

Minutes of the Fall 2017 UCOAC Meeting

October 31st 2017
Physics & Astronomy Building
UCLA, Los Angeles, CA

Attending in person: Claire Max (UCO Director, UCSC), Gillian Wilson (UCOAC Chair, UCR), Aaron Barth (UCI), Michael Cooper (UCI), Andrea Ghez (UCLA), Ian McLean (UCLA), Michael Fitzgerald (UCLA), Tommaso Treu (UCLA), Anna Korossy (UCSC)

Attending remotely: Marusa Bradac (UCD), Jean Brodie (UCSC), Alex Filippenko (UCB), Ben Mazin (UCSB), Shelley Wright (UCSD), Andy Skemer (UCSC)

Absent: Michael Bolte (UCSC), Lori Lubin (UCD), Garth Illingworth (UCSC), Connie Rockosi (UCSC)

General information

The meeting began with introductions and a welcome to new UCOAC member Michael Fitzgerald (UCLA).

UCO members were reminded that they serve as a primary conduit of information flow between the UCO director and the astronomical community at their campuses. To ensure full campus representation, UCOAC campus representatives were requested to ask a campus colleague to attend any meeting they themselves are unable to attend.

Instrumentation mini-grant proposals

The UCOAC went into executive session to review mini-grant proposals submitted in response to the annual mini-grant program. In 2017, “instrument” and faculty-service” mini-grants were combined into one Call for Proposals. Ten mini-grant proposals were received, broadly distributed amongst the different UC campuses and labs. The proposals spanned a range of topics related to Keck, Lick, and TMT, and included projects for design of new instrumentation, upgrades of existing instruments, development of software pipelines, fundraising and conference organizing activities.

The funding allocated by UCO to this mini-grant call was \$300K, and the funding was oversubscribed by approximately 2.3:1. UCOAC members reviewed the proposals focusing on their relevance to UCO's goals of excellence in instrumentation and technology development, support of the capabilities of the Keck, Lick, and TMT observatories, benefit to the UC astronomical community, technical feasibility, and management plan. The final decision on funding will be made by Director Max. PIs will be notified of the outcome of the proposal review as soon as possible and results will be posted to the UCO website. It is anticipated that the 2018 Call will be released on a similar timescale as the 2017 Call.

UCO Business

Director Max presented an overview of UCO's annual budget and answered questions from members of the UCOAC.

UCOP has requested that, as with other Multi-campus Research Units (MRUs), UCO submits an annual report. With assistance from the campus representatives on the UCOAC, who were tasked with collating activities from their campus (papers resulting from Keck and Lick usage, graduate students supported, grants etc.), UCO staff and faculty prepared the report over the summer and submitted it in September of 2017. Director Max led a debrief discussion with the UCOAC of how better to mitigate the impact on staff and faculty time in producing future annual reports.

Director Max also provided an update on a report and a presentation on UC Observatories which was made at the September 2017 meeting of the UC Regents by Director Max, Interim Deputy Director Wilson, UC Santa Cruz Chancellor George Blumenthal, UC Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies Arthur Ellis and UC Provost and Executive Vice President Michael Brown. Director Max gave a brief update on the status of the Keck MOU which will be presented to the UC Regents at their January 2018 meeting for ratification.

Keck Observatory

Aaron Barth (SSC) presented news and updates from the most recent Keck SSC meeting in June, and issues which will be discussed at the upcoming SSC meeting in November.

NASA has awarded a five-year Cooperative Agreement with the California Association for Research in Astronomy to continue the science program at Keck Observatory from 2018-2022. Unfortunately, at this time NASA did not approve an additional request for funds to support data reduction pipelines and more powerful KOA (Keck Observatory Archive).

Due to the increasing number of proposals being received, the time investment required to serve on a Keck TAC, especially on the extragalactic TAC is becoming increasingly burdensome on the faculty. The UCOAC discussed some suggestions which were put forward by the TAC chairs (after consultation with current TAC members), to mitigate the burden of serving on a Keck TAC.

Due to the increasing popularity of remote observing at Keck and Lick, usage of the campus remote rooms is steadily increasing. A UCO working group is investigating more cost-effective solutions for initial purchases and long-term support of remote rooms, including back-up for network failures (an ISDN link is currently mandated by Keck).

Subsequent to the Fall UCOAC meeting, [NIRES saw first light in January 2018](#). It will be available for *shared risk* science beginning in February.

Automated Planet Finder (APF)

Brad Holden presented an update on the Automated Planet Finder (APF). The allocation of APF time is evolving towards a majority of the time being available for proposals from the entire UC community. For the 2018A semester, 65% of the time on the APF will be open for UC-wide proposals.

TMT

Michael Bolte (TMT SAC) provided a presentation summarizing recent news about the project status, including the ongoing contested case hearing in Hilo. From November 7-9th, the 2017 TMT Science Forum “Beyond First Light”, will be held in Mysore, India. From April 2nd-6th 2018, the conference "Shedding Light on the Dark Universe with Extremely Large Telescopes", will be held at UCLA. This is the second installment of a three-part conference series aimed at gathering input from the dark matter and dark energy communities to optimize the operations and instrumentation at future extremely large 30-m class optical infrared telescopes. Tommaso Treu (TMT SAC) is the Chair of the Organizing Committee.

Winter Meeting

The winter (northern California) meeting will be held at the SETI Institute on Friday February 2nd 2018 from 10am-5pm.

These minutes were prepared by UCOAC chair Gillian Wilson