

Fermilab Employee Advisory Group Meeting

January 10, 2011

1 – 4 p.m., Comitium, WH2SE

AGENDA TOPICS

- Announcement of Tevatron extension decision
- Pay freeze discussion
- VSO update and feedback
- New Employee Orientation Report
- Client Engagement Meeting Final report
- Performance Review report
- Management Effectiveness Issues

MEETING SUMMARY

Announcement of Tevatron extension decision

The announcement by DOE not to extend the run of the Tevatron past FY2011 was made today. While there was a strong physics argument, the current budget situation does not support this extension. Pier Oddone talked about the plan to communicate this decision. The board and project management have been notified. It will also go out in a note to staff this afternoon and in *Fermilab Today*. This request would have had a pretty good chance of success in normal times, but not under the current financial situation. It is good for us to receive this information now and not have to wait for the formal budget. We are still getting very strong support from DOE for our other projects. We are trying to get DUESL moving forward. NSF has not taken a stance yet, and Pier is trying to keep NSF in the project so DOE is not left with the full bill. We should be able to keep all of our projects moving forward. A number of comments and questions were posed:

- Many employees still erroneously see Fermilab's future tied to the Tevatron, and the message must be clear about the future of Fermilab, Pier noted that this was his intent.
- Will this decision result in freeing up Tevatron operating funds for other projects? Yes, that has always been the intent.
- What happens with the technicians who run the Tevatron, how do they fit into the new plan? Management is working on that issue; there are still many questions as we do not have a budget for the year in 2012 yet. We do expect some shrinkage but not too much depending on how other projects ramp up. We have been trying to absorb the maximum number of staff into new projects. It is also important to recognize that the shutdown of the Tevatron has been planned for years, and many people have been transitioning already.

- After we see the 2012 budget, we will be able to start that process, but we won't know until then. There will be a great deal of follow-up communication.
- Can we create a place for folks to ask questions? Pier would like to see a web page where a broader set of questions can be asked and answered during this year of transition.
- It was noted that this information should be sent out broader than just the *Fermilab Today* list. It was suggested using an all-hands email to make sure everyone gets this information first hand.

Pay Freeze

Pier noted that the decision to freeze laboratory pay along with the two year federal employee pay freeze came very quickly from the DOE Secretary with almost no consultation with labs. This decision is motivated by reducing deficits, but the OMB has agreed that DOE could keep total savings of about \$8 million rather than put it back into the general budget. The idea is to enhance existing projects. The proposal at Fermilab is to apply it to the Booster to get more proton production. It was pointed out that this might not create a very good feeling among employees, Pier agreed that this is not a great situation but it is better than losing the money altogether.

Pier does not like pay freezes because it changes our ability to be competitive in the market and it is difficult to recover in the future as the pay scale continues to lag behind the market. The whole concept of the GOCO (government owned, contractor operated) facility was to decouple salaries from the government system so this goes against that concept. The main impact on the lab is on new recruiting in competitive areas. It was noted that one person already withdrew from their agreement to come work at Fermilab. It could also have some impact on retention. The hope is that DOE will get credit for this from Congress and not be punished.

This pay freeze will start October of 2011 because Fermilab already gave its increase for this year. The freeze will apply to the following two years. Labs that have not implemented their increases for the year will start immediately. The salary freeze will not apply to bargaining units. These salaries will still be a result of the outcome of the negotiation. However, it does change the nature of the negotiation as the lab will not be in a position to give too much in an environment where everyone else is getting no increase. The freeze does not include promotions, there is a half percent increase included for promotions. Are we sure it will end in two years? It is hard to imagine that it will extend beyond two years. SLAC is coming off a freeze last year, and DOE does have some flexibility to make exceptions.

VSO

We were looking for 50 volunteers and 30 ended up taking it. If the budgets are what we expect, then this should be sufficient to avoid an involuntary separation. There will be a plan for the shutdown of the Tevatron, this is a complicated situation and will include feedback from DOE.

Retired Scientists

There is currently a guest scientist/retired designation for folks who come back to work on projects without pay. This is going to be refined into an emeritus status to make it easier for scientists to make that step. Is there a benefit other than the title? Not really, just a nicer title and better recognition, also creates a clearer designation when they speak or interact with others. In order to comply with rules, they must be self-directed. Travel support is at the discretion of the division heads. There was a question about whether they can simply take up their old jobs—this is not the intent and should not be the case.

New Employee Orientation

Kay Van Vreede was asked whether the EAG input on new employee orientation was useful. Yes, it was useful both having it in a written document and having the conversation with the EAG. Some of the recommendations are already implemented, like using the FTL video. We added quite a bit of benefit information and are still looking at other recommendations to be implemented. Kay would be also interested in bringing issues to the EAG, and alternate work schedule is one of those.

What can we learn from this experience? How do we make the best use of this—need to have good conversation around timing of any implementation and what is appropriate. Bruce mentioned that we should ask ourselves if what is in place currently is better than nothing; also, we should consider what to do in the interim before the improved thing is implemented (which is always more complicated than we initially think, and will take time). It was agreed that it would be good to have Juanita come back at some point to "close the loop" on our recommendations.

Client Engagement Meeting Final Report

The committee reported that all input has been taken and incorporated.

ACTION: It was agreed by all present that we are ready to move this forward as a recommendation.

Performance Review Report

The report as it exists focuses mostly on better education and awareness rather than any real changes. Does the pay freeze create an opportunity to really look at this in more detail? Could this mean we might get a more honest performance review or will it result in a "who cares" attitude? Personal recognition is still very

important to most people and they want the feedback from management. Bruce Chrisman noted that we will not be changing the system as we still will be required to conduct these evaluations.

It may be a great opportunity to actually assess people based on the tool's intent, but it will also require the managers to have the incentive to do a good job on this. Thus it may provide an opportunity to focus on creating new values and skills.

If we want to do performance reviews well, we need to really step it up. This is an opportunity to do these well and properly, and address the actual performance appraisal skill independent of the possible conflict of pay.

This is also an opportunity to come together with WDRS and come up with a process. We need a plan for the next two years and we need to do that now if we want to explore how to improve the performance assessment portion as it is decoupled from pay. It is important that we focus on what can actually be affected, not work on things outside of Fermilab's purview. Results will need to be integrated into a better overall system. After the two years are over, we want a better chance of having a better system.

ACTION: The EAG will create a set of expectations and questions for the meeting with WDRS for February—more like a brainstorming meeting to see what is possible and useful. Kay, Juanita, and Boris should all be invited to share in the discussion.

Management Issue

This is a big issue, so we will need to conduct much of this work using committees.

Young-Kee Kim noted that the lab is working on our communication and trying to make improvements there and we are making progress. 360 degree reviews are also something that is being pursued but has not gotten off the ground yet because they are expensive and complicated to put into place and there is not sufficient budget at this time.

There are a number of areas to explore. Are there labs where people feel good? How do we find good managers here? What are the reasons? How do we want to collect internal data? Why is management a problem here at the lab? What efforts have been done in the past to identify, assess, and reward the best managers? How are we actually preparing and training our managers?

We want to identify best practices. This would be one very good outcome from this effort.

ACTION: Three committees were established to move the management issue forward:

- Terminology (Sandra Charles, lead)
- External research agenda (Carol Angarola, lead)
- Internal research agenda (Rob Roser, lead)

Suspect counterfeit item training

This item was raised as an additional topic. It was noted that the training is a really poor, bad video, very dry, and seemed to include some incorrect information. This training is out of OQPB, they recognize that it is really poor, and it is on the punch list to be redone. It is important to note that while the training may not be up to par, there is a good mechanism in place for people to get their S/CI-related questions answered (i.e. the D/S S/CI Coordinators).