Minutes of the Feburary 10th, 2001 Meeting of the Fermilab Users Executive Committee

Attendees:
Robin Erbacher(<mailto:robine@fnal.gov> robine@fnal.gov)
Peter Garbincius(<mailto:garbincius@fnal.gov> garbincius@fnal.gov),
Sally Koutsoliotas(<mailto:koutslts@bucknell.edu>
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Jim Musser(<mailto:musser@bigbang.astro.indiana.edu>
musser@bigbang.astro.indiana.edu) (by video),
Larry Nodulman(<mailto:ljn@fnal.gov> ljn@fnal.gov) (chair),
Roger Rusack(<mailto:rusack@mnhep.hep.umn.edu>
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Rick St. Denis(<mailto:stdenis@fnal.gov> stdenis@fnal.gov),
Benn Tannenbaum(<mailto:benn@physics.ucla.edu> benn@physics.ucla.edu)
Gordon Watts(<mailto:gwatts@fnal.gov> gwatts@fnal.gov) (scribe),
Herman White(<mailto:hwhite@fnal.gov> hwhite@fnal.gov).

Absent:
Dan Amidei (<mailto:dan@fnal.gov> dan@fnal.gov)
Vaia Papadimitriou(<mailto:vaia@fnal.gov> vaia@fnal.gov),
Philip Yager(<mailto:yager@fnal.gov> yager@fnal.gov).

GSA Attendees (1999-2000 GSA):
Chris Hays (hays@fnal.gov <mailto:hays@fnal.gov>)

Larry Nodulman called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. The meeting focused on housing, public relations between Fermilab and the nearby community
(mostly the ongoing NuMI/MINOS blasting) and the upcoming Washington Trip.

1. Housing

After going over communications with experimental spokespersons (the collider
groups responded), the UEC unanimously voted to make the following reccomendation to Fermilab:

> The UEC requests that Fermilab remind experimental spokespeople and the housing office that, within the allocation to an experiment, the spokespeople may determing whether or not to renew a lease. That is, that they could, for example, choose to discontinue a domestic group who's lease runs out in favor of a foreign group if they decide that issues of language and transport create priority.

In the past Fermilab has arranged for extra offsite dormitory rooms, often at Aurora colledge. Other possible locations are being explored. Further inquiries were made about offsite transportation (BNL's bus was used as an example). Basically, the priority level for this needs to be decided, as it will likey come out of something else. It was proposed that a survey done, but only after a number of questions had been collected.

2. Public Affairs

Judy Jackson, head of Fermilab's PR department told the UEC about the current situation. The major topic of conversation was the NuMI/MINOS blasting. It is expected to last until summer. Fermilab has been careful to inform people of what is going on (town meetings, flyers, bulk mailings, meetings with neighborhood goups). However, the process hasn't been very smooth. She described a number of misunderstandings and what Fermilab is doing to repair them. There was a first open house, in which participants were taken to see the NuMI/MINOS site. About 60 people showed up. Turns out, however, one of the post offices didn't send out the Fermilab bulk-mail flyers until after the open house, and so they are scheduling a second one for March 3rd. Underlying this is that the tunnel blasting is much louder than they thought it was going to be. Further, it turns out what was thought to be the quiet blasting (tunnel as opposed to shaft) is noiseier. This tunnel blasting also occurs at night. On the other side of this, NuMI's schedule is extreemly tight. In order to meet the schedule they are already working 6 days a week and will move to 7 soon. Orginally, Fermilab said there would not be any blasting on Sundays. The public affairs department is also looking for better communication with the project managers so as to keep informed of changes in schedule like this. Fermilab has also installed ground vibration monitors in various resident's homes so they can see that the vibrations are less than the plaster cracking threshold.

As part of this effort, the PA department has started sending Ferminews to the surrounding residents (anyone who asks). Ferminews circulation is now up to 12,000.

Judy also reported on a phone opinion survey. For a long time Fermilab has wanted to do this, but the DOE office has maintained that was not a permissible use of DOE funds. After BNL, however, it was thought that a survey would be a good idea. Livermore was the first to try this, and they published their results in a local newspaper. The Inspector General (IG) is now investigated them for illegal use of funds. The Illinois Collition for Accelerator Research (ICAR) has agreed to fund and run such a survey for Fermilab, thereby bypassing that issue. They have gone through focus groups and are currently revising the survey. They will contract with a company to administer the survey and will pay for 1000 responses. It is hoped that the results of this survey will be used to plan future activities.

It was noted that the lab is considering another open house.

Judy wanted to thank the UEC and others for the huge amount of help offered for the small site tours and the ask-a-scientist program, and urged the UEC to find a way to maintain it.

On March 1st, a new website will go live. The Fermilab web site was the 2nd or third web site in the country, and put together for the top quark discovery. It has always been public oriented, and the current design maintains that. It has taken almost a year, and they have hired a consultant to do most of it (a graduate student). They are making arrangements for someone in the PA office to devote some time to maintaining it.

Finally, the PA office is collaborating with Fred Gilman to write a layman accessible version of the HEPAP white paper. A draft copy was shown in the meeting. It includes a presentors guide. It contains both graphics and text. It is aimed at the educated layperson.

3. The Washington Trip

A large collection of materials was distributed with the agenda. It included a tip sheet on how to conduct a meeting with a member of congress, the science committee membership, senate rosters, a copy of the letter sent to Hastert and and Gephardt, and signed by many members of congress on the Office of Science, house rosters, and, finally, listings of members of congress in each of the UEC's districts.

We were joined, by phone, by members of the SLAC Users Organization (SLUO) - Tricia Rankin, Homer Neal, Sridhara Dasu as well as the URA lobbyist
April Burke. We first discussed the timing of the proposed visit. Congress will
have a recess in April. By the end of this month there will be an overall budget blueprint. It will contain the overall plan, with a few focus areas. The
detailed budget will arrive the early in April. Most departments will be flat (which includes possible inflationary increases). The top priority is the tax cut, which is predicated on the surplusses, which is predicated on low government spending. Abramson (new secratary of energy) has made a big push for science, however the rumor is that DOE is being asked to cut almost 1 billion. At first blush, it looks like the Office of Science will be flat, with the DOE cuts coming out of other programs. Best time is to come in March, late march. We decided to make
the visits on March 28 and 29.

April then lead a discussion on the focus of the visit. First, scientists are great spokespeople for the field. It is good to point out the investment the government has made, and what exciting forefront research is occuring. This is an important point to make at a grass roots level, not just to members of important committees.

It was noted that in times of deficit, the budget committee has been important, as they would list the potential programs for cuts. However, no one completely understands the process in the surplus environment.

Homer, from SLUO, pointed out we need to talk about more than just particle physics. There are other experiments that HEP scientists are involved in, like GLAST, SSRL, etc. It was also pointed out it is important to make contact with local university lobbyists so that people aren't working cross-purposes.

April and Mike Witherell will attend the March 10th UEC meeting.

Procedures for making Congressional appointments were discussed.

4. Quality of Life

A part of the village is having its water pipes replaced in hopes of upgrading the distribution system, and also improving the water taste. If this is successful, then all of the village will be done. Currently, there are no plans to replace the piping inside the houses.

Rick has also discovered that it is, indeed, ok to put non-user pager numbers in the Fermi phone book. A test case is proceeding.

5. Users Meeting

Scheduling the users meeting is an exercise in running obstacle courses a bit blind. We must schedule around the Aspen PAC, Chicago Particle Accelerator Conference, Snowmass, CDF& D0 meetings, Mike W's schedule, and auditorium usage. Finally, 11th of June was settled upon. We are not yet limiting it to less than two days. Depends a bit on the interaction with other things (line drive, subpanel, etc.).

6. Outreach Committee

There is supposed to be a MINOS tour on March 3rd. And the idea of an accelerator
tour sometime after March 1st is also being looked into. There has been no luck contacting the SPS yet. And a young-persons town meeting is being discussed.

The next UEC meeting will be March 10.