



Minutes of the Fermilab UEC Meeting on April 8, 2011

Attending:

Todd Adams, Michael Cooke, Marj Corcoran (remote), Heather Gerberich, Dick Gustafson, Jonathan Lewis, Ron Moore, Manfred Paulini, Brian Rebel, Mayly Sanchez (remote), Dave Schmitz, William Wester, Lisa Whitehead (remote)
GSA Officers: Joe Grange, Zeynep Isvan, Tim Linden

Guests:

Young-Kee Kim, Katie Yurkewicz, Amanda Thompson, Carol McGuire (remote)

Chat with Fermilab Directorate – Young-Kee Kim

In the light of the potential government shutdown, the discussion with Deputy Director Kim focused on advice with respect to the UEC trip to DC planned for the week after this meeting. Young-Kee was involved in a meeting of lab directors and Bill Brinkman earlier in the day and the UEC trip was a significant part of the conversation. She reported that DOE would like to limit high exposure travel during a federal shutdown. Since the UEC meeting, the government agreed on a FY11 budget and the UEC trip to DC was held on Apr 12-15 as planned.

Deputy Director Kim also related the following information to the UEC:

- FNAL can continue to operate for at least 4 weeks in case of a federal shut-down
- some of the VIP's for the Users' Meeting are getting confirmed: Secretary Chu plans to attend as well as Bill Brinkman and Mike Procario
- a meeting about the future of DUSEL is held in the week of April 11 at SLAC
- Fermilab plans to combine the 2012 Users' Meeting with a symposium on the future of Fermilab as well as celebrating the Tevatron era
- a muon collider workshop will be held end of June in Chicago
- there was brief discussion on the large international publicity that the "CDF bump" in the $W+jj$ mass spectrum has received

Report from the Chair – Todd Adams

The Chair briefly reported about a reception and poster session organized by the National Users' Facility Organization (NUFO) to educate members of Congress and their staff on the mission of the national laboratories. The event held in Washington DC on April 7 in the Rayburn House Office Building foyer and was characterized as semi-successful. Many US user facilities were represented but attendance from politicians or staffers was sparse. Todd Adams and Mike Kordosky represented Fermilab.

The UEC submitted written testimony to the Senate and House appropriations subcommittees in support of DOE Office of Science and NSF funding for HEP was submitted on April 7 and April 11.

Since the UEC constitution states the election of new UEC members is by mail but the election is carried out through a web form, it was discussed whether a change to the UEC constitution is needed. This could be done at a Users Organization general meeting during the upcoming FNAL Users' Meeting.

The chair was asked to nominate a user (visitor) to be on the FNAL safety committee. Any nominations should be forwarded to tadams@hep.fsu.edu.

The chair provided the user perspective to the FRA Visiting Committee for Scientific Programs on March 15.

View from Washington – Carole McGuire (Lewis-Burke Associates)

With the possibility of a government shutdown looming by midnight of the day of the UEC meeting, Carol gave an update on the activities in Washington. The two big issues for the FY11-CR are the overall spending reductions as well as bill issues on policy provisions. Instructions about furloughs have gone out in case of a government shutdown and closure of offices was to the discretion of individual Congressional offices. There was lively discussion on whether to continue the UEC trip to DC in case the government would be shut down during the time of the planned visit. Todd Adams offered 3 options: go anyway in the hope that a bill will be passed by the date of the trip, postpone the DC trip or go with a small group. As noted, a FY11 spending bill was passed by Congress and Senate and the UEC trip to DC was held on Apr 12-15 as originally planned. Carol also offered some advice for DC trip attendees on how to approach the various Congress and Senate offices to ask for a balanced portfolio of science funding emphasizing the DOE Office of Science.

Fermilab Office of Communications – Katie Yurkewicz

Katie Yurkewicz, the new Director of the Office of Communications, started with the good news that Secretary Steven Chu will come to the Users' Meeting and her office is in contact with his staff to plan a two day trip to the Chicago area with a one day visit to each Fermilab and Argonne.

The Office of Communications is starting a strategic planning process to collect data on the elements of the communication process and planning. Katie asked for feedback from the UEC and will be back with more detailed questions in the future. As an example, feedback on the Symmetry magazine was solicited since it is a large budget item due to the printing costs. It was also suggested whether it would be possible to track placement of graduate students and postdocs through the Office of Communication.

Subcommittee Reports

Report from the GSA

The 2nd GSA pub night was held at the Foundry including participation in a trivia quiz where the GSA team made 2nd place. The GSA lecture series is being revived and preparations are ongoing to encourage participation in the Users' Meeting poster session and the New Perspectives conference where an advertisement has been sent to the various FNAL experiments.

Non-US Users – Heather Gerberich

Amanda Thompson from the Fermilab visa office updated the UEC on the evolving situation with respect to tax issues for foreign Fermilab users and the requirement to file a US tax return that applies to almost everyone who spends time in the U.S. for 183 days or more over any three year period. Several presentations were given for non-US users and many users approached the visa office in the past few weeks. Amanda is finishing a 7 page introduction to US tax issues for foreigners in the US which can be distributed to all non-US users. Fermilab wants to be more proactive in the future and have a general orientation session for new foreign users.

Quality of Life – Michael Cooke

Together with the non-US users subcommittee there will be a meeting on April 18 with Bruce Chrisman from the FNAL directorate. Another issue of current discussion is to extend the operating hours of the Fermilab taxi service.

Outreach – Manfred Paulini

Very little happened in the past couple of months and the committee plans to get together soon to continue on the idea to put together a web-page through Fermilab communications where outreach activities through Fermilab can be easily turned into demonstrations for local outreach at small universities which do not have their own outreach programs.

Users' Meeting – William Wester

The committee is actively working on the agenda for the Users' Meeting with a list of proposed speakers from the various experiments. The theme for the meeting will be the 'Fermilab Frontier'. The registration will be up in early May. A new photo of the high-rise at night will be featured on the poster. A request for recent PhD recipients has gone out to the experiments. URA visiting scholar grants have been received to support post-doc and student attendance to the 2011 Users' Meeting. Plans are also discussed to hold the New Perspectives workshop organized by the GSA the day before the Users' Meeting.

Government Relations - Dave Schmitz and Marj Corcoran

The main topic of discussion was the DC trip. All attendees were requested to update their contact information and input their primary appointments into the wiki spread sheet by the end of the day in order to allow for a 1st pass on the secondary assignments over the weekend. The list of materials available on the wiki was discussed and some additional material such as the FNAL 'picture book' presented. Online trip reports from previous years have been linked to the wiki and attendees were asked to use new trip reports to keep record of this year's office meetings for future years. Attendees were told to expect frequent emails in the next few days regarding updated information on the DC trip.

Next UEC meeting: May 13, 2011

Secretary: Manfred Paulini