

Minutes of the Fall 2018 UCOAC Meeting

October 26th 2018
SETI Institute
Mountain View, CA

Attending in person: Claire Max (UCO Director, UCSC), Gillian Wilson (UCOAC Chair, UCR), Andy Skemer (UCSC), Michael Fitzgerald (UCLA), Jean Brodie (UCSC), Connie Rockosi (UCO), Anna Korossy (UCO), Brad Holden (UCO), Natasha Pedroza (UCO)

Attending remotely: Marusa Bradac (UCD), Alex Filippenko (UCB), Ben Mazin (UCSB), Shelley Wright (UCSD), Michael Cooper (UCI), Andrea Ghez (UCLA), Aaron Barth (UCI), Tommaso Treu (UCLA), Ian McLean (UCLA), Michael Bolte (UCSC)

Absent: Garth Illingworth (UCSC), Lori Lubin (UCD)

General information

The meeting began with introductions. Andrea Ghez (UCLA) has replaced Michael Fitzgerald as the UCLA campus representative, and Michael Fitzgerald has replaced Andrea Ghez as a Keck Science Steering Committee (SSC) member (and ex-officio member of the UCOAC).

UCO Advisory Committee 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.

Keck Observatory:

Jean Brodie (SSC co-chair), Aaron Barth (SSC) and Andrea Ghez (SSC) presented news and updates from the most recent Keck Science Steering Committee meeting held in June 2018 and discussed issues likely to arise at the upcoming SSC meeting to be held later in November 2018.

Keck Telescope Allocation Policies and Committees (TACs):

The UCOAC and Director Max discussed the following Keck-related topics which had been raised in advance of the meeting by members of the UCOAC or by TAC chairs.

- The three TAC 2018B pilot (Galactic Nearby Universe and Distant Universe) was generally agreed to have proven very successful and will be retained in 2019A.
- Marusa Bradac presented some very constructive written feedback on behalf of the Distant Universe TAC about how the TAC process could be improved.
- Andy Skemer presented some very constructive written feedback on behalf of the Galactic TAC about suggested changes to the Target of Opportunity (ToO) policy, especially with respect to minimizing the impact of ToO triggers..
- Andy Skemer also presented a written request from thirteen assistant professors requesting that the UCO consider allowing postdocs to PI Keck proposals.

Director Max agreed to set up working groups to better study the suggestions, and to implement them where appropriate. Gillian Wilson volunteered to assist.

UCO Business

- **Annual Budget** Director Max presented an overview of UCO's annual budget and answered questions from members of the UCOAC.
- **UCOP Multi-campus Research Units (MRU) Annual Report** Director Max presented highlights from the 2018 annual report. In September of 2019, a five-year report will be required which will be reviewed by UCORP and UCOP. Director Max and Connie Rockosi led a discussion of what would likely be required, and how to mitigate the impact on staff and faculty time in producing this five-year report.
- **Chief Development Officer** Natasha Pedroza was appointed in June of 2018. She attended the meeting and was welcomed by the UCOAC.
- **AO Lab Director:** Phil Heinz (University of Arizona) will take up his position at UCO on February 1st 2019.
- **The Deputy Director search** is ongoing. A systemwide search committee has been formed and a shortlist is expected to be finalized by the end of the year.

Lick Observatory

- The Astrograph Dome has been readied to receive Shelley Wright's prototype SETI instrument.
- A new snow plough has been purchased
- Repairs have been carried out on several staff residences
- The Observational Astronomy Workshop continues to be very successful. Plans to sustain it long term were discussed. In 2018 it was oversubscribed and there was a discussion of how to ensure access in the future.
- "La Noche de las Estrellas" continues to be very popular.
- An NSF Advanced Technologies and Instrumentation (ATI) proposal to upgrade the Automated Planet Finder (APF) will be submitted in 2018.

TMT

Mike Bolte summarized recent news about the project.

A report on the most recent Science Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting was presented by Tommaso Treu (UC SAC co-Chair)

- **WFOS.** At the Fall 2018 SAC meeting, the slit-mask instrument concept "Xchange-WFOS" was selected in preference to the fiber-based instrument concept "Fiber-WFOS". More details of the two concept designs may be found [here](#).
- **Second Generation Instrumentation.** White Papers have been reviewed and ranked and the Project will contact PIs shortly to discuss next steps which will depend on the availability of funding.
- The National Academies have announced "Astro 2020", the next Astronomy & Astrophysics Decadal Survey. [Astro 2020 Science White Papers](#) are due January 18th

2019. [Note: Now postponed to February 19th.]

- NOAO-TMT-GMT are partnering to submit a joint proposal to the NSF to support major participation of US in both telescopes.

Upcoming TMT conferences:

- The [2018 TMT Science Forum](#) will be held in Pasadena from December 10th-12th. The theme for the 2018 Forum is "Breakthrough Science with the Thirty-Meter-Telescope".
- The first in a series of three "[Extremely Big Eyes in the Early Universe](#)" conferences will be held at UCLA from January 28th – February 1st 2019. The second and third conferences in the series will be held in Japan in March and Italy in September of 2019.

Instrumentation mini-grant proposals

The UCOAC went into executive session to review mini-grant proposals submitted in response to the annual mini-grant program. Eight 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, and fundraising activities.

2019 Winter Meeting

The winter (southern California) UCOAC meeting will be held at UCLA on Wednesday February 6th 2019 from 10am-5pm.