

Minutes of the Spring 2017 UCOAC Meeting

May 22 2017
SETI Institute
Mountain View, CA

Attending in person: Claire Max (UCO Director, UCSC), Gillian Wilson (UCOAC Chair, UCR), Alex Filippenko (UCB), Marusa Bradac (UCD), Michael Cooper (UCI), Andy Skemer (UCSC), Jean Brodie (UCSC), Garth Illingworth (UCSC), Ian McLean (UCLA), Connie Rockosi (UCSC), Brad Holden (UCSC), Anna Korossy (UCSC), Ilse Ungeheuer (UCSC), Kevin Bundy (UCSC), Michael Liu (University of Hawaii)

Attending remotely: Ben Mazin (UCSB), Alice Shapley (UCLA), Shelley Wright (UCSD), Aaron Barth (UCI), Andrea Ghez (UCLA), Tommaso Treu (UCLA), Lori Lubin (UCD), Michael Bolte (UCSC), Graeme Smith (UCSC), Graseilah Coolidge (UCSC)

General information

The committee members were thanked for their service on the UCOAC during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Keck Observatory

Brodie (SSC co-chair), Barth (SSC) and Ghez (SSC) presented news and updates from the most recent Keck Science Steering Committee meeting in April 2017, and discussed issues likely to arise at the upcoming SSC meeting in June 2017.

KCWI-B was commissioned in spring 2017 and is performing well. The team expects to complete all high priority commissioning tasks in May. KCWI-B will be offered in shared risk mode in 2017B.

The Keck I Deployable Tertiary is currently in Integration and Test phase. It is expected to ship in late summer. NIRES arrived at the summit in mid-April. It is expected to be available for shared risk in 2018A. The OSIRIS Imager upgrade is expected to be installed in August 2017 (see also McLean's UCLA IR Lab report). Repair of the primary mirror segments at Keck continues to ramp up. Full production is expected to start in May 2017.

Several Keck Science community meetings are upcoming. These include the Jerry Nelson Symposium on July 13th & 14th, and the 2017 Keck Science Meeting on September 14th & 15th, which will be preceded by a "Time Domain Astronomy at Keck" meeting on September 13th.

Keck has launched a by-invitation-only donor-funded Visiting Scholars Program, targeting junior junior/early career scientists.

Keck has released a new call for White Papers with a deadline of June 8th. A total of \$100k is available.

UCO Business

UCOP MRU Annual Report: UCO has been requested to submit an annual report to UCOP in September. Over the summer, campus representatives will be asked to assist in gathering and checking data e.g., awards, publications, grants, graduate students, conferences hosted etc.

2018 Keck Funding Transition: The existing agreement expires on March 31st 2018. Max is leading UC negotiations and currently working through key issues (operations funding levels, night exchanges, funds for instrumentation, etc.). The main issues will be presented for approval at the CARA Board meeting in June 2017, with the full draft presented for approval at the CARA Board meeting in November 2017, and to the UC Regents in January of 2018. The UCO strategic planning initiative has been delayed because of the Keck MOU negotiations but Max anticipates having the committee and task forces in place before September 2017.

New Personnel: An offer has been made in the UCSC Senior Instrumentation Faculty Search. Although UCO had some funds available to incentivize systemwide hiring of new faculty aligned with UCO instrumentation and goals, no eligible candidates were identified this year.

Communications: Ilse Ungeheuer gave an update on the ongoing overhaul of the UCO website which is migrating to a Content Management System, a process which is expected to be complete by June 2017. Input is requested to shape the information architecture/site map outline. It is anticipated that UCO will develop a communications strategic plan in coordination with the anticipated upcoming UCO strategic planning process (see above).

China-US Astronomy Exchange Program ("CUAEP"): In 2017, UCSC is serving as the UC pilot campus (along with University of Hawaii). In the coming years, it is anticipated that other campuses may also be interested in joining. Sandy Faber requested campus representatives confirm the names of campus contacts. There were to confirmed to be Alex Filippenko (UCB), Chris Fassnacht (UCD), Aaron Barth (UCI), Gillian Wilson (UCR), and George Fuller/Shelley Wright (UCSD).

Lick Observatory

Max reported developments since the winter 2017 UCOAC meeting. A new telescope operator has been hired and a new support astronomer is being recruited. There is an exciting possibility of having google-funded self-driving AO at Lick. Filippenko is leading this initiative. A number of infrastructure upgrades have taken place (main building driveway and water tank roads, fire suppression brush clearing). The relative priority of others is still under discussion (36" refractor dome floor repair, major electrical upgrades, fire alarms, new projects proposed for the Astrograph Dome).

While an existing ToO policy exists for Lick, it is designed for interrupts of up to one hour of clock time. Max received a request for full night ToO interrupts on the Nickel telescope. She is preparing a written policy which she will circulate to Nickel stakeholders and present for discussion and endorsement at a future UCOAC meeting.

Automated Planet Finder (APF)

Brad Holden presented the case for APF's importance to K2 and TESS exoplanet follow up. He presented a plan for APF to transition to a long-term goal of 90% of time going to UC observers by 2018A, mostly for long-term projects. He also presented a draft 2017B Call for Proposals (50% of time going to UC observers; no long-term projects). The UCOAC endorsed both the long-term plan and the draft Call. In the fall of 2017, UCO plans to host a workshop for UC exoplanet astronomers to help prepare for the transition.

WFOS

Kevin Bundy (PI) made a presentation to UCOAC on the first-generation TMT WFOS instrument.

UCLA Infrared Lab

Ian McLean presented the 2017 UCLA Infrared Lab report. The group currently comprises three professors, nine professional staff, and five graduate students. The unexpected September 2016 MOSFIRE incident and subsequent successful repair to the ZnSe lens caused a ripple effect delay both to the OSIRIS imager and NIRSPEC upgrade.

IRIS: In November 2016 IRIS (PI Larkin) had a very successful formal preliminary design review for the optical and mechanical design, and was given approval to continue working on the electrical and software systems, as well as a full cost and schedule analysis. The next review will be in September 2017.

OSIRIS Imager Replacement: The majority of fabrication and testing is complete. The imager is expected to be installed early in 2017B. The effort is being led by Michael Fitzgerald.

NIRSPEC Upgrade: Conceptual Design Review (CDR) will occur this summer. Delivery is planned in spring 2018. The PI is Michael Fitzgerald.

TMT

Mike Bolte summarized recent news about the project. Garth Illingworth (SAC UC co-chair) described TMT instrumentation phasing scenarios.

2017 Fall Meeting

The fall UCOAC meeting will be held in southern California (likely UCLA), on a date yet TBD.

These minutes were prepared by UCOAC chair Gillian Wilson