



Users Executive Committee meeting minutes for January 19, 2018

The meeting began at 8:00 am. Attendees were:

UEC: Sowjanya Gollapinni (Chair), Jiyeon Han, Leo Aliaga-Soplin, Gavin Davies, Tammy Walton, Fernanda Psihas, Joseph Zennamo, Carrie McGivern, Sarah Demers (remote), Brian Nord, Frank Chlebana and Thomas Strauss

Directorate: Nigel Lockyer

Washington: Ben Kallen, Lewis-Burke Associates

FSPA: Midhat Farooq, Aleena Rafique, Xuan Chen, Karl Warburton

Users' Office: Kim Pearce

Global Services: Griselda Lopez

Guests: Stacey Vassallo, Julita Marshall

Indico Agenda Page: <https://indico.fnal.gov/event/16014/>

Chair's Report

Sowjanya Gollapinni reported. Sarah Demers is appointed the secretary for the UEC. A UEC brochure is currently being designed by the communications office. As of Fiscal year 2017, UEC has 6108 users both offsite and onsite. UEC will continue to collect demographics information of the users and will make it available to the broader community. The Users office will start announcing the Director's All Hands meetings to the users list as well in the future. Streaming of the last meeting is available at: <http://vms.fnal.gov/w1/Lectures/AllHands/171219AllHandsFNAL/index.html>.

Among the special items on the agenda, Stacey Vassallo, HR manager at Fermilab was invited to give a talk on how their office supports users and what current policies are applicable to users. Another item on the agenda was a report from the UEC Constitution task force (appointed by the chair) to understand if the current constitution needs amendment and to formalize certain procedures for the UEC. The Task Force consists of Sarah Demers (leader), Frank Chlebana, Thomas Strauss and Jiyeon Han. A UEC Meet & Greet event which happened on the evening of Jan. 19th after the UEC meeting went very well and received good user attendance and interaction. A lot of useful feedback was received in the process which the UEC will work to follow up in the coming weeks.

Report from the Directorate

Nigel Lockyer reported. The report mainly focused on Secretary Perry's visit which went very well according to Nigel. A live-stream of Rick Perry's presentation can be found at: <http://vms.fnal.gov/asset/detail?recid=1952640>. Nigel mentioned that on the same day

Perry visited Fermilab, there was a congressional statement by the Deputy Secretary of Energy who emphasized Exascale computing and DUNE as two top priorities. This is good news to the community (look under “Other Congressional Updates” under “Report from Washington” below for more details). There was also emphasis on “technology transfer”, for example the connection of DUNE technology to society’s applications and needed partnerships. Nigel also mentioned that Perry was impressed by the g-2 progress and how the project has stayed on schedule. One of the UEC members expressed concern that Rick Perry didn’t mention CMS in his speech. Nigel answered that Perry is fully aware of lab’s involvement and leadership in that direction. He has complimented the community publicly on the Higgs discovery and was informed that we have a Remote Operations Center (ROC-EAST) here for CMS. Another question was raised about the change in policies for foreign nationals. Nigel answered that the lab is continuously working to address this and may have found a way to address this higher up in the congress, but it is not clear how much time it will take to go through the chain. Nigel then commented that DOE is going through an optimization exercise to be prepared for budgetary decisions and understand where research and operations budgets can be squeezed. One of the UEC members asked how are lab operations impacted if there will be a government shutdown. Nigel noted that according to the lab contract, lab has about one month of reserved funding to support lab functioning including operations, but after one month, the operations will be stopped and the lab will function in a “shutdown and safe” mode which will probably require around 200 to 250 core people to keep the lab hibernating in a safe shutdown mode.

Report from Washington

Ben Kallen (Lewis-Burke Associates) reported.

FY 2018 Appropriations:

- On January 22, the Senate voted to advance a Continuing Resolution (CR) to end the three-day federal government shutdown and extend funding for government programs at Fiscal Year 2017 levels through February 8. The stalemate that led to the shutdown ended after Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) gave Democrats assurances that the Senate will vote on a standalone immigration bill should no comprehensive budget and immigration deal emerge by February 8. Despite the short-term nature of this agreement, it is still hoped that negotiators will agree to a final budget deal enabling a FY 2018 omnibus appropriations bill that increases federal funding for both defense and non-defense research and higher education activities. There was a question on whether what is happening will impact the DC trip being planned in March by the UEC and Ben suggested that it probably will not impact since the focus of the UEC DC trip is FY2019 appropriations.
- The Senate voted 81-18 to end the filibuster of H.R. 195, paving the way for resumption of normal government operations after a final Senate vote, House passage, and Presidential signature. The CR extension is designed to give Congressional leaders additional time to negotiate a bipartisan immigration and budget agreement to protect Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients and lift funding caps on defense and non-defense discretionary spending

to enable completion of final FY 2018 appropriations. The CR was overwhelmingly supported in the Senate with 2 Republicans and 16 Democrats opposing the motion to invoke cloture. Additional provisions from the previous CR that funded the government through January 19 would remain in effect.

- Congressional leaders are still negotiating a broader budget deal, the general contours of which currently include a \$200-\$250 billion increase to discretionary spending over two years. Democrats and Republicans are not yet in agreement over how that increase will be divided between defense and non-defense programs.

Administration updates:

- Following on a Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) released by the Office of Science, HEP released a Request for Information (RFI) soliciting community input on topical areas of overlap between quantum information science (QIS) and particle physics.
 - As articulated by the recently released DCL, QIS is broadly applicable across most scientific disciplines addressed by the Office of Science. For HEP in particular, QIS has the potential to significantly advance the scientific priorities identified by the P5 strategic plan.
 - Specific QIS focus areas for HEP include fundamental QIS, quantum computing, quantum sensors and networks, and new methods of experimentation that exploit quantum entanglement. As such, the RFI encourages responses that address specific questions related to: fundamental science; devices, tools, approaches, and techniques; and organization and assessment considerations.
 - The full RFI is available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2017-27877>

Other Congressional Updates:

- On January 9, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce held a hearing to explore modernization of DOE. Witnesses included: Dan Brouillette, Deputy Secretary of Energy; Paul Dabbar, Under Secretary of Science; Mark Menendez, Under Secretary of Energy; and Frank Klotz, Under Secretary for Nuclear Security and Administrator for the National Nuclear Security Administration.
 - Brouillette used his opening remarks to note that LBNF/DUNE is one of his two top priorities (the other being the Exascale Initiative). In his written testimony, he states that “The Long Baseline Neutrino Facility and the Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment (LBNF/DUNE) is another important SC priority, this one for the Office of High Energy Physics (HEP). This project is headquartered at Fermilab. Once completed, this international center for the study of neutrinos will pair the world's highest-intensity neutrino beam at Fermilab, with the infrastructure necessary to support massive, cryogenic far detectors installed deep underground at the Sanford Underground Research Facility in South Dakota, 800 miles to the west. Completion of LBNF/DUNE will cement U.S. preeminence in neutrino science, one of the frontiers of high-energy physics.”

- It is unlikely that a comprehensive DOE reauthorization bill will emerge as a result of this hearing. Rather, smaller pieces of legislation targeted toward addressing specific needs, such as reforming reporting requirements, remain a possibility.

Users Meeting Sub-Committee

Tammy Walton reported. Both directorate and the UEC agreed to invite Prof. Jim Gates as the keynote speaker at the Annual Users meeting in June. An invitation is being sent out. The budget for the Users meeting is being finalized, both from FRA and vendor exhibition side which will decide if we can have a 2-day or 1.5-day meeting. A limited number of travel grants will be awarded to early career members planning to attend the meeting. An announcement seeking nominations for the URA thesis award was sent out to the experiments spokespeople. The optimal location for the poster session and number of posters was discussed. The conference office proposed a program card and Users' Meeting App, instead of a program booklet for the meeting. This was agreed to be a good idea. A suggestion was made to offer science communication training to users during the Users meeting venue. A follow up survey will be done (e.g. based on past events) to understand general interest in the community for this. There was another suggestion for UEC to work with the FNAL division heads and experiments spokespeople to encourage early career members to give the talks and also to balance the employee and user aspect when selecting speakers. The sub-committee will include these aspects when they send announcements soliciting talks at the meeting.

Government Relations Sub-Committee

Joseph Zennamo reported. After agreement from other users' groups, March 2018 DC trip dates are finalized to be March 7 – 9, 2018. Funding for the trip has been approved and increased from last year which will allow 35 trip attendees this year resulting in increased reach both on the house and senate side. The 2018 DC trip wiki page is being updated in preparation for the DC trip. Justin Vasel (Indiana University) has revamped the connections process with a new look and easy to use framework. UEC thanks Justin for his contribution. The initial pass of the new materials for the DC trip is complete and UEC was asked to provide feedback on them. A 2.5-hour DC trip planning meeting was held on the afternoon of Jan. 19th after the UEC meeting where more trip planning details were discussed.

Outreach and Education Sub-Committee

Brian Nord reported (verbally). The sub-committee is busy in designing science communication training and related materials for the DC trip attendees. A detailed report was presented at the afternoon DC trip planning meeting. Among the upcoming events, a brown bag lunch on Feb. 27th (12 to 1 pm CT, One West) is being organized by the Education Office to give an overview of various public outreach and education opportunities available for users and employees to get involved in. Everyone is welcome to join.

Quality of Life Sub-Committee

Frank Chlebana reported. Sarah Demers has agreed to serve as the deputy for the sub-committee. FSPA members, Aleena Rafique and Tom Carroll were also welcomed to the group. The sub-committee has started meeting regularly and will continue to do so for efficient planning and review of progress on action items. The UEC feedback form flyers were posted around common user areas in the lab for broader reach. Frank met with Deb Sebastian, who coordinates Employee Advisory Group (EAG) meetings, to understand how they handle feedback. The EAG website now includes a link to the UEC feedback form. There was a suggestion to do more survey on how other groups collect feedback to define a model that will allow anonymous submission, transparency in the process and efficient/prompt handling of feedback. Another suggestion was to categorize the feedback received and to have the chair respond, as the spokesperson of the UEC, to enquiries. There was a question received through the feedback form about parking for long term rentals which is being addressed.

UEC Constitution Task Force

Sarah Demers reported. The task force (TF) was formed on December 22nd, 2017. The charge of the TF included: Does the UEC Constitution need a refresh? Define a procedure for UEC chair election; Define a procedure for forming new sub-committees in the UEC; Clarify Chair/Secretary roles in the UEC; Can UEC benefit from formalizing the procedure for chair/deputy-chair roles for sub-committees? The TF met twice to discuss the charge and presented their preliminary thoughts on charge questions. The TF proposed a procedure for the UEC chair election process to make the entire process more fair, transparent, thus allowing people to make informed decisions. A question was raised whether the election process should be added to the UEC constitution or separate procedures should be written up as bylaws. The TF thought that the Chair role and authority is clearly stated in the Constitution and no major changes are needed except for some minor additions to further clarify the role. The TF felt that the Secretary role is well defined and suggested an addition that the Secretary shall be the acting-chair when the chair becomes unavailable for any reason. In terms of formalizing the roles of sub-committee chair and deputy-chair, the TF identified a few places where additional structure might help but no major changes proposed. For the process of forming a new sub-committee, initial recommendation from the TF suggested the new sub-committee be created requiring approval by 2/3 of the UEC through the process of anonymous vote. The TF also identified other issues to consider in the Constitution such as defining the role of the Webmaster, clarifying the definition of "user" etc. The TF is seeking feedback from the UEC members and will make a more formal recommendation soon on which UEC can then vote.

Fermilab Student and Postdoc Association (FSPA)

Xuan Chen reported. FSPA has distributed themselves across the various UEC sub-committees to contribute more efficiently. Contact points were also identified for Global Services meetings and the Campus and Facility Planning Board. Other initiatives from

FSPA included more broadly advertising FSPA in the user community and organizing more Career/Professional development events. One of the FSPA upcoming events is the Chinese New Year Party that will happen on Friday, Feb. 23 at 6 pm in Kuhn Barn. Many fun activities are planned for the event.

Special topic: HR policies and Users

Stacey Vasallo gave a brief presentation and led the discussion. Stacey's talk focused on how the Human Resources (HR) office supports users at Fermilab. More broadly, the workforce services at the lab includes three major branches, Users Office, Visa Office and HR Partners. On the Users Office side, information is communicated using various methods and Stacey highlighted one of the global services webpage that includes useful information to users (<http://get-connected.fnal.gov/usefulinformation/>). Stacey introduced her team (herself, Jeff Artel, Deanne Randich, and Julita Marshall), their focus areas and various activities they perform. Stacey also made a welcoming note that Kim Pearce in the Users Office is being trained as the HR partner liaison for all Users and Visitors at Fermilab. Stacey mentioned that the work force definition encompasses everyone now, not just employees. This was a recent change and she hopes this will help make users aware of this change.

A suggestion was made to Stacey to make the language more inclusive (e.g. employee assistance program be named as community assistance program, which was also brought up at previous UEC meetings) so it is clear to users who to go to seek support. Stacey pointed that Griselda Lopez is following up on making that change. Another question was raised as to what methods are used to advertise the available resources to users? Stacey suggested that they try to get the word out through various methods from the three offices but input from UEC on this front will be very welcome. One of the FSPA members asked how user support is provided e.g. in case of sexual harassment of a user, and if it is anonymous. Stacey suggested that there is a procedure defined for this and in the case of users, the HR office at the lab will work with the HR office at the user's institution to address the concerns and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken to the extent of lab's purview (e.g. denying access to the lab). Stacey and her team welcomed input from UEC on how to make policies more aware to users and in reviewing user related documents. Soon after the meeting, a link to the HR Partner page was added on the Global Services web page per a suggestion from one of the UEC members.

Minutes drafted and signed by **Sowjanya Gollapinni** and **Sarah Demers**.

Regular reminders & useful links:

Housing options can be found at:

<https://fermipoint.fnal.gov/service/TravelSystem/SitePages/Lodging%20Near%20Fermilab.aspx>

Frontier Pub webpage:

<https://www.facebook.com/thefrontierpub/>

Frontier Pub new menu:

https://fermipoint.fnal.gov/organization/os/FESS/web_docs/Shared%20Documents/FrontierPubMenu.pdf

Rental car information:

<https://get-connected.fnal.gov/users/services/>

UEC user feedback form:

https://orgs.fnal.gov/fermilab_users_org/Feedback.html

Upcoming Events:

- FSPA organized “Chinese New Year” Party, Feb. 23rd, Friday, Kuhn Barn, 6 pm CT
- Education Office organized “Brown Bag Lunch” on learning various outreach opportunities at the lab, Tuesday, Feb. 27th, 12 to 1 pm CT, One West