

# **RHIC & AGS USERS' EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

(including minutes from the Computer Subcommittee Meeting)

**February 15, 2002**

## **COMPUTER SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

Thomas, Seto, Mitchell, and White-DePace, met with Arnie Peskin and Sue Sevia from the Information Technology Division to discuss user-computing needs just before the UEC meeting. Sevia stated that ITD has formal communication lines with Departments at Brookhaven but does not have a communication mechanism with User groups at Brookhaven. ITD's intention is to set-up a formal dialog with the RHIC & AGS user community. It was decided that there be a standing invitation for the representatives from ITD to join and/or report to the UEC during its monthly meetings. It was also suggested that this subcommittee link in some way to the Brookhaven Cyber Security Advisory Committee (CSAC), even if it was just to receive minutes of the CESAC meetings. Sevia will check into this.

Sevia noted that there are no mechanisms in place to see if "things work" from the user's point of view. Implementation of computer security measures is a good example of this. Although everyone acknowledges that computer security is important, there must be a forum where security policies that prevent science from being accomplished are discussed before implementation. Sevia also noted that up until this point, ITD has had its hands full just trying to meet security and DOE mandates. The time has come to think about user needs and concerns.

Thomas noted that there would be great value added to Brookhaven's strategic planning if user input on scientific computing was taken into consideration during the discussion and planning stages and not after-the-fact. Users are critical to the mission of science at Brookhaven and if ITD stops working, science at Brookhaven stops.

The key computing issues for Users at this time include:

- Remote log-ins and transferring data from off-site.
- Wireless DHC ports need to be more widely available at Brookhaven.
- Ethernet connections in the apartment area. It was noted that this project was scheduled for completion for the summer of 2001 and was delayed. The UEC asked Sevia to see if it would be completed by June of 2002. Sevia was asked to also check to see if the cottages would have access to the Ethernet.
- ITD needs to come up with a mechanism of educating the community on what they have to offer and how and who to contact when problems arise and a user needs help. White-DePace will work with Sevia on ways of accomplishing this. It was mentioned that a lot of information exists on the web, but the users don't know that it is there. It was also mentioned that ITD used to publish a newsletter, but no longer does.
- Thomas recommended that BNL bring back site-licensing for software. This would be a cost-savings for Brookhaven and for the users at Brookhaven. Sevia will check into this with the Software Subcommittee at ITD.

Users should call the ITD Help Desk with problems. This is a 24/7 operation. Engelage noted that he called the ITD Help Desk with questions regarding the recent "ssh Alert." The Help Desk could not provide him with any answers and he did not receive a call back until Wednesday the following week (six days after the alert was posted). It was noted that ITD should consider when announcements are made—Friday afternoon is problematic.

It was recommended that Don Flemming attend the next UEC meeting.

## **USERS' EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Committee Members: B. Basselack, B. Chrien, J. Engelage (phone), S. Kettell, J. Mitchell, R. Seto (chair), J. Thomas

Guests: L. Barry, B. Kirk, T. Kirk, D. Lowenstein, T. Ludlam, A. Peskin, M. Sadler, S. Sevia, P. Steinberg, M. Vasquez, and S. White-DePace.

Users Executive Committee Meeting started with welcoming remarks from Seto.

### **NASA Presentation**

Marcelo Vasquez presented an overview of the NASA program at AGS. The NASA experiments are scheduled to run in April 2002. NASA exposes biological samples to low doses of heavy ions and study its effects. They use molecules, cells, DNA, and small animals – mostly mice and rats. This experimental program is to understand the health risk from chronic exposures to space radiation in preparation for a return to the Moon and a trip to Mars. The top research fields are radiation, cancer induction, central nervous system damage, and DNA damage.

The program is funded by the Space Radiation Health Organization and NASA. Until 1992, the NASA program was conducted at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. The program moved to BNL in 1995. AGS provides ions, silicon, and gold beams to the experiment. NASA uses approximately 150 hours of beam per year. Brookhaven is presently constructing the Booster Applications Facility (BAF). This facility will consist of an accelerator and a building containing support facilities for the NASA experimenters. BAF will be commissioned in the fall of 2002 and scheduled to be completed in 2003. NASA will continue to use the animal and laboratory facilities in the Medical Department. BAF will also be used for materials science and physics research. No classified research is planned.

### **Immigration**

Brenda Kirk from Human Resources made a presentation about regulations concerning various visa categories, immigration regulations, and the changes that have occurred in the U.S. Consulates and in Immigration since September 11<sup>th</sup>. These changes affect citizens of other countries who are participating in scientific programs in the United States. Brenda prepared a handout that addressed different visa types and key issues to keep in mind for each of them. Her notes are undergoing editing and will

be put on the RHIC & AGS Users' Center web page. White-DePace noted that the changes in immigration policy Brenda outlined in her presentation are the reason the Users' Center will be moving towards a formal check-in/check-out procedure. Some key issues that everyone should keep in mind are:

- Be kind, patient, and courteous with the Immigration Officers and Consular officials.
- Keep copies of everything (e.g., applications, letters) pertaining to your passport and/or visa in a separate file. Do not discard anything.
- If you are a citizen from a country other than the U.S., make sure you know the new regulations and approximate time necessary to visa process before traveling to conferences or business trips outside the United States.
- Make sure you leave yourself enough time to obtain the appropriate visa. It can take as long as 14 weeks.
- Never use the word "work" or "collaborate" on applications for B-1 visas. Brenda advises using "participating in research" in the interview and on the written documentation.
- Make sure your visa is not marked B-2 when entering the country. Get it changed to B-1 before leaving the Immigration Officer who places the notation on the I-94 at the airport. If the person receives a B-2 designation, it must be changed within 24 hours of the determination of the designation. The individual can try to get help available at Terminal #3 behind an office called INSPASS. It is helpful to have a U.S. citizen accompany the individual.
- On February 1, 2002, new laws pertaining to issuing NY State driver's licenses took effect. The laws state that in order to obtain a license, foreign nationals must have a visa stamp in their passports that is good for at least 11 months. This is creating major problems. Brenda is actively working on this issue. She has already contacted Englebright's office and they will contact Schumer's and Clinton's offices.

## Budget Summary

Tom Kirk provided an overview of the budget for RHIC and AGS. The good news was RHIC received an increase of \$16 million. The bad news was the budget was cut for the AGS experiments. The table below provides a picture of the present funding scenario.

Office/Project	Budget Increase/Decrease
DOE	> 2.7%
NNSA	> 5.7%
Office of Science	> 0.1%
Environment	> 0.2%
Nuclear Physics	> 23 million*
High Energy Physics	> 11.8 million
SNS	< 52 million
BES	> 20 million

\*It was noted that 16 million of this 23 million went to RHIC. This will put stress on the rest of the nuclear physics community.

Brookhaven's Directorate, Marge Lynch (CIGPA), and the Associate Laboratory Directors met with Washington lobbyists recently. The outcome of this is that Grucci, Schumer, and Clinton were each given two issues of importance at Brookhaven to address. Restoration of AGS funding was given to both Grucci and Clinton.

Kirk noted that the decision to cancel AGS funding came from very high up in Washington. This was not a decision made at the High Energy and Nuclear Physics office level. The decision was made at the Secretary's Office level. Kirk urged the UEC to pursue this issue because there are always add-ons to the budget. He also noted that 2002 is an election year and the House and Senate are both delicately balanced party wise. Kirk also stated that a letter of support from the UEC on behalf of the community would be extremely helpful.

Seto noted that the President's budget was very strongly worded. It specifies that nuclear physics was to be increased and AGS funding was to be cut. AGS funding is only 1% of the HEP budget, so Seto was puzzled why funding was cut. The fight to restore AGS funding is not about money, it is about principal. Seto spoke with Sally Dawson about her read on the budget. Dawson believes that Washington is following the HEPAP recommendations in which AGS experiment 949 and 861 did not make the list of priorities for the country.

The remainder of the meeting was on discussions on how to best proceed in getting the AGS funding reinstated. The UEC needs to address the New York, the country, and the international piece in different ways. They need to pursue a letter-writing campaign and visits to Congressional staff. The experiments need to pursue letter writing and contacting their appropriate Congressional people. In conjunction with this, the UEC needs to also initiate a letter campaign, which includes letters of support from the RHIC experimenters. E-mails, letters, and assistance with Congressional staff will be made available to the community within the next few weeks.

## **UEC Subcommittee Reports**

These reports were not presented at the meeting due to lack of time. They were provided by the Chairs via e-mail after the meeting.

**Thesis Award:** An announcement of the Thesis Award and deadline date was sent to the RHIC & AGS community and the experimental Spokespersons on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Subsequent reminders will be sent on/about March 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Seto has solicited and received some recommendations from the community for candidates for the judging panel. Work is continuing on this.

**Annual Users' Meeting:** The Users' Meeting subcommittee has discussed the date of this year's annual meeting at BNL. Taking into consideration major conferences, summer housing, and other dates, an e-mail was sent around to the UEC, we are proposing the dates of September 19-20 (Thursday/Friday) or September 20-21

(Friday/Saturday), with some slight preference towards the latter, due to lower airfares and teaching schedules. We would appreciate any feedback on these proposed dates.

**By-laws**. There were no meetings of the subcommittee on By-Laws prior to the last UEC meeting.

**Quality of Life**. Jeff was offered and has accepted a position on the Brookhaven Quality of Life Committee.

**Computing**. Addressed above.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Submitted by Susan White-DePace