

6th GEMINI OPERATIONS WORKING GROUP MEETING

Feb 5,6 2004

Draft Minutes - I. Hook, 7 June 2004

Present: Taft Armandroff, Warrick Couch, Dennis Crabtree, Max Faundez-Abans, Isobel Hook (Chair), Sebastien Lopez, Matt Mountain (on afternoon of Day 1), Magnus Paterson (observer), Phil Puxley, Jean-Rene Roy, Doug Simons, Richard Wainscoat (by video on Day 1).

Action items

- Action 6.1: Puxley to make the time-accounting spreadsheets for 2003A available to the OpsWG via the OpsWG web page.
- Action 6.2 Hook to ask the Chair of the November Board meeting for clarification on whether the Board intended the OpsWG to look further into the method of classical time accounting.
- Action 6.3: OpsWG members to remind their respective NTACs that an allocation of queue time for pre-imaging must be allocated in band-I to support all classical MOS programs. This will be necessary as long as Gemini requires pre-imaging for all MOS programs).
- Action 6.4: As part of the draft call for proposals, Puxley to distribute a proposal for RA range/visibility limits. Gemini will also provide a method for NGOs to check that Phase-I proposals meet these restrictions
- Action 6.5: NGOs to monitor the number of iterations needed with PIs needed to get each proposal to the stage of "for activation" (for example using a count of e-mails).
- Action 6.6: Gemini to arrange training sessions for GMOS mask making in 04A (3 sessions). The suggested timescale for these is March. If needed, Gemini will also set up video training sessions in June on Michelle and T-ReCS phaseII for the benefit of any NGO staff who are not able to attend the NGO meeting in Victoria.
- Action 6.7: Hook, Crabtree, Armandroff and Couch to organise an agenda for the Gemini Users meeting, to be held alongside the Vancouver science meeting.
- Action 6.8: Hook to check whether the UK TAC could move its Phase-I deadlines and NTAC dates such that the proposal package could be sent to Gemini by about May 8th and November 7th of each year. She will also check with the Argentinian rep about the same issue. Answer needed by 1 June
- Action 6.9: Hook to coordinate writing of a document describing NGO roles from an NGO perspective, in preparation for the visiting committee.
- Action 6.10 The U.S. NGO to send a breakdown of their staff effort, in preparation for the visiting committee.
- Action 6.11: OpsWG to initiate telecons with Gemini every 2 months. The OpsWG agreed that the first telecom should be on Wed April 7th at 10am Hawaii time. The second telecom will be arranged for around June 7th.

Resolutions

- Resolution 6.1: The OpsWG notes the 2003A time accounting presented by Puxley. These figures assume the same time-accounting method for classical time as in previous semesters.
- Resolution 6.2: Due to specific problems identified by some partners, it has become apparent that technical issues at phase-I are not being taken into full consideration by some NTACs. Given the complexities of the Gemini system, the OpsWG recommends that the NTACs take full account of the technical feasibility assessments provided by the National Gemini Offices.
- Resolution 6.3: It was noted that Phase-II definitions for classical programs can become very long because PIs wish to define options for all observing conditions. The OpsWG and Gemini Observatory agreed that when checking phase-II definitions for classical programs, it is sufficient for the National Offices to check only a representative set of observation definitions, and add notes to those have been checked.
- Resolution 6.4: The OpsWG feels that, given the greatly increasing popularity of Macs running OSX, it is imperative that the publically-released software (helpdesk, PIT, OT and IRAF reduction software) are supported on this operating system.
- Resolution 6.5: The OpsWG supports the proposal by Puxley to subtract classical time before setting the boundaries between queue bands in future.
- Resolution 6.6: The Operations working group is pleased to hear of plans to implement GMOS mask making from non-GMOS images. We strongly support this being made available to users in 04B.
- Resolution 6.7: The OpsWG is very pleased by the efforts of Peter Gray and the engineering staff in progress towards reducing overheads in mid-IR observing efficiency and mount performance. We strongly support the systematic approach being adopted.
- Resolution 6.8: The OpsWG endorses the capabilities and engineering plan proposed by Gemini.
- Resolution 6.9: The OpsWG agreed the following Phase-II deadlines for semester 2004B: 12 July and 12 August (PIs); 22 July and 23 August (NGOs).
- Resolution 6.10: The issue of Hokupa'a-85 demo science was discussed by the OpsWG. Several of the partners were uncomfortable with the proposal to take 10 Gemini-South nights "off the top" in 2004B for demo science. Instead the OpsWG support the proposal by Armandroff to use 5 nights of US time for one program of demo science. The OpsWG recognises that this may restrict the pool of those using HK-85 in 2004B.
- Resolution 6.11: The OpsWG noted the imbalance of used time between partners that has built up since 2002B(?), with the UK and Canada's used time being significantly behind their nominal allocation. We recommend applying a correction factor, which accounts for 50% of this imbalance, to the 2004B time shares.
- Resolution 6.12: The OpsWG endorses the proposal by the Gemini Director to support SPITZER follow-up proposals with an allocation of up to 10 nights of DDT per telescope in 2004B, provided this allocation is based on the results of the TAC process. We recommend that 7 of these nights (per telescope) be included in the advertised partner nights in the call for proposals, with an accompanying explanation of their intended use.
- Resolution 6.13: The Gemini Operations Working Group was saddened to learn of the untimely death of Richard Elston. Richard made numerous key contributions to Gemini. Elston arranged for his infrared multi-object spectrometer FLAMINGOS to be loaned to Gemini South as a visitor

instrument. FLAMINGOS produced beautiful images at Gemini South and clearly demonstrated excellent near-IR image quality (and were a highlight of the Gemini South dedication). Elston conceived the FLAMINGOS-2 concept of a Gemini-optimized infrared multi-object spectrometer, and he led the Florida Team in the design and fabrication of this instrument. Richard also participated in several Gemini committees and meetings, including the U.S. meeting on future Gemini instruments in 2003. All of us will deeply miss Richard's enthusiasm, scientific determination, and instrumentation creativity. The Operations Working Group extends its deepest condolences to Richard's family.

Minutes of the 6th meeting

Review of Minutes and Action items

Action items from the previous OpsWG meeting were all done except for the following:

We collectively decided that it is not beneficial to circulate the proposal titles before the ITAC meeting (action #6). It is preferable to keep joint proposals independent until the NTAC grades are known.

Gemini did not hold bimonthly telecons with the NGOs (action #11).

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved apart from:

Addition: – the PPARC decision on Michelle was on 1st September.

Taft Armandroff suggested putting page numbers on minutes in future. He and Jean-Rene Roy provided some other minor corrections, which will be implemented by Dennis Crabtree.

Jean-Rene Roy went through the Board resolutions. The resolutions which are particularly relevant for the OpsWG are B.5, which states that the Board supports a 25:75 C:Q split, and B.4, in which the Board reaffirmed support of 70% science time in semester 2004B.

Review of 2003A science operations

Puxley then reviewed the semester 2003A Execution Summary. In the North, 111 nights were used for science, which represents 61% of the semester. Hook asked for director's discretionary and system verification time to be broken out separately in the statistics. For the North, the 2003A queue completion statistics correlate correctly with scientific ranking band. In the South, scientific observations took place on 82 nights (45% of the semester). The queue completion statistics in the South were not favorable, with 50% Band-1 completion, 17% completion in both Bands 2 and 4, and 38% in Band 3. Puxley attributed the poor correlation of program completion as a function of scientific ranking band to poor weather during the CIRPASS runs.

Puxley noted that the baffle on the Gemini-South M2 is still in place. It is estimated that it will be 18 months until the new secondary is finished.

Action 6.1: Puxley to make the time-accounting spreadsheets for 2003A available to the OpsWG via the OpsWG web page.

Richard Wainscoat initiated a discussion about the charging of classical and queue time, and pointed out that with the current system the accounting gets out of balance. Crabtree pointed out that this is only an issue if partners don't use their time in the same Queue:Classical proportion. Puxley said that the current method recognises that Classical is different from Queue in the sense that time that is "lost" to bad weather is not completely lost when in the queue because the observatory can switch to engineering. There followed a discussion about whether the Board intended the OpsWG to reconsider the accounting method. There was no Board resolution but Wainscoat believed that the Board had intended us to look into this again.

Action 6.2 Hook to ask the Chair of the November Board meeting for clarification on whether the Board intended the OpsWG to look further into the method of classical time accounting.

In the meantime the OpsWG noted the time accounting based on the current model.

Resolution 6.1: The OpsWG notes the 2003A time accounting presented by Puxley. These figures assume the same time-accounting method for classical time as in previous semesters.

Review of 2003B science operations

Puxley presented the interim 2003B execution summary (as of early January). Science time is projected to be scheduled for 104 nights in the North, 57% of the semester, and 118 nights on the South. Puxley noted that the 2003B queue completion statistics were not yet complete. The final completion statistics for 2003B will be presented and discussed at the next OpsWG meeting. Crabtree suggested that it would be interesting to see a simulation of what would have happened to the completion stats if everything had been classically scheduled.

Puxley then presented some highlights from 2003B. On Gemini-N switches between GMOS and NIRI during the night have been explored, and the switch can be done in as little as 8 minutes. Unfortunately the November and December Altair commissioning runs were wiped out by weather, so SV programs will be rolled over to 04A. There was also a NIRI failure at the end of the semester. On Gemini-S, T-ReCS commissioning is complete except for the high-resolution mode. GMOS Nod & Shuffle electronic offsets have been implemented, which has increased the observing efficiency during Nod & Shuffle observations from about 70% to over 90%. GNIRS commissioning has started. Also the Gemini-S M2 has been coated with a 3-layer silver coating. Puxley expects good completion statistics in 2003B because of good weather this semester.

2004A proposal Process and Statistics

A. Gemini perspective

Puxley showed proposal statistics broken down by partner and by semester. The total number of proposals increased somewhat in 2004A (by 8%), as did the time requested (21%). The fraction of classical proposals in 2004A was only 10%. Excluding UH this drops to only 2% (by number of proposals, not hours requested).

Puxley also showed the 2004A schedule overview. Altair is primarily scheduled later in the semester because of engineering work early in the semester. Roy expects that Gemini-N in semester 2004A will have low completion rates in band 1 because the RA range 12-14hrs with GMOS was very oversubscribed. He emphasised that the TACS need to consider the RA distribution, and should forward proposals with a range of RAs to Gemini. He also reminded us that the rollover policy has now been implemented as can be seen on the queue web pages

B. Partner Perspective - the NGO reports received were as follows.

PHASE I

United States

The NOAO Gemini Science Center (NGSC) saw a strong response from the U.S. community to the Gemini Call for Proposals for semester 2004A. On Gemini North for 2004A, 77 proposals were received: 50 for GMOS-North and 29 for NIRI; 10 of the NIRI proposals requested its use with the Altair adaptive optics system. Fifty-nine U.S. proposals requested Gemini South: 25 for T-ReCS, 23 for Phoenix, and 12 for GMOS-South. In total, 133 U.S. Gemini proposals sought 301.1 nights on the two Gemini telescopes. The resulting oversubscription factors (not allowing for any weather or other losses) are 3.0 for Gemini North and 2.5 for Gemini South.

The NOAO Telescope Time Allocation Committee (TAC) reviewed the proposals, and the NGSC Staff performed technical assessments. The 75

most highly ranked proposals were forwarded to Gemini for ITAC.

Six forwarded U.S. proposals requested classical observing and were scheduled in this mode. All of these met the 3-night minimum for classical mode.

A few issues arose during Phase I. These are listed in the spirit of improvement for next round:
 The 2004A Call for Proposals was released somewhat late. This was presumably due to the last-minute letter on MICHELLE availability from PPARC. NGSC received several inquiries from the U.S. community about when the Call would become available.
 There was confusion between Gemini and the NGOs about what information Gemini would provide to the NGOs for proposal P.I. notification. It would be highly beneficial to mutually agree on a format and date beforehand.
 NGSC continues to receive comments that the R.A. limits are too restrictive at the semester interface. Some proposers argue that it is visibility that we should really be measuring, not simply R.A. The LMC and SMC, at very southern declination, are common motivators of arguments against strict R.A. limits. They would be treated more equitably if visibility functions were used. The Galactic Center is another target that provokes R.A. limit debates.

United Kingdom (report from Isobel Hook)

The number of proposals received at the 2004A deadline (Sept 30th 2003) was higher than last semester. For Gemini-N the requested time has kept up with the increase in available science time so that the oversubscription has stayed about the same at 3.5. However for Gemini-S the requested time did not increase significantly and the over-subscription has dropped from 1.8 to 1.1 (with the caveat that these numbers have not been corrected for underestimated overheads).

Gemini-N	Number	Hours	GMOS-N	40	806	
NIRI	13	204	Total	53	1010	Over-subscription=3.5 (uncorrected)
Gemini-S			GMOS-S	11	141	
Phoenix	3	43	AcqCam	1	12	T-
ReCS	4	87	Total	19	282	Over-subscription=1.1 (uncorrected)

Notes:

In total 65 proposals were received, of which 7 requested 2 instruments.

9 proposals requested classical mode.

Only one proposal requested ALTAIR.

The time available to the UK in 2004A is 292 hours (Gemini-N) and 257 hours (Gemini-S). The oversubscription rates above have not yet been corrected for underestimated overheads.

For comparison, in 2003B 56 proposals were received of which 5 requested 2 instruments. The time available to the UK in 2003B was 205hrs (Gemini-N) and 209hrs (Gemini-S), and the oversubscription factor were 3.5 (North) and 1.8 (South) before correction for overheads.

The UK NTAC sent 44 proposals to Gemini of which 3 were classical. 39 programs were subsequently scheduled.

UK Phase-I issues

There were only a few problems with the phase-I process in 04A.
 There was confusion about the method for notifying PIs of the ITAC results. The preliminary list of successful programs from Gemini was very helpful (so that we could assign contact scientists) but we had expected to receive the usual feedback as well. This did arrive later, but meant we had to rush to make sure the initial notification came from the national office.
 As mentioned in previous reports, the GMOS guide-star checking algorithm in PIT is not correct (it assumes a circular patrol region). This is misleading and not consistent with the OT. Often the guide star found at Phase-I (and included in the skeleton) is not in fact accessible, especially if the program requires a particular position angle on the sky – I recommend removing the GMOS guide star checking from PIT.

Canada (report from Dennis Crabtree)

Canada received a total of 37 proposals (proposals that asked for time on both GN and GS are counted as two proposals. The distribution of proposals by instrument is:

AcqCam	GMOS-N	GMOS-S	NIRI	Phoenix	T-ReCS	Altair-NIRI	Total	13	13	6
		5	24	1	5	2	5	13		

The total time requested was 519 hours with 2/3 of the time requested on Gemini North. The breakdown of the time requested by instrument is:

AcqCam	GMOS-N	GMOS-S	NIRI	Phoenix	T-ReCS	Altair-NIRI	Total	GN	202.4
58.1		85.5	346	GS	12	86.1	17.7	56.86	173

The subscription rate was 1.88 on GN and 1.15 on GS for an overall subscription rate of 1.55. Canada received 12 joint proposals. The average time requested per proposal was 14 hours.

The Phase I process went smoothly with no real problems. There are still some concerns on CTAC about PIT and the inability of PIs to “preview” their proposal before submission.

Australia (report from Warrick Couch)

The response to the 2004A round was very poor, with a total of only 13 proposals received, barely subscribing the time Australia had available on the two Gemini telescopes. Disappointingly, this was in a semester when the amount of Gemini time available to our community increased significantly, due to Australia’s increased share and the fraction of science time on the telescopes having risen to 70-80%. On the other hand there seems to be a trend emerging that there is significantly less demand for telescope time in the A semester than in the B semester; this may well be related to the South Galactic Pole region – a prime target for most of our extragalactic astronomers – only being accessible in the latter half of the year.

Of the 13 proposals received, 8 requested time on Gemini-North, and 5 requested time on Gemini-South. There were 3 ‘joint’ proposals, involving time requests to other partner NTACs. On Gemini-North, most of the demand was for GMOS, with 80 of the 98 hours requested in total, being for this instrument. The subscription factor for this telescope was 1.28. On Gemini-South, the demand was split roughly evenly between T-ReCS and GMOS, although only 15 and 18 hours were requested on each, respectively. This corresponded to a subscription factor of only 0.63 for Gemini-South! The overall subscription factor for both telescopes was 1.01.

The Phase I (proposal submission and evaluation) process ran smoothly, apart from a hiccup with the incrementing of proposal identity numbers as they were processed by the backend receipt software upon submission to the AAO. For some unknown reason, the numbering jumped from 2 to 17 between receiving the second and third proposals. The technical evaluation of proposals revealed that there is still some misunderstanding amongst our users as to how to properly and realistically define the required observing conditions (for queue programs). At the NTAC meeting I flagged Gemini's intention of bringing the entire TAC process forward by approximately 2 weeks starting in 2004B; this was not seen to be a problem, with the date of the next meeting tentatively set for the last week of April (rather than the first week of May, as in the past).

Chile (report from Sebastian Lopez)

Only 5 proposals were received, requesting 88.5hrs (subscription factor 0.7). This breaks down to GMOS-S: 63.5hrs, T-ReCS: 25 hrs. There was one joint proposal (Chile-UK, for T-ReCS).

The low subscription factor was discussed in SOCHAS (Chilean Astronomy Society) meeting: Image of Gemini within community; strategies to attract more submissions.

Proposals are generally getting better but some of the "old" problems persist. Overheads are badly calculated, WFS stars inappropriate, ITCs apparently not used.

Brazil (report from Max Faúndez-Abans)

As for the submitted proposals for Semester 2004A, a total of 58.48 hours at Gemini North have been requested, representing a pressure factor of 1.89. For Gemini South, 32.23 hours have been requested, resulting in a pressure factor of 1.29. Table 1 displays the final allocated time schedule for the Brazilian proposals after NTAC evaluation. Unsuccessful proposals had requested 5.9 hours.

Time [hours]	GMOS North	38.57	24.65	GMOS South	11.08	8.88	NIRI	19.36	14.78	T-ReCS
	ReCS	10.80	7.80	Phoenix	5.00	5.00	Total	84.81	61.11	

University of Hawaii (report from Richard Wainscoat)

UH continued to use its normal proposal form, then required successful proposers to transfer their proposals into the Phase I Tool. No unusual problems were encountered, and the availability of PIT for Mac OS was a big help - many of our astronomers are switching to Macintoshes now. We hope that Gemini will continue to support Mac OS X.

The proposal stats were as follows:

16 proposals requesting 25.1 nights total (no correction applied for queue efficiency): 1.74 oversubscription

12 proposals for GMOS requesting 18.9 nights
3 of these were killed by the TAC, 9 were forwarded to Gemini

4 proposals for NIRI requesting 6.2 nights
All 4 were forwarded to Gemini

7 proposals were queue
9 proposals were classical

2 classical proposals were killed by the TAC
2 classical proposals were moved to queue by the TAC
1 classical proposal was moved to queue after the TAC at my recommendation with the concurrence of the PI

Proposals forwarded to Gemini were 4 classical, 9 queue

PHASE-II

United States

NGSC staff performed Phase-II review, and related proposer interactions, for U.S. proposals. All U.S. P.I.s were reminded by NGSC of the Phase-II deadlines and their importance. In general, the Phase-II checking and related P.I. interactions are going well. By 3 February 2004, 37 U.S. Phase-II submissions had been forwarded to Gemini (of 72 total).

The following difficulties or inefficiencies arose during the 2004A Phase-II process to date. These are given in the spirit of continuously improving the Phase-II process, to the benefit of the Gemini communities.

The Observing Tool was released significantly later than the date endorsed by the Operations Working Group (December 1). We feel that it is important to allow successful proposers to download the Observing Tool immediately when they receive their notification e-mail. The early release also facilitates NGO staff familiarization with the latest Observing Tool version.

The NGSC Staff recommends that the Observing Tool be enhanced to contain a self-checking capability. A check button could be added that would perform, for example, checks of the targets in the Phase I vs. Phase II proposals, checks of the observing conditions granted vs. those contained in the Phase II, and other straightforward mechanical checks. This would greatly reduce the time required to complete a Phase-II check and increase checking accuracy.

NGSC Staff recommend that the Observing Tool contain a mechanism to select ranges of observations for updating status to "for activation" or otherwise. For programs with large numbers of targets, the current process is very labor intensive (three mouse movements or button clicks on every observation; some programs with >= 100 observations).

NGSC Staff recommend that the Observing Tool allow NGO staff to highlight and fetch multiple programs with a single fetch from the database. NGSC has received some comments on the Gemini instrument Web pages. In particular, the practice of sometimes locating crucial information on the "Hot News" or "Tips & Tricks" pages can be confusing. The T-ReCS pages could benefit from particularly close attention.

On the Queue Summary Web pages, regular updates of completion status would be very helpful. NGSC has received community feedback on this issue.

Finally, NGSC has received proposer feedback advocating for GMOS mask making from pre-existing images or astrometry of sufficient accuracy (i.e., not requiring GMOS pre-imaging). This would certainly simplify the process of securing GMOS multi-object spectroscopy. NGSC appreciates the collaboration of Drs. Roy & Puxley and their staffs in solving some pre-imaging misconceptions of P.I.s during semester 2004A.

United Kingdom

The Phase-II process has been going reasonably smoothly. Our main problem this time has been accessing the database (see below). Generally PIs seem to be producing better Phase-II definitions than previous semesters, although they still almost always require some iteration and some still need extensive correction.

The video training sessions were very helpful, especially for the two new staff members in the UK group.

Problems encountered:

ODB could not be accessed by some institutes (due to a firewall problem) which meant we had to e-mail xml files. This appears to have been fixed for Durham University but MSSL still has problems.

ODB was down occasionally without warning

Calculation of Overheads:

It is not clear which overheads are already included by the OT and which we should add. In particular there is much debate (including among Gemini staff!) about whether we should add a 75% efficiency factor on top of the overheads that are already included in the OT.

It would be extremely helpful if there was a flag we could set for each observation to include or exclude it from the time sum.

Web pages and organisation of information are still a problem

Some essential information is still "buried" in the Tips & Tricks pages. This information should be moved to the OT pages or the relevant instrument pages.

The web pages are not consistent across instruments. Some list new features in the "Hot News" pages, others use the Tips & Tricks pages. E.g. the fact that NIRI users should use P2 rather than P1 is only listed in a Hot News item from 2 semesters ago. This info should be transferred to the main web pages.

The "OT details" page for T-ReCS is empty

The libraries are very useful but people are still not noticing them until we point them out (usually after the first iteration). We suggest pointing to these in the feedback, and giving a bit more info on the web pages about what the libraries contain.

There was some important information that was only given in the library, and was not listed on the web pages anywhere – e.g. the fact that acquisition observations are now needed for NIRI spectroscopy. This is similar to what happened with GMOS last semester (calibrations were required for the first time) where a new requirement was not documented.

We are confused about the phase-II procedure for Classical programs. To what extent should these be checked by the NGOs? (presumably PIs can still make changes at the telescope). Also when is the deadline?

Status of programs: some PIs still forget to change the status of their observations to "For Review" so we do not receive the automatic e-mail notification.

Galactic coordinates: One PI specified their target position in galactic coordinates, and we suspect that it may not have been correctly interpreted – in any case the GMOS OIWFs guide star selected by the PIT was many degrees off!

Canada

(Note: only half of the Canadian PIs have finished their Phase2s so far)

ODB:

The database was the BIG problem this semester as it was flaky on several occasions. One user could not store his programs properly; it would appear to him as if he had, but the skeleton xml would not get overwritten. It was eventually traced to the fact that his RA/Dec were entered with decimal "," rather than "." -which created some bad parsing in the database with bad consequences. These "bad" RA/Dec were like this in his skeleton to start with.

In many cases that were joint programs there were some confusion with the database.

We could not access these programs in the database (in the list accessible to "NGO-Canada"). Then after this was fixed, after the PI iterations again they disappeared from my accessible list. We think the problem was the fact that we were supporting proposals for which the principal contact was from another partner country.

This is another related issue. Stephanie Côté was supporting 7 out of the 9 joint programs in her list, including some with principal contacts outside Canada. One would expect that only half of these should have been assigned to Canada.

Users:

As for last semesters, none of the PIs were able to submit a correct Phase 2 at their first attempt, even for very simple imaging proposals.

There was generally less confusion in the way to construct offset sequences and instrument sequences. But again it was clear that many PIs had not even looked at the Position Editor, and had simply left there the guide stars from their Phase 1 without checking the field.

Many users had apparently not found the webpages "OT tips & tricks" and "OT checklist" since many did not have any calibration files in their first iteration.

Documentation for T-ReCS is missing from the Gemini web site.

OT:

The OT should be able to calculate the readout times (from the chosen CCD binning and ROI) and incorporate it in its estimate of the total time for each observation. Most PIs were not aware that the readouts were not counted.

The OT library examples are great, but they should really be accessible directly from **within** the OT like the JCMT-OT. Most users had no clue about them unless they were told to get them.

Helpdesk:

It is a pain that the Helpdesk still has problems when accessed through Netscape 6 & 7. Several times I had to retype everything twice in an email to the PI because everything had vanished in the Helpdesk.

Gemini staff:

We always received prompt replies to my inquiries and questions. And when things went wrong (eg with the database) they were always quick to react and fix things.

In Summary:

The number one problem for us this semester was the database. It seems to have regressed since last semester, and has become unreliable. Apart from a detail or two that could be improved in the OT manual, most users seem to be more able to do close-to-perfect Phase2s in less iterations with the present documentation. It might also be that the majority of our users are experienced users. New users took considerably more effort to support.

Australia

The NGO is currently supporting 8 programs through the Phase II preparation process. So far this has progressed well, with any queries and problems that have arisen being handled quite adequately by our NGO support staff. However, an important lesson that we learnt in supporting this process in 2003B, was the need for the NGO and its support staff to remain vigilant for PIs not adhering to the Phase II deadlines, and even letting their preparation lapse. This was highlighted by the discovery of one of our 2003B SRB=1 queue programs still being in "Phase 2" four months into the semester! As a result, support staff are now being proactive in monitoring PIs' progress with Phase II and making sure they get it done.

The running of further training sessions by Gemini Observatory staff in December was much appreciated, with most of our support staff attempting to take part. They all found it a useful experience, apart from Gordon Robertson, whose session was ruined by not being able to get any audio signal through the videocon system. The notes/power-point slides and example Phase II proposals provided by the Gemini staff running the sessions have also been found to be very helpful resources..

Chile

As of Feb 2nd 2004 there were no major problems. One PI that contacted the Gemini GC prior to the NGO was 're-directed'.

Brazil

Some problems in the Phase II processes running OT in Windows have been detected:

- 1 – all OT-Windows platform PI users reported problems in fetching and storing files on the Database .
- 2 – when they were successful in fetching the file, and they finished working on them and tried to store the file on the Database, the updated version was not saved, thus remaining the old file on the database.
- 3 – when they subsequently decided to work in Linux, the new version again could not be stored. The other usually-using Linux PIs have not reported any problems so far.

At the NGO, nonetheless, the OT in Windows worked well without any problems!

Brazil's suggestions for the improvement of Phase I–II processes

We realize that, in some occasions, proposals approved by the NTAC suffer some typical technical problems as described below (e.g. based on the GMOS experience):

The target is in a field lacking of bright stars suitable to guiding (OIWFS stars).

The only suitable guiding star is so far that it compromises the science observations with longslit and IFU.

The suitable OIWFS star compromises the longslit angle position.

We strongly recommend the implementation of the "field tool" of the OT into the PIT for the next semester. This will help PIs to improve their proposals and facilitate the NTAC members' task by allowing them to check the technical viability of executing the projects "right from the start".

University of Hawaii (from Richard Wainscoat)

This is still continuing, and some proposals still have not been forwarded to Gemini. Some people procrastinated too much. One particular problem is that UH has a classical GMOS run in February, for which preimaging in January was required. We have excellent astrometry of the fields, so if the software had been available, preimaging would not have been necessary. The preimaging Phase II program was entered in time for the January dark run, but the weather during the January dark run was abysmal, and one field didn't get imaged. I am not sure what impact this will have on the February observations, but will explore this further.

OTHER NGO NEWS

United States

NGSC organized a booth for the January 2004 American Astronomical Society meeting in Atlanta. The NGSC booth featured displays on how to propose for Gemini observing opportunities, brochures on available Gemini instruments, and tutorials on preparing Phase-II programs. Numerous community members visited the NGSC booth.

NGSC conducted a Webcast for the U.S. community on September 17, 2003. The topic of the Webcast was Gemini scientific observing opportunities, in particular Gemini instrument capabilities and observing proposals for the 2004A semester. After the presentations, questions were entertained from the audience.

In response to Gemini System Verification opportunities, numerous proposals from the U.S. have been submitted, indicating strong interest. The procedures for informing proposers about System Verification proposal selection seems non-uniform. For example, on the Gemini Web pages ([HYPERLINK "http://www.gemini.edu/sciops/sys-verif/sysverIndex.html"](http://www.gemini.edu/sciops/sys-verif/sysverIndex.html) www.gemini.edu/sciops/sys-verif/sysverIndex.html), the results of the MICHELLE and GMOS-South IFU solicitation for System Verification are not listed.

United Kingdom

We have set up a UK Gemini Users committee, and the first meeting was held on September 17 2003. Some very useful feedback was collected, and sent on to Gemini. In response, Gemini provided very helpful answers to the queries and concerns.

The 4th UK Gemini support scientist, Ilona Soechting, took up her position on 1st December 2003. She is mainly responsible for support of AO instruments. We are also pleased to welcome Deborah Baines, formerly at Leeds University, who is providing temporary cover for Dimitra Rigopoulou (who is on maternity leave) until May 2004.

A recent allocation of EU-OPTICON funding for ELT work, with matched funds from PPARC, has made it possible for Isobel Hook's role to move towards ELT science activity, starting in January. In negotiation with PPARC it was agreed that a new senior UKGSG scientist will be appointed to take over/share UKGSG support and leadership responsibilities. The transition is expected to take about 12 months.

Brazil

Gemini Public Information and Outreach Network

Mariângela has also participated in the annual meeting of the Gemini PIO Network in Hilo, from July 29 to August 01. During that meeting, many aspects of the present and future PIO actions taken by the Observatory as a whole, as well as by each partner, were discussed. Following the Chilean initiative, the Gemini Virtual Tour will be translated into Portuguese this semester. A first press release on Brazilian Gemini scientific results is planned for this semester, too.

Workshop on Astronomical Instrumentation

The Brazilian Astronomical Community organized a workshop entitled "Optical and Infrared Astronomical Instrumentation for Modern Telescopes," which took place in Angra dos Reis, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in November 16-20, 2003. The workshop was possible due to grants from the Ministério da Ciência e Tecnologia (MCT) and the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq), as well as to the nation-wide project named MEGALIT, a Brazilian Instituto do Milênio. The workshop was focused on optical and infrared instruments for large- and medium-class telescopes, with special attention to projects aimed at the Gemini Observatory and the SOAR Telescope, but contributions for instrumentation for other telescopes were also welcome. In addition to the instrumentation talks, there were talks and poster contributions about the science that will be possible with these telescopes and next-generation instrumentation. Invited Gemini staff scientists presented some of the talks. This conference allowed a close interaction between astronomers and instrumentation scientists and technicians, so they could establish the tendencies for future instrumentation development. In the end, this will allow us all to obtain the high quality data needed to answer the important open questions in many areas of astronomy.

Gemini Fellowship

We have released an announcement for the U.S. Gemini Fellowship for the period 2004-2005. Two Brazilian candidates have been selected by the Scientific and Technical Council of the LNA.

C. Discussion of the NGO reports

In response to the UK report, Puxley said that the firewall will be fixed by the next meeting. Also Gemini intends to update the OT's calculation of overheads, and document it. The Web pages will be overhauled by 2004B, and in particular the T-ReCs pages will be fixed within a week. Also the queue status web page will be linked to ODB - unfortunately at the moment the time accounting procedure is not uniform across instrument scientists. This is on the task list for the next few months.

Lopez noted that he was unable to attend either of the Phase-II training sessions because of a problem with the videocon. He reported that there is still confusion in the community over the two Phase-II deadlines. He also reported problems with info on web pages - the information is too "hidden".

Faundez-Abans reported finding that wrong WFS stars had been used in one of the programs, and he would like the phase-II algorithm to be used at Phase-I. He reported some problems with the Brazilian TAC not taking into account the technical assessments, hence the following resolution.

Resolution 6.2: Due to specific problems identified by some partners, it has become apparent that technical issues at phase-I are not being taken into full consideration by some NTACs. Given the complexities of the Gemini system, the OpsWG recommends that the NTACs take full account of the technical feasibility assessments provided by the National Gemini Offices.

Resolution 6.3: It was noted that Phase-II definitions for classical programs can become very long because PIs wish to define options for all observing conditions. The OpsWG and Gemini Observatory agreed that when checking phase-II definitions for classical programs, it is sufficient for the National Offices to check only a representative set of observation definitions, and add notes to those have been checked.

During the Hawaii NGO report, the topic of the instrument training sessions for the NGOs emerged. More notice about the specific dates/times for the training would help the NGOs in scheduling staff into the sessions. Roy noted that because of logistical difficulties connecting all the sites, we will have to limit participation to NGO staff only. We discussed more advanced training for when the NGO staff have mastered the basic modes.

An issue emerged about support of Gemini software on Macintosh running OSX. This would include HelpDesk, Phase I Tool, and Observing Tool. Many more astronomers are using Macintosh laptops. The NGOs have received complaints about this from their staff and community.

Resolution 6.4: The OpsWG feels that, given the greatly increasing popularity of Macs running OSX, it is imperative that the publically-released software (helpdesk, PIT, OT and IRAF reduction software) are supported on MACs.

C. ITAC report:

It was realized after the ITAC meeting that some classical MOS programs had been allocated time without an allocation for pre-imaging.

Action 6.3: OpsWG members to remind their respective NTACs that an allocation of queue time for pre-imaging must be allocated in band 1 to support all classical MOS programs. This will be necessary for as long as Gemini requires pre-imaging for all MOS programs.

Phase-I issues

Puxley noted some difficulties with the 2004A Phase-I proposals received by Gemini:

Classical proposals should have all conditions set to "any"

Targets outside RA range – the should comply with the CfP!

Proposal package must obey agreed naming, ranking conventions.

NGOs should add note in the xml proposal if it has been "moved" from one telescope to another.

Proposals should list all the components needed (e.g. GMOS gratings are sometimes missing). NGOs should check for this and change the phase-I xml before transmission

Action 6.4: As part of the draft call for proposals, Puxley to distribute a proposal for RA range/visibility limits. Gemini will also provide a method for NGOs to check that Phase-I proposals meet these restrictions.

Puxley described some changes planned for the 2004B PIT. These include: adjustment of guide star checking to match cloud cover, identification of ALTAIR proposals on cover sheet explicitly, checking that classical proposals have conditions set to "any", and auto-checking that the PI hasn't just sent in the xml template!

Puxley reported on the location of the science ranking bands. Currently these are set at 1/3, 2/3 of the total time. However if there is a significant amount of classical time then the queue can end up with too many programs in bands 1 and 2. This will be fixed in future by subtracting classical time before setting the band boundaries.

Resolution 6.5: The OpsWG supports the proposal by Puxley to subtract classical time before setting the boundaries between queue bands in future.

There is still an imbalance of observing conditions among the proposals forwarded to Gemini., in particular there is still a problem with too many programs needing clear conditions.

HelpDesk: Puxley reported that several problems with the HelpDesk related to its Web interface are caused by poor vendor support. Gemini had been hoping that the vendor would eventually fix this. Gemini has now decided to write its own Web interface that will overcome these problems. However, it will require significant work, so the timescale is unknown.

After the 2004B ITAC meeting, Gemini plans to send the NGOs the approved program spreadsheet, including the country that is supporting each program (first), and then the usual packages (next).

Instrument update

Simons provided an update on the Gemini instrumentation program. The observatory is getting close to having all instrument ports filled.

NIRI has had another overhaul. The f/32 channel was left misaligned after the last overhaul. Also the beam steering mirror had developed problems and the pupil wheel failed in December, which meant that no spectroscopy could be done. NOAO staff updated the NIRI detector controller to same version as GNIRS, and gave training to Gemini staff on troubleshooting and maintenance of the controller and detector.

GMOS has been generally reliable. There has been a problem with gratings coming loose in their cells. These are being systematically re-glued.

ALTAIR has demonstrated a factor of four increase in sensitivity compared to non-AO corrected images. The instrument runs with a high open shutter efficiency of 40-45%. The vibration problem with the NIRI cryo-coolers has been damped but jitter remains, and effort is now concentrated on looking inside ALTAIR itself, in particular at the tip/tilt mirror. Preparations continue for the laser guide star. During 2004, the beam transfer optics will be received and installed; the laser will also be delivered and installed. ALTAIR will need a (unplanned) tip/tilt/focus sensor inside ALTAIR. The laser will be used on-sky for the first time during Q4 2004.

MICHELLE was used reliably at the end of 2004 on Gemini, mostly in imaging mode. The Chop/nod issue has been resolved in software. Commissioning of the spectroscopy mode has begun. MICHELLE is due back from UKIRT in April or May, after which it will need ~2 months of rework (assuming only one thermal cycle is needed). On this schedule, commissioning would be completed at the end of 2004A. The rework involves: installing the Gemini foreoptics, fixing the detector temperature problems and fixing the vignetting (which should also fix the "flopture" problem). Gemini and PPARC are close to finalising the long-term loan agreement. An agreement is being put in place with UKATC for long term support for MICHELLE.

GMOS-South: The electronic offset mode has been commissioned. The new MIT/LL chips are not ready. Rick Murowinski went to Hilo in November to interface engineering-grade MIT/LL CCDs (using new DSP code) with the data system. This works with the DHS. Gemini still only have 2 science grade chips for GMOS-S and are awaiting delivery of more devices from Mike Lesser (this month) before the retrofit plan can be executed. This will happen no sooner than Q2 2004.

GMOS-S IFU: The IFU performs well optically but some mechanical problems have been found – the IFU does not fit correctly in its cassette, and the OIWFS probe interferes with IFU and cannot access all of the OIWFS patrol field. The IFU is now back in Durham and should be back at Gemini in time for 2004B.

GNIRS arrived at Gemini-S in Q4 2003 and first light was in January. Throughput is acceptable. There have been a number of wavefront-sensor interface issues, most of which have been solved. The Gemini South helium cooling system is taxed with four cryogenic instruments. Radiation events from the short red and blue cameras are a problem, due to thorium in some of the anti-reflection coatings. This will be addressed by replacing some lenses. The GNIRS IFU shipped recently from Durham. It will be installed in March, with first light in April. One of the IFU mirrors was damaged, unfortunately, before shipment.

T-ReCS: The major modes are commissioned. There is intermittent high frequency noise and this may require a rework of cryogenic wiring inside the dewar. There are low amplitude thermal fluctuations in the detector.

bHROS: Significant work has been done to understand the low throughput measurements (of ~1%) reported at the last GSC meeting. It is now believed that this was due to a combination of clouds, poor seeing and alignment (both internal to bHROS, and between bHROS and the science fold mirror). After fixing the internal alignment problem between the mask on the fibre assembly and the sapphire balls, a throughput of 17% has been measured (using GCAL as the source). It is expected that this will be reduced somewhat for a real stellar PSF. The next step is to do an on-sky throughput test in good conditions. Puxley has assigned 10 hours on Gemini-S for this purpose.

Hokupa'a-85: The loop has not yet been closed due to unexpected noise in the photon counter electronics. Also the new deformable mirror is not available yet because of a problem with the gold coating process (contamination in the coating chamber). The next milestone is in April when Hk-85 should arrive in the Hilo lab. Based on the GSC recommendations, Hk-85 would not be commissioned on Gemini-N but would go straight to Gemini-S. Phoenix would have to be removed in order to provide an instrument port, but would be remounted in order to be used in 2004B (there will be a 4 month cycle - subject to the 16 night condition). General community access for Hk-85 would start in 2005A.

NIFS-2 has made very rapid progress and is being cold-tested already. Also GSAOI is now being vacuum tested.

FLAMINGOS-2 will be commissioned and first deployed at Gemini North.

Simons showed the chart of expected instrument deliveries by year. Deliveries should lull in 2006B. A swap of GMOS-N CCDs could potentially take place in 2004B if the chips exist (which is not likely).

SPITZER Follow up

Mountain described the motivation for allowing up to 10 nights per telescope of DD time to be used for SPITZER follow-up programs. We have a unique, one-off opportunity to capitalise on this, particularly with our Mid-IR instruments. It will be ~1 yr before ESO catches up with VISIR. The GSC also saw this as an important window of opportunity.

His proposal is that the TACs decide how to use the time. The NTACs would flag appropriate proposals, and the ITAC will be in a position to deal with competing proposals. Any unallocated DD time would go back into the queue. Examples of how the time could be used are completion of

joint proposals (e.g. if a proposal is not supported by one of the partners) or as contingency against uncertainties in exposure times. Armandroff suggested that some of the time could be used for proposals submitted outside the normal proposal deadlines.

Couch emphasised that the call for proposals must be worded very carefully so as not to alienate the non-SPITZER community. Crabtree said that ideally by advertising this opportunity and educating the community, a good response will happen automatically.

We break for champagne to celebrate signing of the NGO support agreement by all the Partners!

DAY 2

Phase-II issues

Puxley presented a diagram showing a snapshot of the OT database. On Gemini-S there was a disappointingly low number of programs with their phase-II ready in time for the start of the semester. In future we may have to be more pro-active in chasing up PIs.

Action 6.5: NGOs to keep an approximate count of the number of iterations needed with PIs to get each proposal to the stage of "for activation" (for example using a count of e-mails).

Roy described a plan for allowing GMOS masks to be made from non-GMOS images/coordinates. The Gemini approach is to include this in the OT software (it would then also work for Flamingos-2). The first step would be to create a small team of scientists from Gemini & NGOs to define the requirements. Then the development plan would be designed and circulated. Kim Gillies estimates 3 weeks for these steps. Following that the code would be written which would take 2 months of full time work (e.g. by Alan Brighton). Gemini will send the draft requirements document in about mid March. Until the new software is in place we still require TACs to budget for pre-imaging.

Resolution 6.6: The Operations working group is pleased to hear of plans to implement GMOS mask making from non-GMOS images. We strongly support this being made available to users in 04B.

Training

Gemini will arrange training sessions for GMOS mask-making in 2004A (3 sessions), possibly in March. Phase-II training for 2004B will be arranged for about 2 weeks before ITAC.

Action 6.6: Gemini to arrange training sessions for GMOS mask making in 04A (3 sessions). The suggested timescale for these is March. If needed, Gemini will also set up video training sessions in June on Michelle and T-ReCS phaseII for the benefit of any NGO staff who are not able to attend the NGO meeting in Victoria.

GNIRS phase-II will be supported by Gemini - no NGO training needed [note – it was subsequently agreed at a later meeting that NGOs would support GNIRS Phase-II in 2004B]. MICHELLE and T-ReCS training will take place at the NGO meeting in May in Victoria. Video training will be arranged in June for those who could not attend the Victoria meeting.

Gemini Science Conference

Community interest in this is high. Crabtree reported that the SOC and LOC have held several telecons. There will be no registration fee for the meeting. The meeting will last 3.5 days of which 3 days will be science and 0.5 days users meeting. More financial contributions may be needed from the NGOs to support meals etc. Currently 60 speakers are planned plus 20 posters but another 20 could be added if necessary.

The agenda for the Users meeting needs to be arranged. Armandroff suggested that the meeting be used to give updates on new instruments (e.g. NIFS) and publicise new capabilities. Presentations on the Aspen process and on queue management, PhaseII, data reduction (Gemini IRAF) would also be useful. Crabtree, Armandroff Hook & Couch volunteer to arrange the meeting. Hook will coordinate this.

Action 6.7: Hook, Crabtree, Armandroff and Couch to organise an agenda for the Gemini Users meeting, to be held alongside the Vancouver science meeting.

Following the Vancouver meeting there will be a one-day NGO meeting on 27th May. This will be organised by Dennis Crabtree.

Operational efficiency

Puxley presented slides prepared by Peter Gray. The telescope mount settling time for large offsets (60") is now close to specs defined in the science requirements document (spec is 5 sec, time is 7s). Small offsets still need work. The chopping secondary is now operating at 87% duty cycle. Dual beam guiding while chopping has now been demonstrated. However it requires elaborate setup by the SSA.

Work has been done to understand and reduce target acquisition times. Most effort had been directed towards the SSA's part of the acquisition process. The next step is to work on the astronomer/instrument aspects. All agreed that it would be positive to reflect the improved acquisition time is lower acquisition charges in the Phase I and II proposals. We had some discussion of potentially enhancing the efficiency of PWFS1 and PWFS2 in order to allow fainter guide stars.

Resolution 6.7: The OpsWG is very pleased by the efforts of Peter Gray and the engineering staff in progress towards reducing overheads in mid-IR observing efficiency and mount performance. We strongly support the systematic approach being adopted.

Queue Issues:

Gemini is working to enhance the program status information on the Gemini Web pages. Puxley said that within a few weeks we should have the database writing to a web page, to show which programs were attempted each night. In a few months the queue status web page should have the "%-complete" values up-to-date (this requires the various instrument scientists to make their time accounting methods consistent with each other).

Semester 2004B

A. Timeline

Puxley described plans for semester 2004B. The key dates are

20 Feb : fix the instrument list for the Call for Proposals

14 May : e-transmission deadline

1 June : ITAC meeting

~1 June : switch to 04B OT and OT release.

PhaseII deadlines : 12 July and 12 August (PIs)

22 July and 23 August (NGOs to Gemini)

Resolution 6.9: The OpsWG agreed the following Phase-II deadlines for semester 2004B: 12 July and 12 August (PIs); 22 July and 23 August (NGOs).

There was a discussion about whether the ITAC could be held earlier in order to give more time at the start of the semester. Puxley said that Gemini

could move the call for proposals earlier by a week in future semesters (OpsWG meetings would also be a week earlier). All partners agreed to this except the UK (who use scientific refereeing, so compressing the schedule will be difficult) and Argentina.

Action 6.8: Hook to check whether the UK TAC could move its Phase-I deadlines and NTAC dates such that the proposal package could be sent to Gemini by about May 8th and November 7th of each year. She will also check with the Argentinian rep about the same issue. Answer needed by 1 June.

If this proposal was implemented, the timeline for 2005A would be:

OpsWG (in Sydney) Tuesday/Wednesday 3/4 August

CfP 25 August

Transmission of proposals - 9th November.

ITAC - Nov 22nd.

B. Instrument mode availability

The 2004B Call for Proposals was discussed. We agreed to offer NIRI in classical mode for both spectroscopy and imaging, despite the NIRI pupil-wheel reliability issue. Michelle would be offered in queue only, but with the possibility of "guests" who have queue programs visiting to help with the observing. Note that Gemini is committed to making the spectroscopy mode work even though this means there is some risk that the instrument would not be ready at all (even for imaging). Crabtree, Hook and Armandroff argued that rapid distribution of Michelle (and other) data to PIs with the opportunity for feedback would be highly desirable.

C. Engineering

Gemini presented the list of commissioning and engineering tasks for 2004B. It was noted that if the GMOS chips do not arrive in 2004A then the CCD swap will move to 2004B. Hokupa'a-85 will be reviewed again by the GSC in April (by which time a full system test should have been carried out). For now we leave Hk-85 on the engineering list with the option of reverting to science time.

Resolution 6.8: The OpsWG endorses the capabilities and engineering plan proposed by Gemini.

D. Available time and partner shares

Puxley presented the time accounting summary from previous semesters. The UK and Canada are lagging in their time use, for example the UK is owed about 132 hrs. In order to redress the imbalance, it was decided to apply a 50% correction factor to the 2004B CfP.

Resolution 6.11: The OpsWG noted the imbalance of used time between partners that has built up since 200B, with the UK and Canada's used time being significantly behind their nominal allocation. We recommend applying a correction factor, which accounts for 50% of this imbalance, to the 2004B time shares.

It was agreed that 70% of the Spitzer follow up nights should be distributed among the partners, to be allocated by the NTACs in the usual way.

It was agreed that the U.S. would use 5 nights of its time for one program of Demo science rather than taking time "off the top". The OpsWG recognises that this may restrict the pool of those using HK-85 in 2004B demo science.

Resolution 6.10: The issue of Hokupa'a-85 demo science was discussed by the OpsWG. Several of the partners were uncomfortable with the proposal to take 10 Gemini-South nights "off the top" in 2004B for demo science. Instead the OpsWG support the proposal by Armandroff to use 5 nights of US time for one program of demo science. The OpsWG recognises that this may restrict the pool of those using HK-85 in 2004B.

Preparation for review committee meetings

The AOC-G, Gemini Board and NSF review committees will all be reviewing Gemini shortly. Included in this will be a review of the distributed support model. We discussed ways to prepare for these reviews and it was decided that the NGOs should prepare a short document to describe the support model from an NGO perspective.

Action 6.9: Hook to coordinate writing of a document describing NGO roles from an NGO perspective, in preparation for the visiting committee.

Action 6.10 The U.S. NGO to send a breakdown of their staff effort, in preparation for the visiting committee

News and Updates

Gemini Archive (update presented by Roy). In a few months the prototype will be replaced by the "Full Basic Archive". By Feb 04 this will be ready for internal assessment. In the summer of 2004 it will be released to the NGOs and then to the community. This version will include automatic e-mailing of PIs when their data are about to become public. The next step is to make the Archive useable for data distribution to PIs. This requires quality assessment to be built in, and this will take time. Later, advanced capabilities will be implemented. A working group may be needed to help guide this work.

The Gemini IRAF project: (update from Roy): Frank Valdes is now involved, working specifically on automatic wavelength calibration. A progress report will be made at the end Feb/early March. Roy and Armandroff will distribute this to the OpsWG. Armandroff added that the NOAO IRAF group and Gemini IRAF are now coordinating new software releases. He showed the Gemini Web site containing the plans and organization for the project: [HYPERLINK "http://www.gemini.edu/hedwig/geminipkg.html"](http://www.gemini.edu/hedwig/geminipkg.html) <http://www.gemini.edu/hedwig/geminipkg.html>

Publications (Update from Roy) : The first wave of publications from visitor instruments is now appearing. However NIRI has been on telescope since 2000B and has produced only 4 publications. GMOS is doing well. Hokupa'a had produced the most publications so far, with 22. Crabtree adds that top 4 cited papers are all by Laird Close & collaborators.

Seeing monitors: There is now a seeing monitor on CP - first light was on December 29th. There is a plan to put one on MK (a replica of that on CP). Peter Gray has now taken over responsibility for IQ assessment.

Communications

The regular telecons planned at the last OpsWG meeting did not happen. We decide that the NGOs should take responsibility for the initiation of these and that the first one should be on April 7th and a second one on June 7th.

Action 6.11: OpsWG to initiate telecons with Gemini every 2 months. The OpsWG agreed that the first telecom should be on Wed April 7th at 10am Hawaii time. The second telecom will be arranged for around June 7th.

The setting up of Gemini-wide instrument groups (e-mail lists) also did not happen. Puxley reported that unfortunately there had been no progress on this even within Gemini. More discussion followed on how to improve communications. Hook and others asked for occasional updates, and pointed out that even some pieces of very good news (e.g. GNIRS first light) do not currently get reported to the NGOs.

In terms of sharing information across Gemini for everyone supporting a particular instrument, Armandroff suggested Videocons of these groups periodically to share information and ask questions. We agreed that it would be beneficial to try demonstrations of this concept some time during 2004A. It was agreed that the NGOs would likely need to serve as the conveners. The two best ideas were for the U.S. to organize a GNIRS Videocon and for Canada to organize an ALTAIR Videocon. Also, Armandroff suggested breakout groups at the NGO meeting in Victoria, where NGO and Gemini staff who support a particular instrument could share information, ask questions, and get to know each other better.

Next Meeting

Alternate Operations Working Group meetings will occur at an NGO site. Warrick Couch will host the next meeting in Sydney, Australia. August 3 and 4 is the next meeting date.

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