

Users Executive Committee meeting minutes for November 21, 2014

The meeting, chaired by Bill Louis, began at 8:45. Bill Louis, Bill Lee, Vivian O'Dell, Jesus Orduna, Linda Spentzouris, Tulika Bose, Marcelle Soares-Santos, Sandra Biedron, and Thomas Strauss attended the meeting. Also present at various times were Carole McGuire (via phone), Joseph Lykken, Nigel Lockyer and Kurt Riesselmann.

Overview

The meeting began with the chair report by Bill Louis. UEC member Thomas Strauss will serve on the Fermilab campus and facility planning board. Kim Pearce will replace Barb Book in the User's Office and liaison with the UEC. Fernanda Garcia has deployed the new UEC webpage. There is a place for users to put in complaints and comments, via 'Contact' information uec-members@fnal.gov. However, it is desirable to have user issues go directly to the Quality of Life subcommittee, so, uec-qlc@fnal.gov, should be put on the website for that purpose.

Users Email List

Kurt Riesselmann reported that the mandatory ALL-USERS email list has been populated with 3700 subscribers, and will be deployed immediately. The mandatory list has 362 Fermilab employees taken from Fermi_Scientists list, and 3367 non-lab personnel taken from registered users with a Fermilab email account, including graduate students, physicists, theorists, postdocs, computer professionals, and others (for example undergraduates). There was some discussion about how people (for example engineers) might opt in to the mandatory list. Kurt emphasized that however it is done, it is desirable to do so in an automated manner. One possibility is to have people opt in to the USERSORG list (now with 2569 subscribers), and then have that list automatically added to ALL-USERS. There are about 1400 people on the USERSORG list now that are not on the ALL-USERS list. The opt-in issue was not resolved in this meeting.

Users Meeting Subcommittee

Bill Lee reported on the status of preparations for the User's meeting. All rooms for the User's meeting (June 10-11) are reserved, including the New Perspectives (June 8-9) room. A public speaker was decided on and has been invited. The UEC is waiting for the selected speaker to accept, but if there is no reply to the invitation after a selected time period, another speaker will be invited. It was remarked that there is no representative from the Student Postdoc Association (SPA) at the UEC meeting, and that action to insure that SPA officers are on the UEC email list should be taken. Bill previously met with Cynthia Sazama from the conference office (8th floor), concerning the facility request. Cynthia will fix the user's meeting website (which has been cloned already) in the future. The justification of funds approval to the Directorate was discussed.

Report From Washington

Carole McGuire gave an update on the situation in Congress regarding the budget. Resolving the budget situation has been complicated by President Obama's introduction of action on immigration issues. The Republican congress has several options for their response.

1. The Appropriations committee would prefer to negotiate an Omnibus bill, possibly excluding the agencies involved with immigration.
2. A short term Continuing Resolution (CR) could be passed to be in effect until the administration's plan for implementation of the immigration reform is clarified.
3. A less likely possibility is that a CR for a full year might be put into effect.

None of the above scenarios would be likely to have a big impact on the overall funding level for science. The President proposed a 6% reduction in science funding, but the Congress has restored most of that. Since the P5 report presents a coherent proposal for HEP funding, the administration is likely to be reasonable regarding the funding level for HEP. The Republican party now has a majority in both the House and the Senate, and traditionally the Republican party has been more supportive of basic science research, including HEP. However, there are still very tight budget constraints. Vivian and Carole noted that one of the biggest impacts to HEP under a CR is that no new projects may be started.

Quality of Life Subcommittee

Marcelle reported on the Quality of Life subcommittee. One action item is to address the loss of Samantha in the User's Office, in particular there is some concern about coverage of VISA issues. There are mixed responses concerning the status of the village Internet. It was pointed out that some international users may have devices that operate at frequencies outside the available band, and it could be checked whether this is the basis of some reports of a connectivity problem. Shuttle transport from the Geneva train station to Fermilab will be monitored to see how much usage there is. Since the Geneva train station is further than the West Chicago station, the question arose as to whether another station might be more convenient. Cost may be an issue that limits the number of shuttle users, since it is often cheaper and faster to drive than take public transportation. The issue of providing more transportation to residents of the village was discussed. It is a problem that the Fermilab shuttle is not available after 4:30 pm. The possibility of having rental cars available to village residents was discussed. Another possibility raised was to have Zipcars available.

Government Relations Subcommittee

Sandra Biedron reported on activities of the Government Relations subcommittee. The tasks have been assigned and many are underway. Jonathan Lewis (Fermilab, Particle Physics Division) is advising the subcommittee on creating a wiki to help with the organization. The DC planning meeting will be held on January 30th, after the UEC meeting to make scheduling easier. It is hoped that some special participants will be at

the January 30th meeting (Bill Louis could invite Representatives Hultgren and Foster now that we have the date saved). This meeting, which includes training for the activities in DC is crucial to a successful trip. People chosen for the trip will be those with the stronger ties to members of Congress. The number that can go on the trip depends on funds provided by the URA; and to some extent, cost saving measures by individual travelers. It is hoped that the American Physical Society (APS) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) will provide participants for the DC trip as well. Harvey Newman is helping with arrangements of the special meetings with top level funding agency leaders. The week of March 23rd-27th is most likely to be selected for the trip, although the Future Circular Collider meeting (also in DC) is the same week. The plan is for everyone to stay in a block of booked rooms, and to have dinners together. Tulika has done some information gathering on the packets that will be distributed during the DC meetings. The contents could include an HEP brochure possibly with updated text, the latest version of Symmetry magazine, selected applied science articles, the Division of Physics of Beams (DPB) brochure, Fermilab fact sheets, a map and list of US HEP institutions and some souvenirs. Last year the souvenirs were a poster created about the Nobel prize, bubble chamber bookmarks, Higgs buttons, and scintillator rulers.

Discussion with the Directorate

Joseph Lykken discussed some user issues with the committee. He indicated willingness to have engineers opt in to ALL-USERS list. Regarding the status of the Internet in the village, he said that Jon Bakken can serve as a point of contact for us. Joseph also updated the committee on the progress regarding office space improvements.

Nigel Lockyer discussed some potential schemes for the hostel that is in the planning stages. He mentioned that Republican Randy Hultgren is an enthusiastic booster of science, and is an important representative for our scientific community. Nigel remarked Zipcars might be worth looking into as a partial solution to village transportation issues. On the topic of infrastructure improvement, he said that the ceiling in the cafeteria is going to be fixed with wood and LED lighting as a first improvement. Soon there will be drawings obtained from an architect for the conversion of the small dining room and vending area to a space for the User's Office.

The meeting was adjourned.