

Minutes of the 18 Jan 2008 UEC Meeting

UEC Attending:

Barberis
Hooper
Jones
Kopp
Kotwal
Landsberg
Pitts
Polly
Sawyer
Slaughter
Soderberg
Tollefson
Wittich

GSA Attending:

Benitez
Dorland
Forrest
Pianori
Strauss

Meeting Summary

Question and answer sessions were held with Director Oddone, Mel Shochet, Young-Kee Kim, and Amanda Peterson.

Meeting with Director Oddone

(PO) Several UEC members have just returned from a meeting at SLAC prepare for the March DC trip. What was the mood at SLAC?

(UEC) Not good. They felt these budget cuts were really targeted at HEP, although everybody agrees that nobody really knows.

(PO) The next step we will hear about is the president's budget for 2009. It is expected to be quite good. We will have to see where this budget comes in and plan accordingly.

The next step is then a possible supplemental appropriations bill. It is hard for the president's administration to request such an addition given the insistence at sticking to the overall budget cap for discretionary spending. However, there is a chance that Congress could request a supplement to restore some programs. For now, people working on ILC or NOVA will have to

be absorbed into other programs, which should not be a problem as we are already running lean in many areas. However, we also need to have the funding to keep them, thus the furloughs. The furloughs can be difficult in the sense that there are strict federal labor rules. For instance, exempt employees have to take the furlough in week increments, but if we have an expert on furlough that has to be called in, then they have to be paid for the entire week. The layoffs do not really help much in the current fiscal year. There is the time it takes, the severance pay, and we are already late into the fiscal year.

After the president's budget we will have to see if we can reprogram funding to take NOVA to CD-3. Since the wording from Congress was very clear, the request to reprogram has to go back through the committees. There is a chance they will be sympathetic towards reprogramming.

(UEC) Have you had any feedback from Congress that the letters and efforts from the HEP community are being heard?

(PO) Not so much from HEP specifically, but there have been a number of efforts from industry leaders, politicians, and Chicago business leaders, so I think the message has been heard in one way or another. There has been a lot of support expressed from various local communities (surrounding towns, government leaders, leaders of various Chicago businesses, etc...) in the aftermath of the budget cuts. Hopefully, the Illinois delegates realize what a big part of the Chicago/Illinois technical industry FNAL and ANL form.

(PO) Have you heard from your local visits? Have there been many? Because there is a hierarchy. The Congress receives a million emails, but a personal visit, especially from a university president or somebody in the board of trustees of a university makes a much larger impact.

(UEC) We have been working with APS but the exact numbers for how many local visits were conducted is yet to be compiled.

(PO) At this first P5 meeting we will talk about the first plan, which is funding at the current omnibus levels. In this world there is no ILC and likely no Project X unless it is very stretched out. However, with the existing accelerator we can do NOVA and perhaps a mu2e experiment. With a Project X machine we can run a much broader program. However, there are also more optimistic scenarios like president's budget plus cost of living, or president's budget plus a doubling under the ACI. Either of these options make a Project X level project quite viable and relatively on a fast track.

(UEC) Can you comment on response of our foreign colleagues to the funding situation in the US?

(PO) I have seen some very positive letters on our behalf. Of course there is also an undertone of complaints like, there goes the US again shutting off the B program early, and failing to meet other commitments. Among international science leaders you can imagine this having a longer-term negative repercussion with trusting the US to hold up their end of any bargain. Perhaps this

damaged credibility will start impacting future policy, i.e. future contributions to international projects from the US might have to be appropriated ahead of being accepted into the project.

Amanda Peterson--International Service

The International Services office has been located in the same area as the Users office in order to provide a one stop shop for visa and other user issues. Amanda Peterson will be heading the new visa office. She was an immigration attorney and has lived in UK and Canada, so brings a lot of experience in international issues.

(UEC) If there is a student or a new researcher from Italy or somewhere when should they contact you?

(AP) The office will be involved mainly in business visas associated with positions and job offers. We do not need to be contacted for short visits. Longer visits that require a J-type VISA will need to contact us for some paperwork.

(UEC) Do you also work in the exporting business? Do you help people from Fermilab with traveling or moving abroad?

(AP) Eventually we will, but the details are still being worked out.

(UEC) As far as international user needs, the UEC also has a subcommittee that responds to these types of concerns. There have been surveys in the past to track important issues.

(AP) That survey indicated things are pretty good, but we would really appreciate any feedback that users might have about international services.

Visit from Mel Shochet

You have all seen the P5 charge and a revised charge is coming next week that will include an additional budget scenario that is worse. Other than that there is no difference in the process. About half of P5 has close ties with Fermilab, so there is no worry about a lack of representation. The committee will be gathering information from the funding agencies, project costs, and educating themselves on all of the issues to cover near-, mid-, and long-term programs. The P5 report will really have to hit the physics hard to convey to Congress that these are exciting issues that the public should support. We, the HEP community, know its very exciting intellectually and technologically, but we have to excite the broader community as well so that Congress recognizes the importance of the field.

(UEC) Will HEPAP hear an interim report before forwarding the report to the funding agency?

(MS) The deadline is April 15 according to the charge, but there is not an actual meeting scheduled with HEPAP until May. We rely on P5 to provide guidance to HEPAP, but the only thing official in Washington is the final HEPAP endorsement. The funding agencies will need to know the lay of the land in April, since the FY2010 budgets start getting put together then.

Therefore, there will probably be a verbal report from P5 early in April but nothing official. In fact, Denis Kovar is planning on attending the P5 meetings when possible, so there will probably not even be a need for an interim verbal report.

(UEC) Can you tell us about the last HEPAP meeting

(MS) Some of the more critical points included: --The first talk was by Denis Kovar and was his first talk to the community in his new role. Everybody was anxious to hear his tone and it was very positive. He is anxious to learn from the community, thus he expressed interest in seeing the P5 report. --Joe Primack talked about the Beyond Einstein program. The main question was what should be the first Beyond Einstein active mission? There were a number of proposals within JDEM, LISA, black hole surveys, Conex, etc. Overall, there were five missions presented, and in the end JDEM was selected because of the match to the Beyond Einstein goals, and also simply because JDEM produces an incredibly rich survey of objects in our universe. Additionally, technical readiness was a factor. The hope is for the DOE office of science and NASA to sign an MOU this year. --The decision to extend Tevatron running into 2010 was deferred. This is largely because the gains are in part based on analysis progress that will be more easily assessed as the date is closer. There is also a concern about whether or not the CDF and D0 experiments will have the personnel it takes to operate the experiments and analyze the data. This in turn is closely tied to the LHC startup since many of the groups have joint commitments. So the LHC schedule, will certainly have a bearing on an extended Tevatron run. - -Young-Kee Kim presented the report from the steering group. It was well-received, but it was felt there are still a few things needed. A detailed R&D report on what it will take to get the machine online, the physics case, and whether or not there are enough lab experts to take on this project in addition to ILC R&D and other demands. --Open access publishing...the LHC community has decided only to publish in open access journals. These are journals that are available without a subscription fee that make it much easier for scientist in less affluent countries to obtain access.

(UEC) Are the open access issues just something you were hearing about or is it something that HEPAP will take a stand on later?

(MS) Mainly just gathering information. You can imagine that the model that works well in Europe might not be the same as in the US.

(UEC) The previous P5 recommended waiting a year to decide on Tevatron running.

(MS) The new P5 was asked by Denis to report by April to aid him in understanding the issues in the field. Had P5 come back later in the year, then the timing would have been more consistent with the timescale for making a Tevatron run decision.

(UEC) What is the focus of the February, 2008 HEPAP meeting?

(MS) The focus will obviously be on the budget disaster. We have asked for impact statements from the lab directors. We will have presentations on the ILC and the US-ILC since that clearly has been affected between the European and US budget decisions.

(UEC) Can you comment on the what has happened to the recommendation from the University Grants subpanel?

(MS) The University Grants subpanel had a number of good suggestions that were being discussed. One request was that relatively small experiments, not necessarily at a lab, need to have a mechanism for being reviewed and approved. Another request involved having a committee to continuously assess the situation in the universities and report back to HEPAP and program officers once per year. With Denis Kovar and Joe Dehmer, I thought we were getting close to coming up with an implementation of this plan. Of course, the budget ax has since fallen and the discussion has turned to survival. Probably the recommendations from the University Grants subpanel will not come up again for several months.

The reaction within the funding agency was that the report requested an increase that was somewhat arbitrary. There was no justification why the amount requested shouldn't be half or twice the amount requested. Another problem is that the report recommended an increasing in funding to the university grants without indicating where that money should be removed.

(Young-Kee Kim) Somehow that report created some political difficulties between university and lab scientists. There are really three segments of the HEP community, university groups, HEP groups at other non-HEP labs, and the HEP labs themselves. It is certainly the case that each portion of the community brings unique capabilities to the field, so we really need to look at the full infrastructure.

(MS) In the COV reports we have been encouraged to examine the roles in all sectors including HEP labs, multi-purpose labs, and universities. This has been asked for the last 20 years, and every group thinks they will be the ones that fair well in a review that concentrates on maximizing physics/\$. I think it will be addressed in the next year

Project X Discussion with Young-Kee Kim

(UEC) What is the latest on the workshop and report, and how might we help?

(YKK) Working groups have been having meetings to discuss the physics programs and how they might fit together. We are working on a document to distribute ahead of the workshop so that each group can read the report, come into the workshop more educated, and have a more productive 2 days. What you can do is to please come to the workshop and express your ideas. It is critical that the whole community understand and be behind the experiments that a Project X enables.

(UEC) What happens beyond P5, do the working groups continue?

(YKK) After the 2nd workshop I can imagine that work will continue to polish a document through March. Beyond that we have to start thinking about experimental R&D, etc.

(UEC) What's the most positive outcome from P5, what is the best thing they could say?

(YKK) We are simply asking P5 to allow us to do some R&D for Project X, or more generally the proton plan that takes us into the future.

(UEC) Is NOVA a prerequisite for Project X? What would happen if the cut from Congress really meant NOVA has been targeted for cancellation?

(YKK) In my opinion that would be pretty severe. If it has been targeted, then it is a statement about neutrino physics in general and damages the motivation for Project X, which is heavily rooted in a neutrino program.

(YKK) The URA institutes now contribute annual dues, which amounts to about \$400K per year when totaled. This money is now being used as part of a Visiting Scholars program. Application deadlines are March 1 and September 1. More information is available on the web:
http://www.fnal.gov/pub/forphysicists/fellowships/ura_visiting_scholars

Dates for Future UEC Meetings

Feb 15, Mar 7, Apr 11, May 9

Submitted by: Chris Polly, UEC Secretary