

## **Fermilab Employee Advisory Group Meeting March 22, 2012**

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM, One East

### **AGENDA TOPICS**

- Management updates
- Status of EAG member selection process
- Structure/purpose of the Steering Committee
- Tracking Previous Recommendations from EAG Meetings
- Planned Supervisor Meetings
- New Employee Announcements
- EAG issue areas for 2012
- Employee comments/questions from the web

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

#### **1) Management Update**

Budget. \$20 million of this year's budget for Mu2E can't be spent until reaching CD1, which has now been put off to this summer. This results in a significant challenge for the overall budget, as a result, a reprogramming of the budget is underway to be able to meet nearer-term obligations. At the HEPAP meeting last week, the lab was hoping to get some clues from DOE on their direction for LBNE but that did not happen. It is clearly going to be a challenge to maintain funding, other projects in Office of Science have also been severely underfunded.

A new DOE travel order changes the rule of one day of personal travel per day of foreign travel to now one day of personal travel allowed per 2 days of foreign travel. The new contractor assurance clause in the contract is being evaluated as to how it affects the role of the Board of Directors, in particular how to identify risk. The Computing Sector outsourcing of the service desk, desktop support, etc and five actual layoffs both occurred last week. Both went as well as can be expected.

Interviews for Bruce Chrisman's position have started. He will help the new person transition prior to retirement. With the challenging budget situation, Pier is continuing to spend a lot of time in Washington.

#### **2) New EAG Member Recruitment**

43 applicants were received from across the lab and included a wide cross section of job categories. Bruce Chrisman has made tentative selections based on the identified EAG needs. Bruce will review these preliminary selections with Pier and then make

calls directly to the selected candidates. Kay VanVreede reviewed information showing the range of characteristics for the new candidates.

The new members will be invited to begin at the April meeting, as well as outgoing members; will look to identify a room that could handle all of these folks.

### **3) Structure/Purpose of the EAG Steering Committee**

The steering committee was established after the start of the EAG to help guide the overall process and frame issues for discussion. Six folks were originally nominated and all were included on the committee. This structure has been successful. The current members of the committee would recommend that it continue to work this way, and have been able to achieve a quorum at each meeting. Their function has evolved over time. The committee meets with Bruce on a monthly basis in between EAG meetings, and this has been very useful in helping to stay in touch with directorate and set agendas. The committee also manages process for web submissions, and serves as first review before bringing these issues before the full board. They are also working with the Office of Communication on web content and coordinating mid-month meetings. All meeting notes are posted in sharepoint,

**ACTION:** It would be helpful to have an outline of the duties of the steering committee that people can look at.

**ACTION:** It would be helpful to have an orientation meeting for new members before the next full EAG meeting, Bruce can be there. Doug will help with compiling a set of materials for new members.

### **4) Tracking Previous Recommendations from EAG Meetings**

The group reviewed a sharepoint table that was established to track and allow ongoing updates to EAG recommendations. Anyone is able to add comments and updates.

Questions were asked regarding how to use this list beyond an internal tool to track things, does this serve as a communication tool in itself? How do we guard against people changing recommendations or adding meaning that is not what was intended? How can information be protected? Should this remain on the sharepoint site or be made more or less accessible? We can't have anyone just be able to go in and make changes, need to make sure that the original suggestion or recommendation is still understandable and see what changes have been made or suggested.

**ACTION:** Further exploration will be done to understand how to protect cells and use versions to identify new additions and changes. Need to get feedback from EAG members as to whether each of these possible recommendations should move forward.

**DECISION:** The Steering committee will manage this process.

Feedback from management on the usefulness of this table included the following:

- When things are too broad and general it is very hard to respond or take action, recommendations need to be more specific
- This is a mixed bag of specific recommendations and some statement of needs, it would be helpful to organize it in some way and clarify any recommendations where the EAG is anticipating action and response.
- If this can be managed well then, then it would be a good tool for management, however it will still be important that specific recommendations are directed and communicated to the appropriate audience.
- It would also be useful to have a mechanism to alert people as additions are made to the list.

### **5) Planned Supervisor Meetings**

Young-Kee Kim discussed the idea of having a series of meetings to start a conversation with supervisors regarding changes and issues stemming from the focus groups and EAG process. Planning three meetings to cover a total of about 400 supervisors.

A comment was made that there are people who do not approve timecards (so would not be considered supervisors) but who do manage people. A lot of those folks would be missed by the supervisors list. Young-Kee Kim agreed that there is a need to clarify the definition. However, the way our matrix structure works, almost everyone would be included. The best approach is to have local division managers identify additional folks who would be missed but should be in the meetings.

A question was asked whether in this format it could be hard to get messages across given the large size, wonder if people will really participate. We certainly can try, in our previous meetings to talk about the future of Fermilab we have had have gotten a lot of folks to speak up. It also opens the door to raise questions in the future, hoping to encourage people to come and ask. We want to hear supervisor's challenges and difficulties. This is the start, will ask them for input how to have future meetings.

What are the expectations to communicate to the supervisors in this forum? We still need to come up with those topics and messages—a lot of them are the themes coming from the focus groups and the EAG. We need to establish clear expectations for supervisors regarding communication, meetings, and responsiveness. We also need to discuss issues in these difficult budget times.

Do you expect the answer or questions to be different with all levels of hierarchy in the room—the lowest level supervisors are not going to speak up with their senior managers in the room. May want to talk to different levels separately.

Training expectations will be very important to communicate.

Morale is really low right now, there is a low of pressure, and so much is out of our control. Have never seen so many years in a row of budget cuts and project delays.

The April 26 EAG meeting will be used as a overview of the meetings to get feedback from the EAG. Will wait to have the first meeting until after that EAG meeting.

## 6) New Employee Announcements

The Fermilab Today announcements are a way of welcoming new employees to the lab and making them feel welcome. These are difficult challenges as other employees are leaving the lab.

People understand the reasons for new hires, but lots of folks seeing former employees pictures as new hires causes confusion. Looks like we are hiring more people than we are laying off. Need to clarify summer employees, they look like regular employees.

It is a morale question and many folks do not understand why we are hiring new employees. This also came up last year, and it has been a real issue. More people are hearing about this. Maybe need to welcome these people locally in their divisions. If there were no pictures, this might also help. Also need to create more context to help explain why people are being hired. There is a big lack of information on the whole hiring process.

Do we cross-train people to fill these new jobs? Yes this is done.

This last layoff and the IT outsourcing has hit people hard, they were told they could apply to Dell who got the outsourcing contract. Has really undermined morale.

Why not post new jobs in Fermilab Today with a link to show people what is available at the lab.

The lab has its lowest regular employment in 30 years, most of that has come through attrition, people leave and are not replaced. Almost the entire budget goes to salaries, not much construction going on, need to start to build new projects which means less money for salaries, so that money is available for construction.

**Recommendation:** Agreed that eliminating the pictures from Fermilab Today will help with the problem. Though still concerned that this undermines the need to welcome new folks. Need to do a much better job of communicating the complexity of maintaining the right staffing levels at the lab. Push the announcements down locally in local newsletters or communication.

## 7) Next Activities for 2012

The EAG questioned how much can really be done at this time with all the budget issues, what role can the EAG really play and what are realistic expectations for

actionable steps under the current conditions?

Young-Kee Kim noted that it would be good to analyze what has been recommended, what has been done and what impact this has made.

The EAG is looking to management for some guidance on what topics it makes sense for the group to focus on in 2012.

Bruce Chrisman noted that the lab is changing and we need to get many things done to prepared for and start the future direction. In many ways, this is the time to focus on these big picture issues and culture change, it is going to be a whole new lab.

**ACTION:** The EAG needs to pull together a document that outlines everything that has been recommended and where that has led.

**Possible 2012 Issues:**

Need an overall structure for how change management and the future culture and values of the lab will be developed, this is a good topic for April EAG meeting, with new members present.

Also need to focus on how we working to get folks connected to the work of the lab.

**EAG Action Items:**

- Orientation meeting for new members.
- Set up a meeting with steering committee, directorate, and Doug Sarno to frame conversation for April meeting.
- Sandra and Carol working on the outgoing members. Carol will put this on line.

**2012 MEETING DATES**

Meetings are currently scheduled for the following Thursdays

All meetings 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

- April 26 – 1 East (looking for larger room, will include incoming and outgoing members)
- May 24 - Comitium
- June 28 – 1 East
- July 26 - Comitium
- August 23 - Comitium
- September 27 - Comitium
- October 25 - Comitium
- November 15 - Comitium
- December 20 - Comitium