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Distributed to staff, users, organizations and others
involved in the Gemini Observatory.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE GEMINI BOARD

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The Gemini Board has recently completed an intense and rewarding retreat, designed to address our vision for the future of our Observatory and how it might be realized. Our deliberations were tractable only because of the enormous amount of discussion and planning that you, the members of the community, and the Observatory have undertaken in preparation for the next years of operation. We emerged from our discussion excited by the vision, united in our determination to pursue it, and fully justified in our confidence and pride in an institution, the Gemini Observatory and its staff, that only a decade ago was little more than plans on paper. As a result, we want to share this vision, as well as some of our thoughts about it, with the Gemini community.

Vision Statement

We are poised to advance into an exciting and challenging scientific era, having created a first-rate institution, the Gemini Observatory. We see the observatory establishing a leadership role in a global effort to define, address, and solve compelling scientific questions. The answers to these questions will have a fundamental impact

on our view of the universe and our place in it. Gemini, by exploiting its unique strengths and capabilities, will be a keystone in that global effort. Among our strengths are the breadth of the partnership, the diversity and depth of our communities and staffs, our connections with other institutions sharing common scientific aspirations, and the energy and vision of our Observatory.

In pursuit of our vision of leadership, the Observatory's mission is:

- to provide observing capability that will enable the Gemini community to be a leader in the global scientific quest;
- to remain an agile, responsive, innovative organization maximizing its use of the strengths of the partnership;
- to initiate and continually strengthen partnerships with other institutions in the pursuit of scientific aspirations we hold in common with the global community; and
- to explore new modes of astronomical observation, and to lead in the evolution of the necessary cultural, managerial, and institutional changes.

Derivatives of that Vision and Actions to realize the mission goals

The Board re-affirms its endorsement of the scientific goals of the Aspen program, as expressions of the aspirations of the entire Gemini community. The Board renews its pledge to actively pursue efforts to find the resources that enable the Gemini community to address these scientific issues in a highly competitive environment.

To that end, the Board charges the Director of the Observatory to cost the high-priority Aspen instrument complement as recommended by the Gemini Science Committee, and for which planning has begun through design and feasibility studies.

The Board also supports efforts to find creative and innovative ways to address the scientific goals expressed in the Aspen report, and so charges the Director to pursue arrangements with other observatories to provide instrumentation capabilities beyond those available or practical for the Gemini telescopes.

The Board also encourages the Director to continue exploring upgrade options to

the acquisition and guidance system with, for example, an infrared wavefront sensor, and the inclusion of an adaptive secondary for Gemini North. The Board considers it the role of the Gemini Science Committee to include the adaptive secondary in their consideration of priorities within the recommended Aspen instrumentation suite.

Noting the current high demand for queue-scheduled observations expressed by the Gemini community, the Board charges the Observatory to plan for, and cost measures to guarantee, a vital scientific staff capable of supporting 100%

queue, while still providing the option for classical observing. This operating model is expected to provide maximum flexibility for scheduling of telescope time, allow the observatory to explore innovative ways for users to interact with the queue, to continue to work to enable eavesdropping, and to arrive at scheduling options that remove the current three-night minimum on classically scheduled runs.

The Board reiterates its support of enhanced data reduction pipeline processing and delivery of processed data to the user. Further, the Board considers it an appropriate goal to set for each

instrument that data will be processed to the degree that all impediments to further reduction and analysis have been removed before data are provided to the user. The Board recognizes that this goal requires the definition of a processing procedure that is specific to each instrument, both those existing and in progress, and urges the Gemini Science Committee to take this consideration up as soon as possible. The Board also charges the Observatory to plan for and cost data reduction capability that will provide sufficiently processed data to the user and the Gemini Science Archive.



Circumpolar star trails over Gemini North (left) and Gemini South (right) together in new poster available for download at: www.gemini.edu/posters. See page 16 for more details on the new Gemini poster and image series.