FERMILAB Users Organization Executive Committee
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==> Minutes of the April 21st, 2001 Meeting of the
==> Fermilab Users Executive Committee
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(submitted by Robin Erbacher)

Attendees:
Dan Amidei (amidei@umich.edu) (video),
Robin Erbacher(robine@fnal.gov),
Peter Garbincius(garbincius@fnal.gov),
Larry Nodulman(ljn@fnal.gov),
Vaia Papadimitriou(vaia@fnal.gov),
Roger Rusack(rusack@mnhep.hep.umn.edu),
Rick St. Denis(stdenis@fnal.gov) (video),
Benn Tannenbaum(benn@physics.ucla.edu),
Gordon Watts(gwatts@fnal.gov),
Herman White(hwhite@fnal.gov).

Absent:
Sally Koutsoliotas(koutslts@bucknell.edu),
Jim Musser(musser@bigbang.astro.indiana.edu),
Philip Yager(yager@fnal.gov).

GSA Attendees (2000-2001 GSA):
Chris Hays (hays@fnal.gov),
Nancy Lai (nlai@hep.uchicago.edu)

Announcements: Larry Nodulman
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** Larry collected $20 from each UEC member ($10 from students) for 4 "Fermilab Prizes" to be awarded at the Illinois Science Fair, open to high school and junior high students throughout Illinios. In addition, the URA contributed $100 for the prizes. Kevin Pitts of UIUC was involved in the judging and awarding of prizes. Details of how the event went and the winners are attached below after the minutes.
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** Larry will be on video for the May 12th meeting.
Benn has volunteered to locally run the meeting.

** We will start getting candidates for speaking at the User's Meeting June 11-13.

** Will we have a joint UEC/SLUO meeting at Snowmass? We'll take an email poll to find out when the most members will be there.

Visit with Bruce Chrisman:
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** Changes in FNAL badge ID procedures.

Fermilab is beginning to phase in changes to badge renewal procedures. This is mostly driven by computer security concerns. To renew your ID, someone will now have to sign off on the renewal in order to verify that you are still a Fermilab user. For this reason, experiment spokespeople will be asked to identify an institutional representative for each member institution on a Fermilab experiment. They will be authorized to sign off on renewals. The renewal time will be 1 year for students and postdocs and 3 years for more senior users. This procedure is already being phased in, and has had very few glitches so far.

Q (Robin): Some of my colleagues have left to other experiments but now need access to their accounts.
A (Bruce): Offsite or "gone" people can still maintain computer accounts if a local person (spokespeople) will sign for them.
Q (Rick): What about getting them set up with an ID and a computer account before they arrive? (Since ID's are required in order to obtain an account.)
A (Bruce): They can get a badge # and then an account remotely. We can investigate whether or not this badge number is temporary or permanent... please send a note about this.
Q (Rick): Can we get an email reminder warning us that badges are about to expire?
A (Bruce): Yes, this will be implemented with both 1 month and 2 weeks of lead-time warning.

** Revisiting student insurance policy.

The new procedure, with it's 1-year badge renewal
for students and postdocs, will help the UEC and FNAL
to implement the planned requirement that students
and postdocs have their institutional representative
verify (via their signature on the badge renewal form)
that their advisor or other has reviewed their insurance
coverage while resident at Fermilab. If the coverage is
deemed inadequate, FNAL will then be willing to sell
supplemental coverage policies to them. [n.b.:
This new requirement is a culmination of a long discussion
with the Fermilab user's and amongst the UEC following a
survey that was taken by the Graduate Student Association
and the UEC in 1999-2000. It was found that many students
who merely have student health insurance do not have local
coverage while at Fermilab, and are required to go to the
university health center for any treatment needed. It
was further found that badge renewal needed to be more
frequent, since students often arrived for a short period
during the summer preceeding a more extended stay, and that
the insurance question was never revisited after the
initial visit, since the student already had the badge.]

Q (Vaia): I have a student that left but nobody has asked
him to get a new ID.
A (Bruce): We don't have the expiration policies fully
in place yet. We're phasing in the new expiration dates so
he/she probably still had a valid id.
Q (Roger): What about people, like on CMS, who will never
have to come to Fermilab?
A (Bruce): They can get the institutional representative to
sign for them and we will issue them a badge # and account
without them having to show up to the User's Office.

** Open questions.

Q (Benn): What is the status of our inquiry regarding opening
the footpath to the new housing developments at the southwest
side of the lab?
A (Bruce): The directorate has considered this and has
decided not to implement it for a variety of reasons that
I don't want to detail at this moment.
Q (Benn): What is the status of the discussion regarding the
problems in getting foreign collaborators various VISA's?
A (Bruce): There was a contact that Tom Kirk had made but
in general we don't have a good direct interface with the
INS. I have been sending mails to someone in the State Dept
with no response. We are interested in this and it will have
to be an ongoing multi-year effort, especially if we plan to

host an international laboratory/experiment effort in the future. The more people we talk to in Washington, the more likely we can get the problems solved, so use whatever contacts you have.
Q (Vaia): What happened about the transportation question and the extension of the taxi service using the BNL model?
A (Benn): It turns out that BNL uses non-DOE monies to do this.
Q (Robin): What happened to the idea of staggering the times of the 2 taxi's so that at least one of them will run later than 5pm?
A (Bruce): This is still a possibility to consider... send an email and I will look into it.
Q (Rick): If nice things such as the taxi service are taken away due to a poor budget one year, will they be reinstated when the funding improves?
A (Bruce): Yes, and fortunately we haven't had to stop the taxi service yet.

Report on UEC/SLUO trip to Washington DC: Herman White
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Attendees: Some SLUO members and SLAC students, most UEC members, the FNAL GSA officers, Merrill Jenkins (Alabama), Kent Clark (Alabama), John Conway (New Jersey), and 2 students from Michigan.
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Text excerpt here:
Abbreviated report on the UEC and SLUO visit to Washington DC from DC Trip Chair, Compiled by Herman White of Fermilab.

We targeted 74 offices for our visit this year, and completed ~70 meetings plus DOE, as well as 2 previously unscheduled meetings. Our group consisted of 27 users from Fermilab and SLAC, including 9 graduate students and 3 guests. We had good contact with the Executive branch including the OMB, and the DOE, as well as the Congress including the House and Senate Appropriations, and House Science. My strategy for access this year focused on joining Congress members and their constituent HEP user representatives within our group. In Congress I also put a high priority in getting our message to the new Chairman of the House Appropriations, Energy and Water Sub-committee chair, Congressman Sonny Callahan, of the 1st district of Alabama. To that end we invited the two high energy physicists in the 1st district of Alabama to join us in Washington. Professors Merrill Jenkins and Kent Clark, were tremendously helpful in the access we had and delivering our message to the Chairman of that committee. It is important to report that we met with the Clerk of the House Energy and Water Appropriations sub-committee,
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who exchanged information on the budget process and current status. Our message focused on evaluating the current state of physical science research and by our presence demonstrating the excitement, promise, and future of this field. We stressed that this could best be done by improved support of the DOE's Office of Science, our laboratories, and support for University personnel. There were many other meetings among our group and we will summarize reports of those meetings at a later time. As expected, graduate student participation was very well received and I believe made an impact among many congressional offices.

We gained information about "Dear Colleague" letters in both the House and Senate in support of physical science research and the DOE's Office of Science. Last year's letter in the House was authored by Judy Biggert of the 13th district, Illinois, and we delivered her an appreciation letter from the representatives of the UEC and SLUO. We believe new good contacts are developing between UEC, SLUO, and Congress member's Offices. We extended our gratitude to URA for their support in this work and I believe that the UEC and SLUO demonstrated good cooperative efforts in our joint visit.

Nearly all of the UEC and SLUO reports are complete and these will be consolidated by Lewis Burke and company in a summary report. There are also recommendations for improving this activity in the future, including communications, contacts, material gathering and distribution, and strategy.
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UEC discussion:

Larry, Herman and Phil spoke to Mike Holland at the OMB and he had some dire words to say about how the budget looked. A presentation to HEPAP is on the web. The good news is that the anticipated ~$1B cut will only be ~$400-500M. The new Secretary of Energy is protective of the Office of Science, but we should expect flat budgets. He stated directly that no new intiative-driven activities will be dealt with in FY '03. This is partly because there is no science advisor yet. Furthermore, they may institute a "performance metric" to quantify the success of our projects. [n.b. Several of the UEC members were not happy with the mention of the idea of quantifying success in our projects.]

Herman had interesting interactions with House Appropriations people. The 40 minutes of time with Callahan (see above) was really a coup. We are apparently now known as "the atom guys" in the appropriations arena. Callahan warmed up to us once he discovered we are a science/education facility (not a weapons lab?)
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and asked about other labs in the world, which Herman listed off. He then asked about the SSC specifically, to which Herman replied simply that the unexpected cost increases caused Congress to lose confidence in the project. In general, the meeting was positive. Kevin Cook, the clerk, warned Herman to call Jim Decker to let him know about their discussions, since Decker and Callahan were to meet a few days later. After the meeting, Cook spoke to us informally and invited us to insert commentary into the House subcommittee report.

Most Washington attendees have gotten their reports in, and Burke and Associates will hopefully compile them soon. This will be sent to us, the URA, and possibly the DOE. Improvements Herman suggested were to have the information packets assembled prior to arrival in DC, more communication ahead of time with SLAC, and taking photos with congresspeople and sending them immediately to their home newspapers. Congresspeople love this as good P.R. The signed thank you letter to Judy Biggert for her Dear Colleague letter last year will be sent off to SLUO for their signatures and then sent out to Biggert.

Comment (Robin): We were able to have a long conversation with the deputy Chief of Staff for Rodney Frelinghuysen of NJ who is on the House Appropriations committee.
Q (Rick): What's happening with the draft of the new Biggert letter?
A (Gordon): I met with the lobbyist at U.W. The text will be similar to last year's letter. I don't know about the Senate side. The idea is to keep it similar to last year's so that as many people as possible will sign it.
[n.b. The Senate letter became available this week and is sponsored by Senators Bingaman and Warner.]
Comment (Roger): Two people: Oberstar (MN) and Sabo (MN) have sent a letter to the House Appropriations Committee regarding the Office of Science. Also, the APS meeting is coming up, and they will have a congressional reception.
[n.b. See minutes of upcoming May 12 meeting for a report on the APS meeting visit.]
Comment (Larry): On meeting with Holland: he thought that the only way to get an NLC is for an international new model. Herman, Larry, and Phil spoke with Witherell and he was happy with the contacts we made in Washington.

GSA Report: Chris Hays
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The Graduate Student Association officers [Chris Hays, Nancy Lai, Olga Lobban, Daniel Whiteson, Dan Cyr] are planning to bring copies of letters to the next GSA party so that the students can sign the letters and send them to their representatives to show support for funding of the physical sciences and the DOE Office of Science.

Comment (Herman): The HEPAP subpanel got a paper from students from Cornell regarding their opinions on the future of the field, and they apparently found this very helpful. Perhaps we should think about one for the June User's meeting.
A (Chris): Yes, maybe YPP would want to tackle that.
A (Robin): I'll bring it up with YPP.

FY2002 Budget Problems: Roger Rusack
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Roger spoke about the terrible state of funding this coming year for the DOE Office of Science universities and support labs. Whereas last year SLAC and FNAL were cut severely at the beginning of the process, this year, it is the universities that are suffering from drastic reductions. There seems to be a finite sum rule. This means a drop of ~$13.5M in "as spent" dollars (ie- not inflation corrected). His view is that this is a catastrophe for all of HEP. What this could mean realistically has been presented by Roger, and is very important. See his transparencies as well as the budget at:

http://hbar.stanford.edu/robine/budget/

Roger summarized the consequences of the cut, and said that every DOE university group has been asked to submit a budget 10% lower than before. This will clearly have to come out of personnel, and this means no new students, postdocs, or faculty for these groups, which incapacitates them, and results in a loss of prestige as well. We may not have a next generation of HEP people to work on the LHC or other projects if budgets are cut like this.

>From discussions with Mike Witherell, the proposal is that there should be a letter sent to Congress (like last year) explaining "this is the consequences of the cut". We want to be careful not to lab-bash while asking for funding for the universities and support labs (ANL, BNL, LBNL). It's important to emphasize that it's only a $13M problem and so it's a relatively easy fix, but an extremely important one. We would like to try to get the University Presidents to sign such letters as well, and we will circulate one hinting for FNAL/SLUO User's to get involved.

[n.b. See letter from Larry Nodulman to the User's List last week regarding our follow-ups to our Washington visit and the letters we want to send.]

** Larry presented his views during lunch.
Larry showed some excerpts from the budget with his commentary on it, pointing out that while Basic Energy Sciences is up +1.3% (effective cut since this is not inflation-corrected) and HEP is up +1.3%, the specific details of the language indicate that universities and support labs get only -4.7%. The language says that funding for FNAL and SLAC is "maintained" in order to exploit the physics at the new facilities. This together with the university cuts implies that all of the running of the experiments and analyzing of the data must be done by lab employees, which is of course ridiculous. The directorate agreed that the cuts in funding for universities and support labs are unacceptable and need to be fixed. They also pointed out that although there is an increase in total budget at FNAL and SLAC it shows up in Physics Research rather than Facility Operations as an artifact of a change in category for Capital Equipment. The UEC concluded that Roger draft a letter with Witherell to go out to the universities and that Larry and Patricia Rankin (SLUO chair) draft a letter for FNAL and SLAC users to send out emphasizing to our contacts from the Washington visit the catastrophe that such cuts would be.

User's Meeting: Peter Garbincius
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The HEPAP subpanel has decided to come to Fermilab to have the midwest region town meeting during this year's User's Meeting, which we have scheduled for June 11-12 (with New Perspectives on the 12th-13th). For this reason, the meeting will be dominated by *invited* public presentations on monday June 11th about the major projects of the laboratory. We will have this in the auditorium with streaming video available. We have 5 hours for presentations on Monday, but BNL got 1.5 days, so we will try to negotiate more time so that we can spill into Tuesday the 12th. The presentations on Monday will be followed by a town meeting in which user's can apply to give a 10 minute presentation on their viewpoints. [n.b. Solicitation for abstracts for such presentations was sent out Monday May 7th to the FNAL User's Org list.] After the town meeting we will follow up with a reception with the HEPAP subpanel. The plan for Tuesday the 12th is to schedule User's Meeting talks but to try not to have too many or to overlap too much with what was covered last year. We will have to work around the HEPAP subpanel schedule so how much we do depends on whether or not it spills into Tuesday. We'd like to invite DOE dignitaries and both Witherell and Dorfan to speak briefly as well. We are also going to try to invite Bob Eisenstein, head of physics research at NSF to come.

Comment (Robin): We should try to make sure we don't overdo it on Tuesday, and come up with a way to really steer people into the graduate student _New Perspectives_ conference since it begins Tuesday evening with a poster session and reception. We should also work hard at increasing the attendance to the _New Perspectives_ conference on Wednesday the 13th, perhaps by addressing the spokespeople of the FNAL experiments and asking them to encourage support for the graduate students and attendance to the talks. Another concern is that people get "talked out", so we should maybe have a smaller number of speakers but have them survey several topics.
Comment (Herman): I really think it's important to encourage people to send young physicists up to speak, and to try to arrange it so that everyone doesn't get up and walk out after a big name speaks, to the humiliation of the young person who has spent a lot of time preparing a talk.
Comment (Peter): We'll try and meet next week to start organizing talks for the meeting, and in the meantime I'll try to find out what the HEPAP schedule will be.

Reports: Vaia Papadimitriou
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Younger Physicists Subcommittee.
Vaia and Robin spoke to Bruce Chrisman and he was supportive of our idea to have a grad student and postdoc town meeting so that we can find out what their concerns are. We have scheduled this meeting for May 22nd, and Bruce has given us permission to order pizza and drinks for the meeting. We are thinking of in the future possibly inviting people from academia and industry to talk about their experiences. The first meeting, however, will likely introduce us, have a short presentation by a couple physics faculty, and then proceed into a discussion about what they are interested in.

Quality of Life subcommittee: Benn Tannenbaum
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Here are some recent complaints received:
** Why don't all the houses in the Village have ethernet connections?
** Why does it take so long for repairs in Village housing? (Reports indicate a range from 1 day to 3 weeks.)
** Mail takes too long. It goes to the FNAL office first and then takes unacceptably long to get delivered, causing bills to be late.
** When packages arrive, they aren't delivered and nobody is notified that they are there. Will look into why this is

happening.
** The gym is overheated, and the tennis nets are not up until very late in the season. We will refer them to the FNAL facilities committee (Dee Hahn et al).

Interactions feedback: Robin Erbacher
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We spoke about problems and suggestions regarding the notebook entitled _Interactions_ that is being developed by public affairs and some of the physicists. We took several of these notebooks with us on the Washington visit, and have some suggestions to the developers of the book. This information will go directly to the source.

Fin.
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The next UEC meeting will be on May 12th, followed by June 9th (by an email vote).