel discussion of career prospects for students and postdocs. The sub-committee is also preparing a survey on the user demand for housing and office space. URA funds (10K) were obtained to get students and postdocs to the Users Meeting. It was recommended that the announcement be made earlier next year, even if the exact level of funding is not available that early. This would give the Users Office more time to arrange travel. Investigation of how to improve the water quality in the village has been initiated, and should be continued in the fall.

Outreach report

André reported on the activities of the Outreach sub-committee. Although various possible activities were discussed, there was little action from the sub-committee and the main outcome was the addition of an outreach talk at the Users Meeting. There are no available funds, or a specific agenda, making it difficult for this group to make major

contributions. This has been true in past years as well. André suggested disbanding the Outreach sub-committee. He said it would be more productive to have that manpower employed in planning and executing outreach support for the DC trip. In other words, have an Outreach deputy for the DC trip who, among other things, would provide information about what outreach material should go into the DC packets. There could be a leader for the DC trip supported by an outreach deputy, and maybe other deputies. Disbanding the Outreach subcommittee could add more manpower to the other UEC subcommittees. The UEC will vote on whether to disband the Outreach sub-committee at the next UEC meeting.

The Outreach sub-committee discussion expanded into a discussion of further possible changes to the structure of the UEC. It was suggested that two more UEC members be added to the total membership, because there is so much work for the committee to do. One member could be added to each of the committee rotations (half the committee turn over each year). The extra manpower would help. Expansion of the membership would cost money, since non-local members are often transported to Fermilab for the meetings. Expanded membership would increase the cost of maintaining the UEC, and that support would ultimately come from FRA. Also, this would entail a change to the UEC constitution, which now states that there are 12 members. It is not clear from the current wording of the constitution exactly who would be the proper body to vote on the changes. Whatever the composition of the voting body, a 2/3 majority of the votes cast must be in favor to effect a proposed change. If the UEC decides to change the constitution, perhaps the wording of the constitution might be clarified at that time as well.

Assuming more annual funds are made available to support the UEC, there are choices to be made as to how best to employ those funds. They could be used to increase UEC membership, or to increase the number of meetings held annually, or to host an extra meeting to prepare for the DC trip that includes bringing non-local expert DC participants to Fermilab, or else some combination of these. Kim supplied some of the costs. The price per meeting now with twelve members is \$100 for catering and between \$2000 and \$3000 for travel, depending on whether two or three people are brought in for the meeting. It costs between \$8000 and \$10,000 per year to bring the non-local members to all of the meetings. Two more non-local members would raise the cost per month by about \$2000 (that is, \$1000 each for travel). So, with no extra meetings, it would cost \$20K for two extra potentially non-local members. Alternatively, with no extra members, each extra meeting would cost between \$2000 and \$3000. Sandra will draft different proposals of how best to use extra funds for the UEC to vote on. This will be distributed before the next meeting.

Lee Roberts report

It is time for elections for the new UEC members. There are six vacancies, and it is desirable to have at least 12 serious candidates on the ballot. The target date for opening the election is sometime in July. There is a requirement that any member of the user community that gets 10 or more signatures on a nomination form must go on the ballot. A few candidates are produced in this way. However, usually there are not enough candidates without suggestions from the UEC. The bulk of the slate has come from the

UEC in the past. Since the committee has more than 10 people, we are able to get the needed additional candidates on the ballot and to make sure that it is a diverse pool of people. It is time to start talking to people and to find out who is willing to run. We also need to inform the users that nominations are open. It should be announced at the Users Meeting, where the nomination forms should be available. The UEC members should look for someone for the chair position who is not a Fermilab employee. It is customary for the chair to be external to the lab since the UEC represents the users. The UEC members expressed the desire to have a running electronic list of proposed candidates, so that they could work together to create a diverse list of candidates.

Fermilab Student and Postdoc Association report

Rob Fine reported for the FSPA. There are now 76 people signed up for New Perspectives. This includes 11 undergraduates, 11 postdocs, 2 professors, 1 'other', and 51 graduate students. There are 28 requests for poster presentations, and 39 requests to give a talk. This year there is only space for 24 posters (compared to space for 56 last year) because of work being done in the atrium. So, a little more space for posters is needed. The schedule accommodates 40 talks, so 'welcome' and 'closing' talks will probably be included. The Career panel participants and format has been finalized. The panel event, focusing on career opportunities for physics graduates outside of academia and the national labs, is scheduled from 3:30 to 5:30 pm on Tuesday June 9th. Today is the deadline to register with a request for a presentation. Registration for people who are not requesting a presentation will remain open until the conference begins.

There has been substantial progress on the 'Fermilab Guide to Life'. There have been several iterations between NALWO and the FSPA, and now a final check for potential revision is to be done once more by each group. The Users Office could include the link when they send information to new users, and could help with the distribution of the document. FSPA will make the .pdf available on their web page. The Housing Office will distribute it if someone else pays for printing. As a consequence of revising the 'Fermilab Guide to Life', there is motivation to provide more information about driving in Illinois. Information is confusing or limited about the rules, guidelines and policies. One issue is that an international driver's license is only valid for three months, but it takes at least six months to get an Illinois driver's license. It is not clear how to handle this awkward situation, and many visitors are not aware of this problem in a timely way.

Jack Hawkins and UEC members have suggested that it would be good to have more continuity of FSPA members; this is being considered by the FSPA and will be discussed after the New Perspectives meeting. Now there are five officers that turn over every year; 3 graduate students and 2 postdocs. There is currently no overlap in terms and no constitution. It is typically not easy to find people who would like to serve in the organization, and a two-year term is too long for many students. Kim offered to help FSPA by creating an auto-enrollment email list for new students and postdocs. Rob said this is an attractive offer; but if taken, there would need to be two email lists, the automatic list, and the present list that is voluntarily joined.

The meeting was adjourned.

