

OPERATIONS WORKING GROUP MEETING #17

Warwick Arms Hotel, Warwick, UK

29-30 July 2009

FINAL MINUTES

Attending: Dennis Crabtree (Gemini), Tim Davidge (Canada), Inger Jorgensen (Gemini), Sebastian Lopez (Chile), Bryan Miller (Gemini), Chris Onken (Australia), Bernadette Rodgers (Gemini), Marilia Sartori (Brazil), Ilona Soechting (Chair – U.K.), Verne Smith (U.S.A.),

Attending via telecon: Colin Aspin (Hawaii), Scot Kleinman (Gemini)

Action Items and Resolutions

Resolution Item 17.1 – For classical programs, the Phase I technical reviews must encompass the backup program including backup targets and observing conditions. For programs switched to classical at a later point, a valid backup program must be established before the ITAC.

Resolution Item 17.2 – Introduction of a word limit of suggested 900 words for all partners enforceable at submission point for all proposals. This resolution will come into force after ITAC approval.

Implemented at 1000 words for science and tech and 200 words for abstract

Resolution Item 17.3 - Future OpsWg meetings will take place at the observatory with alternating site in February for a face-to-face meeting and both sites video-linked in August.

Resolution Item 17.4 - The software tools that define observations are essential for Gemini's continuing success. The OpsWG urges Gemini to allocate appropriate resources to (1) maintain the existing operational software tools (PIT, OT), and (2) to develop next generation of software that will enable the implementation of the "guaranteed data model".

On going discussion

Resolution Item 17.5 – When drawing plans for Future Instruments the operational impact including full distribution of observing conditions, instrument swaps, etc. should

be explored in detail and taken into account.

In hands of GSC

Resolution Item 17.6 - Future Instruments should deliver data reduction software compatible with the Gemini Software Package as part of basic requirement.

In progress for GPI but at limited level. In full past GPI

Resolution Item 17.7 - The OpsWG expresses its support for the large program initiative. Up to 10% time fraction dedicated to the program at its starting point would be in line with large programs approved and executed at Gemini in the past.

Board subcommittee established - reporting in march.

Resolution Item 17.8 - OpsWG agrees to implement a 7 day observatory and NGO respond time to phase II activations. Starting point is 10 days before the P2 deadline. The information provided to PIs should indicate this commitment.

Resolution Item 17.9 - Observatory should attempt to cover any queue under-subscription through, in the first instance, reactivation of programs not completed in previous semesters (starting with band 1) followed by adding time to current programs. Those steps can be undertaken without consultation for large partners (US, UK, CA) only. Regression to ITAC failed programs is not being viewed favorably. If multiple programs fulfill the selection criteria, any selection should be based on the current partner time imbalances.

Resolution Item 17.10 – The OpsWG recommends that ITAC allocates rollover status to all band 1 LGS programs.

From Videoconf:

Resolution 17.11 – Starting with semester 2010A, no standard ToO programs with transient targets will be accepted in band 3 because of their negligible chance of execution and danger of using those programs to lock targets from the competition.

Resolution 17.12 – In case of two competing standard ToO programs triggering on the same target, the program in the higher band will obtain the rights to the target for the remainder of the semester. In case of two programs in the same band the time stamp will decide the target rights. It is assumed that both triggers are issued on the same day (observatory day, noon to noon).

Large resources needed for policing. Implement for 2010A t monitor the numbers affected and report to ITAC.

Resolution 17.13 – Gemini will make the best effort to accommodate long observations (observations uninterrupted for over 3 hours in optical and 2 hours in NIR/IR). However, if an observation needs to be abandon after 3 hours (2 hours for NIR/IR) or longer, the observation including acquisition and required calibrations will be charged to the program.

Resolution 17.14 – For programs which contain repeat observations of the same target with timing constraints on the individual observations, the Observatory will make best effort to schedule the start of such observations to optimise the probability of obtaining all the requested observations. However, for time accounting purposes, each individual observation that meets the requirements at the time will be charged independently. In particular, time charging does not depend on whether all subsequent individual observations are successfully executed.

Action Item 17.1 - all NGO - Phase II checks to include minimum time

Follow-up on it.

Action Item 17.2 - NGO heads - supply Dennis with exploder e-mails for their offices

Done

Action Item 17.3 - Dennis - alert respective NGO heads to DDT programs from their communities.

Done

Action Item 17.4 - Inger/Bernadette - observatory to send generic e-mails to all PIs with updates about unusual weather conditions or any other special circumstances.

Action Item 17.5 - Bryan - reword Band 3 Tab in OT to add clarity that accepting band 3 doesn't deem a program to be allocated band 3. [if workable distribute new text to OpsWg before implementing]

Done

Action Item 17.6 - NGO heads - contact Sandy Leggett with preliminary Subaru demand by November 2nd.

Done

Action Item 17.7 - Ilona - organise bi-monthly videocon meetings of the OpsWG (Thursday is the most suitable day of the week)

done

Action Item 17.8 - Dennis - forward user feedbacks to NGO heads

Done

Action Item 17.9 - Sandy - coordinate the Observatory effort to create a list of critical checks for P1 process (not just ITAC relevant).

Done

Action Item 17.10 - NGO Heads - feedback on large programs by August 17.

Done

Action Item 17.11 - Bryan - Make sure that all input parameters are displayed on the ITC results page.

Not done

Action Item 17.12 - Bryan - Follow up on ITC server crashes close to the proposal deadlines and work to make the ITCs more reliable.

Work in progress

Action Item 17.13 - Bernadette - check the GMOS MOS instruction web pages for any suggestions of mask submission at Phase 2 deadline (particular non-gmos pre-imaging).

Explicit suggestion of submission of mask designs after Phase II will be added to the web pages

Action Item 17.14 – NGO Heads - continue to share P1 technical evaluations of joint proposals on the best effort basis. In case of major problems, contact lead office.

done

Review of Minutes and Action Items

Minutes and action items of OpsWG meeting #16

Verne presented a brief review of the status of actions/resolutions from last meeting. Most items from past meetings are done or on track, only Action.15.3 delayed (see on-line document).

Board Resolutions

Dennis discussed the board resolutions from the May meeting with the main item being the cancellation of WFMOS. Other significant issues are the respond to the failure of the

PDR of the data flow project, response to the visiting committee report, and the implementation of large programs at Gemini. The later became subject of deliberations of the OpsWG. [presentation with all resolutions is available on-line]

Instrument Status Review

Scot outlined the status of the instrument program. In summary:

- NICI campaign and open science going well with efficiency enhancements considered for 2nd quarter 2010;
- Flamingos-2 acceptance testing should be completed October 2009, with first light in September. The Hawaii-2 array is delaminating. Dead pixels are confined to one part of the array, but have seen a `disturbing' set of features crop up since first warm test. This is a problem with Hawaii-2 detectors. Might take a few months to get a foundary run at Teledyne to make a new batch. Could upgrade to Hawaii-2RG array, but this would require lots of work. Gemini is waiting for the next cool-down to see if the detector defects disappear, stay the same, or get worse.
- GNIRS commissioning now April 2010 (acceptance testing in February 2010), due to significant set backs with coating problems (premature aging – coating coming off some optics after only 2 weeks). A mirror was also scratched during assembly, and must be replaced. First cool-down test in late August of this year. SV in 2010B?
- GMOS-N CCDs will be integrated mid to late 2010, and negotiations underway with integration vendor. Timing of change will be set to coincide with end of semester, to minimize data homogeneity issues.
- GPI assembly underway and delivery in 2011.
- MCAO staffing is still incomplete (only 60% of what is needed), and laser should be delivered late this year. The Keck laser is working well in the lab. First light with the optical bench in 2010 (i.e. laser propagation, and light received at DM). GSAOI commissioning in 2011A. Laser infrastructure is on the telescope.

Gemini will circulate an AofO for bHROS disposal.

Semester 2009A science operations

Gemini-North completion statistics are very poor, due to 18 week poor weather patch from December 2008 – April 2009. 60% completion for Band 1, but only 20% for Band 2. Band 3 is a wipeout (5% completion, and about 30% are 75% complete). For comparison, in 2009A on GS got 50% completion in each band.

Science operations update

LGS completion rates: Appear to have 55% mean completion of LGS programs in Band 1, and 25% in Band 2. This is averaged over the past four semesters. LGS programs are prime targets for roll-over.

Inger encourages TACs to consider giving more programs roll-over, as this will boost Band 1 completion stats.

Typically DD time amounts to 1 – 2% of total time allocated, based on stats from recent semesters. Some partners would like to be informed of successful DD requests from their astronomers, so that they can offer assistance to PIs and also include these programs in their reports

Partner imbalances have become more-or-less random, without long term time imbalances building up. The BoD and the Gemini Director are happy with the status of time imbalances.

Classical observing accounts for 8.7% of time allocation.

Large programs – pointed out that Gemini has had a large number of large programs already (SNe Legacy, Gemini/HST galaxy Cluster, ESSENSE SNe, GRB, etc). 14% of charged band 1 and 2 time has gone to 6 programs with more than 100 hours time. Large programs typically go through 3 – 10 TAC reviews.

2009B phase I and II review

In the observatory report, Inger noted that this semester an NGO scientist forgot to check the 'mask checked' box on the Phase 2, with the results that masks were not cut.

All partners, but Argentina (not attending), presented their reports containing proposal statistics and staffing changes. Thanks to the improvements to the PIT and OT libraries and the education of users, less problems are encountered during both P1 and P2. Other items identified are: (i) AU program got 200% of allocated time – need to regulate charging of such programs; (ii) Brazil is seeking funds that would allow to double its time on Gemini. UK receives more proposals for Gemini than for VLT (per unit telescope). US is the only partner with considerable demand for classical observing (26%). For unexplained reasons PIs using masks w/o pre-imaging assumed that mask designs are due at P2 deadline. Instructions on the web will be double checked to find the origin for this assumption.

Discussion of the ITAC actions highlighted that Gemini would like to see 20% of the time coming from NTACs in low-ranked CC90%ile programs.

NTAC package submission deadline is November 10. ITAC November 19, 20 in Tucson. Subaru TAC meets November 5, so all partners must send best estimate of Subaru-approved programs to Hawaii by November 2.

Initial discussion of the 2010A CfP

See on-line presentation for details. After discussion the SV time for F2 has been changed to 8 nights. Inger will correct the available time to account for NICI charges to small partners.

2010A Process and Schedule

Policy issues

Discussed classical programs. Some programs that ask for queue sometimes get classical programs (in the US). They do not have a backup program. Discussed, and decided that PIs should come up with a backup program after the ITAC meeting. It is also fine NOT to have a backup program, as long as they understand that they will lose the time if the conditions are not right.

Discussed protecting targets as parts of PI programs, much like the NICI campaign. Pointed out that PIs can write to the Gemini Director and have proprietary period extended. Perhaps protection should be not for the target and instrument (too restrictive), but the target and instrument configuration. Does Gemini need a policy for this?

Discussed filling of RA holes. Options: Do programs from previous semesters? Add targets to programs assigned time in the current semester? Bring in programs that were submitted to ITAC, but did not get time because of condition constraints. Could contact ITAC members to approve decisions involving programs already in the queue. Decided (1) complete all programs, (2) add time to programs in the queue, and (3) re-visit programs from previous semesters.

Process deadlines

- August 28 Friday: Call for proposals issued.
- September 30 Wednesday: Proposal submission deadline.
- November 10 Tuesday: NTAC package submission deadline.
- November 19-20 Thurs-Fri: ITAC meeting in Tucson.
- December 7 Monday: Queue finalized and NGO feedback generated.
- December 14 Monday: Results online, new OT and skeletons available.
- January 15 Friday: Phase II deadline for PIs.
- January 29 Friday: Programs set for activation by NGOs.
- February 1 Monday: Start of semester 2010A.
- February 15 Monday: Queue fully loaded.

Technical assessment of joint proposals

The sharing of assessments experiment was a success, and will continue.

Helpdesk

Feeling that topics should be re-vamped, and NGO heads should send list of topics that are missed, or that should be deleted from Helpdesk.

NGO-Gemini interactions

OpsWG video/telecons: Will try having an e-meeting every two months to deal with issues that crop up between OpsWG meetings. The meetings will be chaired by the OpsWG chair. The items for the first meeting include revision of helpdesk topics.

OT feedback: Gemini has decided to send out feedback forms every semester to PIs to solicit suggestions for improvement. There has been concern that there may be 'user fatigue' if this is sent out every semester. The forms are short (14 questions).

Enabling large/key programs

Large programs: Dennis suggests that 30% of time come off of the top to do large programs. There would be a large program TAC (possibly ITAC members). Notionally there will be a commitment for PIs to produce products that are placed in the archive – if they do not sign up to this (would have a special section dealing with data products and plan) Selling point is that there is a large number of joint proposals already. Issues: balance between telescopes? Number of nights available (notionally 10%). Let NTACs see proposals for comment (but not ranking). Will also be discussed by ITAC and the GSC.

Science software status

Gemini presented a dire picture of software situation, and that can not support P1T and OT upgrades, let alone GAP development. The OpsWG discussed at length, noting that Gemini should not pursue development work if operational software is jeopardized. Gemini did not like this view, and pressed for a resolution that argued for more money to hire software staff. Dennis got angry, even though the OpsWG forwarded draft resolutions in which 'Operations software is essential, and Gemini should look at ways of maintaining these' etc.

Future instrumentation

Discussed new instruments proposed by the GSC (see on-line document)+ Kyoto (spectrographs all, with range of wavelengths, focusing on high spectral resolution). Agreement that should look at instruments that can be used in poorish conditions. Better alignment with operations when ranking the instruments.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will take place on February 10-11 2010 in Hilo. Will now meet two weeks later than has traditionally been the case (two weeks before the CfP, rather than 4 weeks). In the future, for each year will try to have one meeting F2F in February, and a two node (Hilo + La Serena) meeting in August.