

## **Users Executive Committee meeting minutes for February 26, 2016**

The meeting, chaired by Bill Louis, began at 8:30. Jesus Orduna, Thomas Strauss, Minerba Betancourt, Ed Kearns, Louise Suter, Sarah Lockwitz, Fernanda Garcia, Mateus Carneiro, Robert Fine, Kim Pearce, Sebastian Aderhold, Elena Gramellini, Griselda Lopez, Brian Nord, Katie Yurkewicz, and Linda Spentzouris attended the meeting. Tim Meyer was also present, representing the Directorate.

### **Overview**

Bill Louis gave the chair report, and ran the meeting. There has been an update from Steve Ritz regarding the DC trip materials. The layout for the brochure/folder is almost complete, along with the insert that goes inside. The text for the insert has been revised repeatedly since the HEPAP meeting. There is an updated map on the insert that shows funded particle physics activity across the country. The Ask is on a separate paper, rather than being combined with other brochure material. The rest of the brochure is not specific to the DC trip and can be used by the community for other purposes.

Griselda reported that the International Services Office has been renamed the Global Services Department. It combines the functions of the Users Office, and the VISA Office. There will be a new website for Global Services, and they are looking for suggestions for the name of the URL, something that is easy to find with a search. There will be new training requirements for all users, such as sexual harassment prevention training, workplace violence and active shooter awareness training, and computer security anti-phishing training. Rob brought up the offensive nature of some of the material in the counter terrorism training, and asked if something could be done to improve it. Other issues came up such as the awkward way that training requirements are specified for each user. It was suggested that an overall review of safety training related issues be carried out. The User's Office is looking to provide additional services for users in the village; for example, providing a mobile library, securing an extra PACE bus route, creating corporate housing options, and acquiring Divvy bikes or Zipcars. They would like

to work with the Quality of Life subcommittee. The FSPA would also like to be kept in the loop.

The next UEC meetings are planned March 11<sup>th</sup>, April 15<sup>th</sup>, May 13<sup>th</sup>, and June 17<sup>th</sup>. The March 11th meeting is just before the trip, and any last minute questions may be discussed.

### **Report from the Directorate**

Tim Meyer reported for the Directorate. The senior lab management will be in DC next week. Tim and Nigel will be meeting with a variety of folks in the Congressional offices, and the senior lab management will have a budget discussion with the DOE Office of High Energy Physics regarding the FY17/FY18 budget requests. Although the President's budget request calls for a \$23M increase to HEP, people going to DC should ask for \$15M more in addition to the \$23M, with \$10M more for LBNF/DUNE. The environment for funding requests is good right now, thanks to the credibility associated with the P5 report.

Barry Barish will be the public speaker at the User's Meeting, and there may be another high profile talk. Tim said that he has suggestions for a new process for getting a high profile speaker for the User's Meeting in future years that would not be so effort intensive.

There is now a map of Fermilab that shows how the four school districts map to the site.

It remains to be determined how the map will be disseminated.

### **Report from Washington**

Leland of Lewis-Burke Associates reported on the news from Washington. The President has submitted his FY17 budget request, and while it generally sticks to the caps of the two-year budget deal, it also included some mandatory funding not limited by the caps. This has soured the political mood, and Congress refused to hear OMB testify about the President's budget. Congress states that completing the appropriations bills is their highest priority. Since they are now working on markups of the appropriations bill, it is important to keep asking for

support for science. The Energy and Water Development subcommittee is drafting their bill in March and early April, so the timing of the visit to DC is perfect. The President's budget has increased HEP funding \$23M compared to last year's level, and this is on top of a \$22M increase the previous year. In accordance with the P5 report, the bulk of the additional funding was for LBNF, recognizing that the U.S. needs a flagship HEP effort.

People visiting DC should seek support somewhat above the President's budget request for the HEP budget. Leland has recommended requesting a funding level of \$833M from Congress, about \$15M above the President's request. It can be said that in addition to the neutrino program, it is a critical year for the next generation dark energy/dark matter experiments, and for upgrade efforts for the LHC detectors. The requested funding is needed to sustain and execute P5 priorities. The additional funding request will address HEP shortfalls.

The President's request has a critical shortfall for LBNF/DUNE. CERN has agreed to carry out development of the world's largest liquid Argon neutrino detector, but the U.S. has a shortfall on our contribution to the detector development effort. It is important to get \$10M in additional LBNF funding specifically for work with CERN on prototyping the detector. If the U.S. does not contribute to that effort, there will be less incentive for our international partners to carry out the detector work in a timely way. Another \$5M of additional funds are needed for the dark matter/dark energy search. We have serious competitors in this area (for example, Japan). The existing projects should not fall behind schedule. It is undesirable to harm research and theory funding in order to continue to move forward on these projects. Lewis-Burke Associates has reached out to BNL, Berkeley, SURF, and others to make sure this budget request is the consensus of the whole community. While \$833M is an ambitious request, it is an appropriate number. This request takes into account that some projects are ramping down; it is an honest assessment of what funding HEP needs to stay on track.

Ed Kearns brought up the issue that universities have been having large

shortfalls compared to their HEP funding requests, and have been told that funding large projects is necessarily causing university research funds to be lower. It is felt by universities that the major construction projects are eating them alive, and that they need a voice in Washington DC as well. Leland agreed that it is important to balance research with operations and with new projects. When on a tight budget, the goal is to find a good balance. Research dollars must be squeezed to move projects forward. However, when there is approval for construction, and once the projects are on good footing, the plan is to increase research dollars again at that point. Universities need to make the case that research dollars are important. It is easier to sell a project than to sell research, since research is more diffuse. Garnering strong support for research funding has always been a challenge. Leland encouraged DC visitors to talk about research as well as the projects on the hill. There is hope that next year there will be a growth in base research funding along with other increased funding.

The Senate has taken up the energy bill again. The Durbin-Alexander amendment was adopted; this would increase the DOE Office of Science funding by 5% over the next five years. This was a bipartisan effort of Durbin, Kirk, Baldwin, Murray, Coons, Cantwell, and Alexander. It is not real yet; it is an authorizing vehicle. It is not a victory until the pledge is fulfilled and money appears. When visiting DC, ask that Congress please follow through on this commitment to increase funding for the Office of Science, even a 1% or 2% increase would be helpful. The Nobel Prize for the discovery of neutrino oscillations last year helps support the message that neutrino physics is an important area of research. The LIGO discovery of gravitational waves is another validation of big science.

### **User's Meeting Sub-Committee**

Thomas Strauss reported on User's Meeting activities. The banquet will be free, but tickets still need to be distributed for accounting purposes. The caterer is likely the same as last year, although bids are going out. Barry Barish will be the speaker for the Public talk.

Some information was presented on the contents of the User's Meeting brochure. It will have an award history, i.e. what awards have been given at the meeting, and who has received these awards. It will also have the agenda and abstracts. There might be a page in the brochure listing the funding agencies. There could be a page describing the FSPA (and perhaps the UEC). The content should be finalized and the brochure must be ready to print by mid-May.

The budget request to the FRA for the meeting was discussed. A form with the final User's Meeting budget proposal was sent to the FRA for approval. There are two opportunities to have it reviewed by the FRA, one in the spring and one in the fall. Traditionally the budget has been sent in the spring, but it is probably better to send it in the fall, if possible. This way there would be more lead-time for certain aspects of the planning. This should be considered for next year.

The original vendor price was quite low, just enough to cover the cost of setting up the tables. Since the DOE is strongly in favor of vendor participation, a higher price option was also made available. This option provides extra perks, such as signage in meeting rooms. The higher fee option enables the organizers to put more information (pages) in the brochures, and have better supplies for coffee breaks.

### **Government Relations Sub-Committee**

Katie and Jesus have put together an insert for the brochure with the Ask. This cannot be sent to the UEC members for review via any .gov email, since those government resources cannot be used to support the DC trip. It also should not be part of the post-P5 document going into the brochure for the trip, and must be a separate insert.

Most of the information for the DC trip may be found on the Wiki:

<http://www.fermilab-uec.org/mediaWiki/index.php?title=DC2016>

including information on the primary assignments:

<http://www.fermilab-uec.org/mediaWiki/index.php?title=PrimaryAssignments2016>

There is also a list of uncovered primaries available. Most people have

around five to ten primary assignments. Last year 46 people went on the trip, and this year there will also be 46 people, although the distribution of the number sent by each group is different. There is room in the budget to send a few more people at this time. People who want to get more practice on how to carry out the office visits may stay after the next UEC meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup>. A note to people who are going on the trip for the first time – try not to schedule meetings before noon or 1:00 pm on first day, so you can observe some meetings as secondaries before being a primary.

The materials for the packet for the DC trip are now defined. The packet is a little heavier this year than last year. They will be shipped to the URA office in DC, although three items will be shipped separately (Ritz brochure, LHC brochure, Ask), and these will need to be added to the packets there. There was some discussion about when the packets could be picked up from the URA office, since carrying all the packets around the first day would be difficult. The URA office will be open during business hours on Tuesday, and people arriving early could get their packets the day before to avoid having to carry all of them around on Wednesday.

### **Quality of Life Sub-Committee**

Minerba gave the report for the Quality of Life subcommittee. Requests for summer housing at the village are now being accepted. The Housing Office does an excellent job of keeping the housing at full capacity during the entire year, maintaining constant vigilance to fill unexpected vacancies with people on the waiting list. The Housing Office reports that in past years about 50% of requests for houses have been rejected due to lack of capacity, whereas 5-10% of requests for single rooms are denied. Letters to users whose requests have been rejected include information about alternative off-site housing. There is a list of this potential off-site housing available. One difficulty is that off-site housing terms are not matched to the time needs of Fermilab visitors, although there are some apartments that will take short term (2-3 month) stays. Another difficulty is that off-site, short-term housing can be expensive. The Housing and Travel office work full time to try to

accommodate the housing needs of users as much as possible.

Students who do not have cars or flexible transportation options present another issue. Discussion of Zipcars, Divvy bikes, or other possible ways to improve transportation options will continue. There is progress on the village water quality issue; a new contract has been written, and Jack Hawkins is waiting to see if the vendor accepts the new contract. On the topic of outreach, FNAL will be hosting a 'Dare to Dream' STEM workshop for 8th grade Latina girls on April 9th from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. The 'Dare to Dream' organization is paying for lunch, and Minerba has found volunteers to cover the event. The Quality of Life subcommittee will be reaching out for volunteers from the lab for any future events that might be planned.

### **Fermilab Student and Postdoc Association report**

Rob reported for the FSPA. They now have their new logo, and it will be liberally applied to the materials they generate in the future.

The FSPA is making a transition from hosting all their events to sponsoring many of them instead. A host is responsible for events from beginning to end, whereas a sponsor contributes support (financial as well as manpower) to an event initiated by another group. This change will allow the FSPA to participate in a larger number and range of events, since it will be freed from the intensive operational organization and leg-work associated with being a host. The plan is that people could apply for FSPA funds and participation in their event. There was some discussion about how the application process would work; the plan at present is to have a form available on the website to apply for FSPA sponsorship. Some people mentioned that having a more informal option (email, phone call) in addition might be useful. Having a form completed in all cases does lead to the advantage of insuring a paper trail. Some examples of possible events would be a big data firm career event, a badminton event, and the Holi event hosted by the Indian Association of Fermilab. There are still some questions to be considered, such as what are the appropriate criteria for sponsoring an event, and should advertising criteria be different than those for

providing funds? Event sponsorship as well as efforts on FSPA webspace revitalization will be updated at future meetings.

Planning for the DC trip is going very well, as is planning for New Perspectives. For the latter, some new ideas for advertising, increasing attendance, and presenting an interesting, diverse program are on the table. Working with the Conference Office has been very helpful. Establishing a clear divide between the New Perspectives and User's Meeting poster session has also been helpful. Posters advertising New Perspectives have been printed. A one-page summary of the FSPA and its mission, with a description of New Perspectives has been developed and is being distributed. This year the goal is to get large attendance regardless of the demographic of the audience. High profile people at Fermilab are being asked to chair the sessions. Instructions for the chairs are to keep the talks accessible to the younger community by encouraging their questions and discouraging long interrogations from more senior attendees. The FSPA has invited collaborations (for example MINERvA) to send a motivated young person to give an overview talk on the whole experiment or on recent results from the experiment. This will help coordination and avoid confusion as to which speaker will introduce the experiment. These 'invited talks' are also a way to encourage collaborations who have not traditionally participated in the event to attend. The majority of the speakers will still be focused on their own work and their particular part in the experiment.

The meeting was adjourned.