

Minutes of the UCOAC Meeting
UCLA, 2015 February 9

Attending in person: Aaron Barth (UCI; Chair of UCOAC), Claire Max (UCSC; UCO Interim Director), Ian McLean (UCLA), Gillian Wilson (UCR), Garth Illingworth (UCSC), Ben Mazin (UCSB), Shelley Wright (UCSD), Lori Lubin (UCD), Andrea Ghez (UCLA), Alice Shapley (UCLA), Mike Rich (UCLA), James Larkin (UCLA).

Attending remotely: Alex Filippenko (UCB), Chris Fassnacht (UCD), Graeme Smith (UCSC), Crystal Martin (UCSB)

Introductory messages. The UCOAC welcomed new member Shelley Wright, representing UCSD.

TMT.

Garth Illingworth presented a summary of recent news regarding the TMT partnership, board activities, and SAC activities. A major news item is that India joined TMT as a full partner in December 2014.

In the 2014 call for new participants in the Instrument Science Definition Teams, there were 45 new applicants including 2 new applicants from UC. Updates to the TMT Detailed Science Case are in progress, with a goal to send the updated DSC to the SAC for approval at the April 2015 SAC meeting. For 2015, planned activities include drafting "simulated" TMT key programs to identify science and operations issues and focus on future instrumentation needs. This will be a major topic for the June 2015 TMT Science Forum, to be held during June 23-25 in Washington DC. There will be some funding available for UC participants to attend this meeting. UCOAC members were asked to send suggestions for meeting topics to the SAC members.

For the IRMS instrument, a set of engineering mini-studies will be conducted, similar to the ongoing WFOS mini-studies. Bahram Mobasher (UCR) is leading work on the OCDD. For the WFOS mini-studies, the plan is that the studies will be completed and reviewed in spring 2015.

Keck.

Work is under way to follow up the Fall 2014 strategic planning meeting. The Observatory directors (WMKO, UC, and Caltech) and the SSC co-chairs are charged with leading the development of the strategic plan. UCOAC members discussed a variety of possible initiatives and how to incorporate them in the strategic plan, including wide-field imaging, new radial velocity instrumentation for exoplanet science, enabling visitor instruments, and new AO capabilities. A key goal is to focus on the capabilities of Keck in the era of JWST, LSST, and ground-based ELTs, and to ensure that Keck maintains compelling capabilities in this future landscape. Enhancing Keck's partnership with NASA is also a major goal. Some funding may be available through UCO to support work on simulations of instrument capabilities or other initiatives related to Keck strategic planning.

Keck is currently conducting a search for a "chief scientist", which will be a new position for the Observatory. An operational change at Keck is that the observatory is moving to a mode where

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there is only 1 staff member at the summit during the night, and the observing assistants work remotely from Waimea during the nights.

Claire Max described plans to implement a cadence observing mode within UC's Keck nights. This would be done by setting aside some number of nights in order to pool together time-domain science observations that could all be done during specifically dedicated cadence-observing nights or half-nights. However, it is not known how much demand there will be for this mode of observing, or whether it will be possible to pool together observations from different programs that will be compatible in terms of instrumentation or cadence requirements so that half or full nights could be optimally used. It was suggested that UCO should send a call for brief "letters of intent" for UC observers who have an interest in proposing for this observing mode, to assess the level of demand and the instruments and cadences that would be requested.

Lick.

A major development was the recent announcement of Google's donation of \$1M to support Lick Observatory. UCOAC members congratulated and thanked Alex Filippenko for his efforts in securing this donation.

The consulting firm SeriesC will be beginning a project to define a strategic plan for Lick. A key first step is to define the vision for future Lick science, since this will feed into defining the fund-raising and operations plan. SeriesC personnel will be conducting interviews with Lick stakeholders. Additionally, Claire Max plans to visit all of the UC campuses in spring in order to discuss future plans for Lick and other UCO issues.

A ShaneAO users workshop was recently held. When atmospheric conditions are good, ShaneAO is working extremely well (PSF images show multiple Airy rings), but the system still needs improvement for robustness and reliability and would benefit from more automation so that less staff effort would be required to operate it. Currently, up to 70 nights/year are allocated to AO, and this is limited by the staff effort required to run the laser and AO system. The number of laser hours per night are also manpower-limited. An MRI proposal was submitted in January to support ongoing improvements to ShaneAO, and UC observers contributed 16 science cases for the proposal. Major goals include automating the operations of the AO system and laser, increasing the laser brightness, and enabling queue scheduling and ToO observations.

Keck TAC policies.

The UCOAC discussed proposed changes to Keck TAC policies and procedures, based on a set of proposed policies circulated prior to the meeting by UCOAC Chair Barth and other suggestions contributed by UCOAC members. These policy changes were motivated in part by the change to a new system in which the Keck TAC chairs can now be selected from any UC campus (not just from UCSC), and it is important to provide necessary information to TAC chairs and members to ensure smooth functioning of the TAC meetings. The proposed new policies included guidelines for information that UCO should provide to the TAC chairs and members, guidelines for LMAP proposal submission and resubmission, and guidelines for TAC operations including grading and ranking of proposals, assigning nights recommended, and

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providing review comments to proposers. (Following the meeting, Barth wrote a revised set of policy guidelines taking into account the UCOAC discussion outcomes, and submitted the revised guidelines to UCOAC for review and to UCO Interim Director Max for implementation.)

UCO budget and support for systemwide instrumentation activities.

Interim Director Max has set aside \$100K for mini-grants that can be used by UC faculty and researchers to support instrumentation, technology development, and other activities. The goal is to send out a call for proposals and distribute funding in spring 2015.

Lick Transition Team.

Max described ongoing work by the Lick Observatory Transition Team, a group commissioned by UC Provost Aimee Dorr to examine the state of facilities and physical plant at Lick. Members of the team have extensive expertise in life cycle modeling of major facilities. The transition team is preparing estimates of replacement cost for all buildings and is projecting maintenance costs out to 2023. A small number of unused and dilapidated buildings may be demolished in the near future.

UCO Director Search.

Gillian Wilson gave a brief summary of the activities of the UCO Director Search Committee. Interviews are scheduled for shortly after the UCOAC meeting. The committee will write a report on the candidates' strengths and weaknesses but will not rank the candidates. This report will be submitted to the UC Provost. The committee reports that the applicant pool is very strong, and the search is proceeding on schedule.

IRIS.

James Larkin and Shelley Wright gave a presentation on the design of the TMT IRIS spectrograph, and major open issues and design decisions for the preliminary design phase.

For the last portion of the meeting, the UCOAC went into executive session.

These minutes were prepared by UCOAC Chair Barth.