

7th GEMINI OPERATIONS WORKING GROUP MEETING

August 3,4 2004

Minutes

Present: Taft Armandroff, Warrick Couch, Dennis Crabtree, Max Faundez-Abans, Isobel Hook (Chair), Rachel Johnson (observer), Sebastian Lopez (by video for part of the meeting) Matt O'Dowd (observer), Phil Puxley, Jean-Rene Roy, Doug Simons, Richard Wainscoat

Action items

Action 7.1: All NGOs to flag potential problem proposals to the Associate Directors at the technical assessment stage

Action 7.2 Crabtree to investigate Multi-point control Unit (MCU) for NGO training sessions. The next NGO telecon may be used to test this method of communication.

Action 7.3: Roy to check Gemini staff availability for NGO training sessions on GNIRS IFU and Mid-IR spectroscopy. The aim is to hold each session twice in the week of 6 December. Gemini staff to arrange times of these sessions and notify NGOs.

Action 7.4: NGOs to continue initiation of regular NGO-Gemini telecons. The next will be held at 1pm HST on 4th October.

Action 7.5: Puxley to circulate OT worklist to NGOs.

Resolutions

Resolution 7.1: The OpsWG notes that some requests from the Board that are relevant for the OpsWG are not explicitly noted in the actions or resolutions from the Board meetings. Unfortunately this can mean that the OpsWG does not learn of these requests until the OpsWG meeting is underway. Since the OpsWG meetings usually have a very full agenda, the OpsWG respectfully asks that the Board communicate any major issues for the OpsWG well ahead of the OpsWG meetings. This will allow sufficient time to be scheduled at the OpsWG meetings for work on these items.

Resolution 7.2: The OpsWG recommend that HIRES on Keck be advertised in the 05A CfP as a 5-night exchange with Michelle. We recommend that the time be split into 2 nights in March and three in June.

Resolution 7.3: The OpsWG supports the proposal by Gemini staff for capabilities to be offered in 2005A on Gemini-N. We note that offering the echelle mode of Michelle is contingent on performance, to be assessed by Gemini staff prior to Call.

Resolution 7.4: The OpsWG supports the coordination with other observatories to maximise science from the Deep Impact event. The OpsWG recommends setting aside 2-3 nights around the time of Deep Impact. The Call for proposals should explain that proposals for Deep Impact observations should not be submitted for these nights. Gemini will issue a

separate call for Proposals nearer the time. However the call will encourage proposals on other nights before or after the event in support of Deep Impact science.

Resolution 7.5: The OpsWG approves the proposed capabilities on Gemini-S. If performance of Hokupa'a-85 is not demonstrated by end of August (to be equal or better than Hk-36) it will not be offered in 2005A. However in this case we support rescheduling the U.S. Demo science run to 2005A, and adding an additional 5 nights of Demo Science for the full Gemini community in 2005A. These nights are to be scheduled once performance of Hk-85 has been verified.

Resolution 7.6: The OWG notes the agreement, contained within MICHELLE Workscope Gem01052, on compensatory time for the UK for the use of MICHELLE on Gemini North. The OpsWG is concerned that inserting large amounts of CT into the schedule will unduly skew the Scientific Ranking Band 1 distribution by partner. The OWG recommends that the CT be limited to 33 hours per semester. For the purpose of calculating the advertised time in the Call for Proposals we recommend that 5 (five) nights be taken "off the top" of the available time to provide the necessary queue slots.

Resolution 7.7: The OpsWG notes that late submission of Phase-IIs affects observatory efficiency. The OpsWG recommend penalties for late Phase-II submission, and asks the GSC to seriously consider implementation of such a policy. We suggest using a system similar to that used at ESO, where late programs are demoted by one scientific ranking band.

Resolution 7.8: The OpsWG discussed the conversion ratio between classical nights and queue-scheduled hours (in particular for the purposes of time accounting and charging) and concluded that a ratio was required to facilitate comparison of, and exchanges between, classical and queue time. Rather than constructing a complex set of currency exchanges for each specific case, the OpsWG strongly recommends that a single ratio encompass all of these factors. The factors considered by the OpsWG are detailed in the minutes of this OpsWG meeting (#7). The OpsWG recommends that a ratio for queue-classical conversion of 75% be adopted. As the aggregate time accounting exists for semesters up to and including 2003B using the extant conversion ratio of 1.0, and has been used for partner share rebalancing in 2004B, the OpsWG recommends that the new 75% conversion ratio be applied to semester 2004A and subsequent semester's accounting.

Minutes of the 7th meeting

Day 1: 3rd August 2004

Review of Minutes and Action items

Isobel Hook opened the meeting and asked for comments on the February 2004 meeting notes. Armandroff had circulated some minor comments on the notes. Hook will incorporate these.

Hook reviewed the action items from the February 2004 meeting. All of these were addressed except 6.4 (part done – RA limits were proposed but no method for checking RA limits was provided) and 6.5 (monitoring Phase-II e-mails was not done by all NGOs). Note that the NGOs contributed to the training action item (6.6) via Tim Davidge and Jay Elias speaking on ALTAIR and GNIRS, respectively, at the NGO meeting.

Jean-Rene Roy reviewed the Gemini Board action items that are relevant to the Operations Working Group. In particular we note the following:

2004.A.13: The board recommends minimum science fractions in 2005A of 70% at Gemini-North and 75% (with a goal of 80%) at Gemini-South

2004.A.14 gave approval for both Hokupa'a-85 and bHROS commissioning, with Hokupa'a-85 being commissioned first, assuming it is available.

A Board action asked the Operations Working Group to examine the issue of the appearance of inconsistency in the charging of classical versus queue observing time, in that the classical time is charged as nights awarded (regardless of weather conditions) and the queue time is charged as hours used and to report its findings and any possible recommendations for changes in practice to the Board at its November 2004 meeting. This was discussed later in this OpsWG meeting.

Roy reported another item from the Board which was not explicitly noted in the Board meeting resolutions or actions. The Board strongly desire to put in place system of metrics to monitor the performance of the observatory and NGOs. A list of metrics is needed by the time of the Board "retreat" (27-28 September). This clearly requires considerable effort by the OpsWG and we were disappointed not to have been notified prior to our meeting of the short time-scale involved. This led to OpsWG resolution 7.1 above.

Instrumentation Status

Doug Simons presented the Instrumentation Status report.

NIRI: There was a planned NIRI shutdown in January. This accomplished realigning the camera(s). The NIRI controller was upgraded to be identical to that on GNIRS. After the shutdown, there is anomalous noise in 10-20% of the frames. Simons plans to have work done on this problem, with NOAO assistance.

GMOS-North: GMOS-North has been reliable. Work continues on pre-emptive repairs to prevent grating/cell decoupling. The U filter degenerated, but this was not used much and silver mirror coatings are coming which will make it less important. The use of GMOS with ALTAIR is not currently available and is not planned for the near future. Hook asked about whether observations at the parallactic angle (both fixed and tracking) are offered since it is not clear from the web pages and OT. Puxley replied that if users wish to use this mode they should contact the Gemini instrument scientists.

ALTAIR: Success has been seen in NIRI+ALTAIR spectroscopy on objects with close separation. Roy asked the NGOs to help promote NIRI+ALTAIR spectroscopy. Some vibration problems remain in ALTAIR, resulting in a residual Strehl diminution. Gemini, with assistance from HIA, is adding a new ALTAIR wavefront sensor that is required for laser guide star AO. Gemini has a plan to insert a new pupil-imaging lens in ALTAIR to change the elevation of conjugation. This change should result in a larger isoplanatic patch.

Installation of the ALTAIR Laser Guide Star (LGS) has started. There was a 1 month delay in delivery of the laser launch telescope and there is a 1 month delay in delivery of laser (currently the power is not meeting spec). These delays mean that some LGS activity will slip into 05A. First laser projection is expected in late 2004B.

MICHELLE: Gemini suggests offering MICHELLE imaging, low-resolution spectroscopy and possibly echelle spectroscopy in semester 2005A. The detector vignetting has been improved during the latest shutdown/work. Despite an attempt to repair this, the

MICHELLE detector is still running 2 degrees too warm. This impacts the dark current, which has the most negative impact on the echelle mode. It is still unclear whether MICHELLE echelle mode will be offered in 2005A. Relevant numbers and analyses are underway and need to be resolved before the Call for Proposals. Gemini may purchase copies of the T-ReCS filter set for MICHELLE.

NIFS: NIFS is undergoing cold testing at AUSPACE. The NIFS schedule has slipped about a month due to the array controller and socket issues. Simons expects acceptance testing in early 2005. It's doubtful that on-telescope acceptance testing will be completed in time for the 2005B Call for Proposals.

GMOS-South: Simons continues to pursue the GMOS-South CCD upgrades to MIT/LL devices, though progress is slow. It is presently dependent upon obtaining the devices from Mike Lesser's Lab in Arizona. Following this there would be at least a further 6 months of work needed to prepare and install the chips.

T-ReCS: The major issues with T-ReCS are the intermittent high-frequency noise problem and the failed grating wheel and filter wheel. Gemini is about to fix the two wheels. The instrument is coming off the telescope this week. Spectroscopy mode is currently locked out.

GNIRS: All the GNIRS modes have been commissioned except polarimetry and R=18,000 spectroscopy. The IFU is performing well. A major GNIRS shutdown is planned to replace the radioactive-coated camera lenses, replace the OIWFS gimbal, etc. NOAO will perform the work. One GNIRS system verification program, by Kevin Luhman at the Center for Astrophysics, has resulted in the first submitted GNIRS paper.

bHROS: Commissioning is now planned for early 2005A. Simons is awaiting a draft commissioning plan from Aderin and Barlow. A commissioning Team is being assembled using both internal staff and outside temporary help.

NICI: The first NICI cold test was successful. The array controllers are complete. The next cold test will feature either MUX or science detector testing. Over the next couple of months, the integration and test of the dewar, detectors, and mechanisms will occur. The adaptive optics system is likely to be the limiting factor. Simons is forecasting a Pre-Ship acceptance test for NICI in Q1 2005 with on-telescope AT during Q2 2005. Thus NICI commissioning may not affect 2005A.

Hokupa'a-85: Hokupa'a-85 produced 70% Strehl at H using a turbulence simulator. It also passed its 1-dimensional flexure test. Winter storms have delayed Hokupa'a-85 delivery to Cerro Pachon. The ABU infrared imager has had some technical issues that have caused delays in its image quality testing. Both NOAO and Gemini staff have worked to fix the ABU issues. The Hokupa'a-85 + ABU on-sky tests this month are crucial. Gemini and UH have developed some calculations/expectations for Hokupa'a-85 + ABU performance. They contain various limiting cases for ABU image quality.

Phoenix: Simons indicated that Phoenix has been reliable. Gemini and the US NGO are in discussions regarding a new Phoenix support model with the following general attributes: a) classical observing with a 1-night minimum; b) US NGO provides bulk of support. Puxley and Armandroff reported that Gemini and NOAO are close to reaching agreement. SOAR would like to secure Phoenix for a test fit. However, Phoenix remains lower on SOAR's visibility/priority than telescope commissioning, the SOAR optical imager, and the Goodman Spectrograph.

TEXES: MOU negotiations are proceeding with Texas on deployment of TEXES at Gemini North. Nominal deployment is planned for semester 2005B and 5 nights for commissioning in 05A. Community access would start in semester 2006A.

Hook asked about when polarimetry might be offered with MICHELLE. Roy replied that this is not planned in the foreseeable future. The bottlenecks are: a) waiting for full commissioning of the MICHELLE spectroscopic modes; b) plan for polarimetric data reduction, and understanding the prioritization of this versus other important data reduction software. This would need input from the GSC in order to raise its priority relative to other data reduction work.

Initial discussion of 2005A Call for Proposals

Puxley then reviewed the preparations for the 2005A Call for Proposals. A draft Call for Proposals will be sent to the NGOs for review. The date for release for the Call for Proposals is 1 September. A few points for discussion were identified: (1) The proposed time swap of 5 nights of Keck + HIRES for the same number of nights of Gemini-North + MICHELLE (and the associated operational impact such as technical assessment of proposals), (2) the uncertain performance of the echelle mode of MICHELLE, (3) The status of Hokupa'a-85 and (4) the Acquisition camera. Discussion on these topics was concluded at the start of day 2 (see the minutes of that section).

We also discussed telescope efficiency issues. Gemini has well-defined plans to address these issues. Their implementation is limited by engineering effort. There was a consensus that the GSC should discuss the relative prioritization of commissioning specific to new instrument modes versus telescope efficiency issues.

2005A Time distribution

Puxley then presented the aggregate and current time accounting. The Gemini Staff are ahead of their share by ~120 hours; Canada and the U.K. are behind. The OpsWG decided by consensus to make a correction to the nights available to each partner for the 2005A Call for Proposals. About half of the Gemini Staff excess, 5 nights, will be removed from the Gemini Staff available nights and added to the U.K. and Canada. Another important factor is that Australia plans to purchase 7-10 nights of U.K. time at Gemini South in 2005A (and possibly beyond). The final number will need to be settled before the Call for Proposals.

We discussed the MICHELLE compensatory time (CT) that is awarded to the UK for the use of MICHELLE on Gemini North (20 nights in Band-1 over 3 years). In order to avoid large fluctuations in the amount of band-1 time available for other partners it was agreed to limit the amount of MICHELLE CT used in any semester to 33hrs. Five nights would be taken "off the top" each semester when MICHELLE CT applies in order to allow for the necessary queue slots. – see OpsWG resolution 7.6.

However some flexibility is allowed in the length of programs flagged as CT: The total length of all flagged proposals must be 33 +/- 10hrs. This allows some latitude in the loading algorithm (but any time over the 33hr maximum would be charged as regular UK band-1 time, not CT).

2005A Proposal process and PIT

Puxley described the problems that occurred during the 2004B proposal processing, ITAC, and post-ITAC process. Errors by proposers, NGO mistakes, and Gemini-induced errors all contributed to a large number of errors in the Gemini post-ITAC feedback to the NGOs. The NGOs remarked that the error rate from Gemini was anomalously high compared to previous semesters. Puxley indicated that either more time needs to be added to the schedule for proposal processing or the process needs to be under tighter software/process control. Because there is a high level of inflexibility in the deadlines, a technical process solution is being endorsed.

Puxley proposed that joint proposals only be submitted via a revised PIT. The new PIT would specify all the partners on a joint proposal and would insure one unique copy of a joint proposal. Wainscoat, Hook, and Armandroff raised the issue of needing a national contact for each joint proposal, partly because NTACs may want to see a clearly-defined person from their partner country who is responsible for the proposal, but also because each NGO needs a contact within their country to follow-up with on data status, etc. Puxley agreed to implement a feature in the PIT that includes the ability to specify a principal contact and a contact in each partner.

Puxley also described a Phase-I proposal database (PIPD) that the NGOs can use to access their forwarded proposals and status. The NGOs are enthusiastic about the software and process proposed by Puxley.

We agreed to allow a small amount flexibility in Phase-I deadlines (which are now all in rough alignment at 30th September/1st October for 2005A) in order to accommodate the new joint proposal system. Guidelines for proposal lengths are also broadly consistent across partners: - one page science case, one page technical case and one page figures, with a total of no more than 3 pages. We agree to allow some flexibility on the length and format for joint proposals.

2005A timeline

The timeline for 2005A was discussed. The plan is as follows

- 30 Sept/1st October – Phase-I deadline
- 15 November: e-transmission of proposal package from NGOs to Gemini
- 29 Nov: ITAC meeting
- 1 Dec: OT released
- 3 Dec: ITAC feedback sent to NGOs
- 7 Dec: ODB access opened to PIs
- 12 January and 10 February - first and second Phase II deadlines for PIs
- 21 January and 21 February - deadlines for NGO approval as “for activation.”

Training on GNIRS IFU (Rodgers & Turner), MICHELLE and T-ReCS spectroscopy (Volk & Geballe), and possibly GMOS mask making support (possibly Bergmann & Carasco) will take place during the week of December 6th. Gemini will arrange these sessions and notify the NGOs – see Action 7.2

2004B

Puxley then talked about some problem proposals for 2004B. We agreed that when the NGO notes a serious technical or scheduling question for a proposal that is likely to be forwarded,

they should contact Drs. Puxley and Roy before the ITAC meeting, preferably before the proposal package is sent to Gemini. See OpsWG Action 7.1

At the Phase-I stage, there is still a problem with too few proposals requesting conditions with worse than median cloud cover.

Metrics

Jean-Rene Roy introduced the initial draft addendum to the “Gemini User Support by the National Gemini Offices Under the Gemini Agreement.” We discussed some specifics of the draft addendum. Armandroff raised the issue of when we begin counting the metrics, such as visits to the sites. The consensus was the start of semester 2005A. We also discussed the numbers of 4-5 night queue blocks to be supported by the NGOs. We agreed on the following numbers per semester (across both sites): 6 U.S., 3 U.K., 2 Canada, and 1 spread among the other partners.

We agreed that Gemini would submit the metrics report to the NGOs for inspection and discussion for some reasonable period before the metrics are reported to the Gemini Board, AOC-G, Visiting Committee, or partner agencies. This would allow the NGOs to resolve any misunderstandings before these groups see the report.

There will be a small Working Group to negotiate the refinement of the metrics and the addendum for consideration by the full Operations Working Group, consisting of Armandroff, Crabtree, Johnson, and Roy.

Regarding the publication metrics, we agreed that the only primary metric is number of papers per partner. The other quantities listed in the draft are really derived from the numbers of publications. We discussed how to attribute papers to countries. The program ID(s) that formed the dataset will have a partner split. This split will be used to divide credit for the paper among the partners. If the program is derived from System Verification or Director’s Discretionary time, it should be divided by the partner countries of the authors.

Many felt that the proposed target of 80% HelpDesk queries being resolved by NGOs was not feasible. To put the HelpDesk metrics in perspective, Armandroff discussed the U.S. HelpDesk statistics for 2004. From 1 January 2004 through 10 June 2004, there were 52 HelpDesk requests that were directed to the U.S. NGO at either Tier 1 or 2. The U.S. NGO resolved 54% of these, and Gemini resolved 46%. Armandroff reviewed the HelpDesk requests that were not resolved by the U.S. NGO. Many of the HelpDesk requests have extensive work and response given at the NGO level even if they are not definitively resolved there. Armandroff presented a tally of the issues in the queries that the NGOs do not have the knowledge or authority to fully resolve:

Sophisticated Gemini IRAF bugs, errors, & new feature requests	12	50%
Observing Tool bugs, errors, & new feature requests	2	8%
ITC bugs, errors, & new feature requests	1	4%

Sophisticated GSA bugs & errors	1	4%
Permission to use untried or untested modes of instruments	2	8%
Corrections to Gemini Web pages	1	4%
TOTAL	19	79%

The remaining 21% were assessed by Armandroff to be potentially resolvable by NGO staff after a large amount of training and coordination between NGOs (although they were not answered by NGOs in the current study). This could therefore be considered as "room for improvement" in the fraction of helpdesk requests that could be resolvable by NGOs in future.

Another proposed metric is on the fraction of correct Phase-IIIs forwarded by the NGOs. Since the NGOs cannot check Phase-IIIs on time if the PIs do not submit them, it was agreed that a penalty system for late Phase-IIIs should be considered by the GSC. See OpsWG resolution 7.7.

Communications

The Victoria NGO meeting was helpful on the communications front, as were the two NGO telecoms in 2004A. We are pleased that Bernadette Rodgers set up a GNIRS e-mail exploder that includes both Gemini and NGO GNIRS contacts, and encourage the observatory to set up similar lists for other instruments. The short, newsy e-mail summaries of recent Gemini activities that Jean-Rene Roy has sent around are also helpful. We agreed that NGO-Gemini telecons should continue – see OpsWG action 7.4.

NGO Reports

We discussed the "Partner Perspectives" of the various partners. The written reports are collected in Appendix A.

During the U.S. presentation, Puxley indicated that it will be possible to rename the "sky background" observing condition to "lunar phase," and that the lunar phase is irrelevant for observations longward of 1 micron. This will take some time to propagate through the Web pages and the Observing Tool. Roy and Puxley informed us that there would be a MICHELLE integration time calculator for spectroscopy for semester 2005A. For the ITC, in response to the U.S. request, Puxley asked that anyone with a starburst spectrum with wide wavelength coverage should send it to Gemini.

Day 2: 4th August 2004

2005A Call for Proposals

We began day 2 by concluding the previous day's discussion on the 2005A Call for Proposals.

A simple exchange of 5 nights of Keck + HIRES for the same number of nights of Gemini-North + MICHELLE is planned. The proposals for HIRES will go through the NTACS and ITAC. The U.S. NGO will provide Phase-II support for the Keck-community MICHELLE

users. It was agreed that UH will do tech assessment of HIRES proposals in exchange for tech assessment of UH proposals by other NGOs. One complication is the scheduling of the Keck nights. The consensus opinion is to schedule two Keck blocks in advance and advertise the dates in the Call for Proposals. See OpsWG resolution 7.2.

PIT will be modified to include a HIRES option. Keck will eventually fill out the PIT for their successful MICHELLE users. Gemini will put the MICHELLE programs into the ODB. The U.S. NGO will support Keck-community P.I.s during Phase-II and related checking.

One uncertain item is whether to offer MICHELLE echelle spectroscopy. If the sensitivity in the echelle mode is poor or unknown, it will not be offered. In the North, all instruments will be available in classical mode except for MICHELLE. We agreed on the Call for Proposals but left the decision on the echelle mode of MICHELLE to be made by Gemini staff at a later date. See OpsWG Resolution 7.3.

On Gemini-South, enough data has been taken with the GNIRS R=18,000 spectroscopy mode to be comfortable offering it in 2005A, but commissioning still remains. The GNIRS IFU has been commissioned. Gemini is comfortable offering the IFU from 1 to 2.5 microns in 2005A (IFU at wavelengths longer than 2.5 microns is on hold). The GNIRS lens swap will be mentioned in the Gemini Call for Proposals, with GNIRS unavailable after April.

If Hokupa'a-85 meets Hokupa'a-36-like level of performance by the end of August, Hokupa'a-85 will be listed in the 2005A Call for Proposals. If not, the December science run will be turned into commissioning. Also in that case, the U.S. will look into rolling over its 5 nights of Hokupa'a-85 into 2005A, and the full Gemini partnership will offer another 5 nights for a partnership-wide Demo Science Program. See OpsWG Resolution 7.5.

The Acquisition Camera has very low demand, but almost negligible support needs. Because of the low support, we decided to continue to offer AcqCam for high-repetition-rate photometry.

We discussed the potential use of MICHELLE for the Deep Impact science campaign around 4 July 2005. The Operations Working Group supports setting aside 2-3 nights around the Deep Impact event. These nights will be allocated by a special Call. The 2005A Call for Proposals should specify that these nights should not be applied for via the normal ITAC process. See OpsWG resolution 7.4

Gemini and NOAO have reached agreement on a new Phoenix support model. The 2005A Call for Proposals will state that Phoenix will be offered in classical mode, with integer nights, with no minimum. NOAO will provide support for the Phoenix classical users.

2003B summary

Puxley and Roy presented a final report on 2003B including queue completion statistics. The completion statistics followed the expected general trends. For example 57% of band-1 programs were completed, 16% of Band-2, and 6% of both band-3 and band-4.

2004A Summary

We then discussed semester 2004A. Science nights were scheduled for 90% of the semester at Gemini North. This was allowed by moving the mirror coating to the next semester and needing less MICHELLE engineering late in the semester. The weather was very bad early in the semester. This motivated Roy to convert the engineering night to science nights.

Highlights of semester 2004A in the North include a highly successful classical ALTAIR+NIRI run (PI Merline). Multi-instrument operation was carried out on several nights to allow better use of the observing conditions (sky brightness). The GMOS electronic offsets were implemented in the North.

At Gemini South, science nights were scheduled for 70% of the semester. The telescope and instrument loss was 11%, which is unusually high. Weather was not cooperating, with a 17% weather loss. Highlights included commissioning of all the significant GNIRS modes. The GMOS IFU was also commissioned, including using nod-and-shuffle with the IFU. The GMOS electronic offsets were implemented in the South.

The preliminary queue completion statistics were disappointing at both telescopes. This is primarily caused by the weather, but the 10-11% telescope/instrument loss contributes as well. T-ReCS spectroscopic programs were negatively impacted by the failure of the grating wheel and filter wheel.

Queue & Classical Time accounting

We then discussed the time charging methodology, as directed by the Board action. All the NGO representatives agree that the present time charging algorithm is unfair to classical observing. Presently, classical is charged for the twilight-to-twilight hours allocated, whereas queue is charged only for hours used. For simplicity, we propose a fixed conversion factor for converting classical nights to queue hours.

The OpsWG discussed the conversion ratio between classical nights and queue-scheduled hours and concluded that a ratio was required to facilitate comparison of, and exchanges between, classical and queue time.

The OpsWG considered the conversion rate to fall within the approximate range of 0.5-1 (e.g. one classical night is equivalent 5-10 queue hours for the nominal 10-hour night). The conversion factor in current use, and since the start of science operations on Gemini, is 1.0.

A number of factors argue for a ratio tending towards lower or higher values within this range: weather loss (site dependent and instrument dependent; e.g. mid-IR instruments can only use clear time), technical loss (telescope and instrument dependent), observing efficiency (instrument mode dependent and observing mode [queue/classical] dependent).

Rather than constructing a complex set of currency exchanges for each specific case, the OpsWG strongly recommends that a single ratio encompass all of these factors.

The conversion ratio should be the same for Gemini North and South because programs and observations are exchanged between the telescopes to maximise science return.

In the two most recent semesters for which statistics are available the ratio of science time used divided by scheduled nights was 63% (GN) and 85% (GS) in 2003A and 76% (GN) and 66% (GS) in 2003B. These ratios are largely driven by weather and technical losses. The average of 72% is likely to be a slight underestimate as a low level of commissioning and engineering tasks is carried out on science nights. Hence the OpsWG recommends that a ratio for queue-classical conversion of 75% be adopted.

As the aggregate time accounting exists for semesters up to and including 2003B using the extant conversion ratio of 1.0, and has been used for partner share rebalancing in 2004B, the OpsWG recommends that the adopted conversion ratio be applied to semester 2004A and subsequent semester's accounting.

See OpsWG resolution 7.8

The GSC will then discuss the time charging recommendation at its October meeting and pass it on to the Board for their November meeting.

Next OpsWG Meeting

The next Operations Working Group meeting will be February 7-8, 2005 in La Serena, Chile. A Cerro Pachon visit is planned on February 9. Preliminarily, we expect August 8-9, 2005 in Oxford for the summer Operations Working Group meeting.

Quick Response Mode

We then discussed Quick Response. PIs must submit a "dummy" Phase-II (without target details) for each Quick Response program. After the activation trigger, coordinates and other relevant details are entered into the OT. Gemini is working on how to modify the OT to allow P.I.s to trigger an OT program. For example, the OT and ODB would have a new category "On Hold" instead of "For Activation" for Quick Response programs. The goal is to implement a system to be able to get onto a program in one hour at night. Roy emphasized his opinion that it is important to put Quick Response programs in Band 1. More specifically, a program Quick Response trigger cannot over-ride a program in a higher band.

Armandroff pointed out that with SWIFT launch we would expect a lot of community interest in GRB proposals. This will generate a lot of reading of the Gemini Web pages on Quick Response, which are outdated in several ways.

There was some discussion about the relative priorities of the software work needed for this compared to other capabilities (for example software support of new instruments and modes, improving the efficiency of the night-time observing system and its usability by visiting observers, improvements to the acquisition procedures etc). Roy said it would be helpful if the GSC could give priorities to these in broad categories.

2nd Generation Gemini Instrumentation

Doug Simons gave us an “Aspen” instrument update. The Aspen contracts have been let for Extreme AO design study (two groups: UC Santa Cruz; Arizona), HRNIRS design study (two groups: NOAO; ATC), WFMOS feasibility study (AAO leading many subcontractors), GLAO feasibility study (HIA coordinating others, including Arizona). Studies will be due by February 2004. The Source Selection Boards will meet and make recommendations before an April 2005 GSC meeting. Science working groups have been established for WFMOS and GLAO (the AO Working Group for the latter).

GMOS Mask-Making from coordinates

We discussed the definition of GMOS masks from non-GMOS images and coordinates. This continues to be a common request from Gemini users. Michael Ledlow had created a plan for this that did not involve the Observing Tool, which he discussed at the Victoria NGO meeting. Tragically, he died very soon afterward. Rachel Johnson volunteered to help on this work via a project visit. Taft Armandroff volunteered to see whether his staff could assist Rachel on this.

Gemini Science Archive

Roy informed us that although there have been some delays, the official Gemini Science Archive will be released in the next two weeks. A notice will be sent to the NGOs.

Other News

Puxley reported that a seeing monitor is now in automatic operation at Gemini South. The values from the seeing monitor agree with the image quality measured from the instrument frames, except at the very good seeing regime.

A new web interface is being developed for the HelpDesk (which will be browser independent). This reproduces previous functions but does not require logins. The new interface should be ready in a matter of days.

Puxley described progress on the OT wish-list. Although progress had been made, some items identified by the NGOS as high-priority, such as correct calculation of overheads (including documentation of what currently goes into these calculations) and internal checking functions are not yet implemented. Puxley agreed to circulate the OT work-list to the NGOs for input on priorities – see OpsWG Action 7.5.

We discussed eavesdropping mode. All seemed to agree that we need to define the mode and understand what is required to offer it. Armandroff suggested forming a small working group to discuss the ideas write a brief position paper of eavesdropping. The U.S. and U.K. NGOs will consider contributing people to this working group.

APPENDIX A – Reports from the National Gemini Offices

UNITED STATES- report from Taft Armandroff

Phase I:

The NOAO Gemini Science Center (NGSC) saw a strong response from the U.S. community to the Gemini Call for Proposals for semester 2004B. Eighty-four proposals were received for Gemini North: 45 for GMOS-North, 18 for NIRI alone, 5 for NIRI with the ALTAIR adaptive optics system, and 17 for Michelle. Ninety-three U.S. proposals requested Gemini South: 29 for GNIRS, 28 for T-ReCS, 28 for GMOS-South, 9 for Phoenix, and 2 for the Acquisition Camera. In total, 161 U.S. Gemini proposals sought 371 nights on the two Gemini telescopes (note that some proposals requested more than one instrument).

The numbers of U.S. Gemini proposals and the nights requested represent all-time highs. The oversubscription factors of 3.1 at Gemini North and 4.8 at Gemini South demonstrate healthy community demand. The large number of U.S. proposals for GNIRS during its first semester of availability, 29, indicates wide community interest.

The NOAO Telescope Time Allocation Committee (TAC) reviewed the proposals, and the NGSC Staff performed technical assessments. The 83 most highly ranked proposals were forwarded to Gemini for ITAC review. Four forwarded U.S. proposals requested classical observing and were scheduled in this mode. All of these met the 3-night minimum for classical mode.

The Phase I process ran smoothly in the U.S. However, a few issues arose during Phase I. These are listed in the spirit of improvement for next semester:

- The lack of a Gemini integration time calculator (ITC) for Michelle in spectroscopy mode was a problem for both proposers and NGSC Staff performing technical reviews. An ITC is provided for Michelle in imaging mode. We recommend that the Michelle ITC be generalized to include all spectroscopy modes to be offered in semester 2005A.
- The T-ReCS ITC for spectroscopy does not allow the calculation for a single emission line at a given wavelength with a given flux and width. This would be very useful because many projects seek to detect only emission lines for sources without detectable continuum. Also, dust reddening is not taken into account.
- The ALTAIR web pages are out of date and should be updated so that proposers get a better idea of what the instrument can deliver. It appears that the page was last updated for semester 2003B; it suggests that only imaging mode is offered. Including the results from the SV observations on this page would be very helpful. In particular, a plot of the expected dynamic range as a function of radial distance from the AO guide star would be very useful in assessing technical feasibility of searches for close companions. Several groups are currently pursuing these types of studies with ALTAIR.
- The GMOS ITC does not allow one to input object magnitudes in the ugriz filter system, even though these are the filters in GMOS. The NGSC Staff recommend that Gemini add ugriz to the possible filters in the ITC.

- NGSC received several proposals for observations of starburst galaxies at a range of redshifts. It would be helpful to include a starburst-galaxy spectral energy distribution as one of the choices in the ITC.
- NGSC also received comments regarding the "proper" accounting of overheads for GMOS. Somewhere on the web page it states that there is a 25% overhead for GMOS. Other places list the exact time for various overheads (readout, change of filter or grating, etc.). The 25% overhead is a shorthand way to calculate these things for imaging programs, but is an overestimate of the overhead for spectroscopy programs with long integration times (30-60 min/exposure). It would be very helpful for the web pages to make it clearer that the 25% overhead is most appropriate for imaging programs. In general, misunderstanding the overheads is one of the most common errors seen at Phase I (for all instruments).
- In the technical reviews for infrared instruments, the most common problem found is related to proposer's settings of the "sky background" condition. There was considerable confusion, possibly because of the way the Gemini web pages indicate to deal with this -- which appears inconsistent with the Observing Tool settings. Specifically, the sky background is the familiar bright/gray/dark/darkest, but for the 1-2.5 micron region "bright" becomes twilight (which is not how Gemini actually observes, since a PWFS star is needed, which is quickly lost in twilight), and for 3 microns and beyond it is a duplication of the "water vapor" specification. Aside from the fact that the Observing Tool does not have these separate ranges, it is confusing to the proposer and would seem non-informative to the queue observer. Three of the "IR" NGSC Staff suggest that the "sky background" be renamed "lunar phase," since the other considerations (sky noise or water vapor) are covered already. The observing constraints would then be easier to understand and would be consistent with the way we believe Gemini actually does the observations. Furthermore, the web page could then state that the lunar phase is irrelevant for observations longward of 1 micron.

Phase II:

NGSC staff performed Phase-II review, and related proposer interactions, for U.S. proposals. NGSC reminded all U.S. P.I.s (on July 7) of the Phase-II deadlines, their great importance, and the help available to them through NGSC. For 2004B, the Phase-II checking and related P.I. interactions are going well. Before or around the early-in-semester P.I. Phase-II deadline (July 12), 29 U.S. programs had submitted targets to NGSC. By the corresponding NGO deadline (end of July 22), NGSC had interacted with all of these P.I.s and forwarded all of their Phase-II programs to Gemini.

The following difficulties or inefficiencies arose during the 2004B 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. We appreciate the fact that some of our suggestions from the last such report have been implemented.

- The NGSC Staff recommend that the Observing Tool be enhanced to contain a self-checking capability. A check button should be added that would perform straightforward mechanical checks: 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, missing observe command, etc. This would greatly reduce the time required to complete a Phase-II check and increase checking accuracy, benefiting Gemini and the NGOs. It could also allow P.I.s to do some self-checking before submission.

- The Observing Tool was released significantly later than the date endorsed by the Operations Working Group (June 22 instead of the ITAC date June 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 post-ITAC feedback from Gemini to the U.S. NGO concerning approved programs and contact names had a very high error rate, particularly for joint programs. Errors included a missing program, incorrect master contacts on joint programs, incorrect NGO contacts, and other serious errors. Eventually, all the discrepancies that NGSC raised with Gemini were resolved. Such errors, if not corrected, can result in P.I. confusion and embarrassment to Gemini and the NGOs.
- In response to the NGSC e-mail reminding P.I.s of the Phase-II deadlines, two U.S. P.I.s reported that they had not received their e-mail from Gemini on the Phase-II deadlines and their program key. These issues were eventually resolved. However, it would be prudent to send each NGO a list of their national program keys to speed resolution of such problems.
- Two NGSC Staff did not receive e-mail notifications when U.S. P.I.s set their Phase-II's to "for review." When NGSC reported this to Gemini, investigation revealed that Gemini Staff had not input the e-mail address of the NGO contact properly into the relevant database.
- It would be useful for the NGOs and Gemini to further encourage P.I.s to input their program number into HelpDesk requests relating to an approved program. If they instead simply select the category "Phase II", their HelpDesk request will require manual re-routing to their NGO contact scientist.
- NGSC Staff recommend that the Observing Tool allow NGO staff to highlight and fetch multiple programs with a single fetch from the database.
- 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 continues to receive P.I. 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.

Other:

The following NGSC astronomers visited Gemini to take part in queue observing during semester 2004A: Marcel Bergmann (GMOS North and South), Lucas Macri (GMOS North), Patrice Bouchet (T-ReCS), and Rachel Mason (T-ReCS). NGSC astronomers Jay Elias and Rachel Mason visited Gemini South to participate in 2004A's GNIRS commissioning and system verification. NGSC astronomers Ken Hinkle, Bob Blum, Rachel Mason, and Knut Olsen provided support at Gemini South for Phoenix observing.

UNITED KINGDOM – report from Isobel Hook and Rachel Johnson

Phase I

UK Proposal Statistics 2004B

The number of proposals received at the last deadline (March 31st 2004) was again higher than last semester. The slight imbalance between Gemini-North and South proposals that we saw in previous semesters appears to have corrected itself.

Gemini-N	Number	Hours		
GMOS-N	28	522		
NIRI	7	89		
NIRI+ALTAIR	3	83		
Michelle	1	18		
			Over-subscription=	
<i>Total</i>	39	713	(uncorrected)	2.5
Gemini-S				
GMOS-S	22	539		
Phoenix	4	61		
AcqCam	1	3		
T-ReCS	5	72		
GNIRS	5	73		
			Over-subscription=	
<i>Total</i>	39	747	(uncorrected)	2.6

Notes:

- In total 76 proposals were received for 1460 hours. Four of these requested both GMOS-N and GMOS-S – in the above statistics the time request in these proposals has been divided equally between the two instruments.
- The overall subscription rate is 2.56
- 5 proposals requested classical mode.
- The time available to the UK in 2004B is 286 hours (Gemini-N) and 284 hours (Gemini-S). The oversubscription rates above have not been corrected for underestimated overheads. For comparison, in 2004A 65 proposals were received (although note that in that semester we allowed single proposals for North and South). The time available to the UK in 2004A was 292hrs (Gemini-N) and 257hrs (Gemini-S), and the oversubscription factor were 3.5 (North) and 1.1 (South) before correction for overheads.
- The UK NTAC forwarded 51 proposals to Gemini of which 4 were suggested for classical time. 39 programs were subsequently scheduled.

Phase-I issues

There were only a few problems with the phase-I process in 04B.

- The PIT insists that conditions are set to “any” for classical programs. This caused problems for an ALTAIR programme because after changing the conditions to “any” the guide star was deemed too faint. We suggest rather than requiring classical programs to select “any” conditions that
 - There is a >50% (by time) chance of conditions being suitable or for the program or
 - A backup program that can be done in “any” conditions
- As pointed out previously, 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 – we recommend removing the GMOS guide star checking from PIT.

Phase-II

The phase-II process for 2004B required several iterations with Sybil at the beginning to iron out problems with the ITAC feedback, but has been reasonably smooth after that. All the Phase-II definitions required some iteration. A count of total emails required (PI→NGO + NGO→PI), for programs submitted for the 1st deadline, is given in Table 2 below. The On average proposals take about 13 e-mails to reach the stage of “for activation”. For PIs who are new to the OT system the number is about 20.

Particular problems encountered were:

- The OT and ITAC feedback were released later than planned.
- The initial ITAC feedback contained a lot of mistakes: e.g. all Ilona’s programs were assigned to Isobel. In one case the awarded time was incorrect (as pointed out by an honest PI!).
- The ITAC feedback was corrected by the observatory and resent to us after we had sent out our notifications, with a note that the errors had been corrected. It would have been useful to have a list of which errors had been corrected, as we had to check through the feedback a second time to see what the changes were.
- Some programs were incorrectly ingested into the database, leading to ‘ready for review’ notifications being sent to incorrect NGO contacts. There were also several problems accessing programs from the UK NGO. Often these seemed to be joint proposals where the NGO database access was assigned to the wrong country even when the NGO contact was correct.
- We were informed on 13th July (i.e. after the 1st Phase-II deadline) that the procedure for NIRI Phase-II had changed, and that all calibrations should now be defined by the PI. This caused some consternation and exasperation, which could have been reduced by warning us in advance that this decision was likely. Thanks to Tom Geballe for offering that the observatory would check any affected Phase-II. In the future, we hope that decisions that affect the Phase-II process can be made by the OT-release date.
- Durham University again had problems accessing the database through their firewall.

- It is not clear whether the parallactic angle option is available for GMOS, and if it is, how should the PIs set this at Phase-II?

In a change from previous semesters, NGOs were asked to check the phase-II arriving before the deadline, for pre-imaging of early targets. This was OK as we had a reasonable amount of notification. We will need the same amount of notification in the future, and also some flexibility for observatory staff to check these phase-II, as we may need to accommodate the NGO contact being unavailable.

We have the following suggestions:

- The procedure to submit a helpdesk query about a particular phase-II program is confusing, in particular the use of ‘OT/phase2’ for both a phase-II program query (from the top submit page), and for an OT software query, from the normal submission form. We suggest the category called “phase2” is removed and the category for OT software/installation problems is renamed more clearly.
- At the beginning of the ITAC agenda there should be an item asking ITAC members to flag tricky proposals e.g. time critical, unusual modes etc. This is to ensure that these programs do not get forgotten when the preliminary schedule is being made, and to enable an assessment of their schedulability to be passed to the NGO. (It is better for us to tell PIs straight away that there may be scheduling problems, rather than, as happened this time, to tell them they have been awarded time, and then tell them later that their program couldn’t be scheduled).
- We again request a way to simultaneously change the status of several observations in OT.
- We again request that OT calculates the overheads correctly (and that it be made clearer what is included in the current calculation).
- As mentioned previously, 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.
- The practical use of “groups” in the OT as folders is not well documented.

Some of the web pages are much improved (e.g. TReCS), the information in others (e.g. GMOS) still remains hard to find.

Other news from the UK Gemini Support Group

- The UK Gemini Users committee has now been converted to an 8m users committee with the addition of UK VLT users. A meeting was held on March 22nd 2003. Some very useful feedback was collected, and sent on to Gemini. We intend to provide feedback to the users at the next meeting.
- Rachel Johnson took up her post in the UKGSG on 1st June 2004. She is taking over leadership of the group, and this will become official on 1st November 2004.

Table 2: Status of Phase-II programs submitted at the first deadline.

Program	Instrument	# emails	Status
GN-2004B-Q-16	GMOS-N	7	Complete
GS-2004B-Q-31	GMOS-S		
GS-2004B-Q-90	GMOS-N	21	Complete

GS-2004B-C-1	GMOS-S	2	Classical – still to finish
GN-2004B-Q-77 GS-2004B-Q-61 GS-2004B-Q-8 GN-2004B-Q-35	GMOS-N GMOS-S	18	Complete
GS-2004B-Q-51	T-ReCS	8	Complete
GS-2004B-Q-77	GMOS-S	3	Complete
GN-2004B-Q-82	GMOS-N	3	Complete
GN-2004B-Q-31	GMOS-N	11	Complete
GN-2004B-Q-4	GMOS-N	9	MOS – still to finish
GN-2004B-Q-23	NIRI	11	Complete
GS-2004B-Q-60	GNIRS	12	Complete
GS-2004B-Q-3	Phoenix	10	Complete
GS-2004B-Q-19	GNIRS	23	Complete
GN-2004B-Q-64	NIRI	7	Complete
GN-2004B-Q-8	ALTAIR	11 + 3 visits	Complete
GN-2004B-Q-33	GMOS IFU	6	Complete
GN-2004B-C-1	NIRI	0	Late
GN-2004B-Q-71	NIRI	5	Cont.
GN-2004B-Q-78 GS-2004B-Q-87 GS-2004B-Q-88	GMOS IFU	27	Complete
GN-2004B-Q-72	NIRI	39 + 1 phone	Complete
GN-2004B-Q-101	GMOS	6	Complete
Additional emails			
Database problems		16	To Sybil/Phil

CANADA – report from Dennis Crabtree

Canadian response to the 2004B Call for Proposals was gratifying. The details of the 50 proposals received are included in the following two tables. The subscription rate on Gemini-South was slightly higher than that for Gemini-North. The combined subscription rate was 2.4. There no major issues during Phase I which ran quite smoothly.

The Canadian deadline was over a week earlier than most of the other Gemini partners. This caused some confusion and resulted in some joint programs not being submitted to Canada.

Time (hours)	Altai								Total
Telescope	Acq Camera	r NIRI	GMOS North	GMOS South	GNIRS	Michell e	NIRI	Phoenix	
Gemini North		116.6	209.3			13.5	56		395.3
Gemini	6			219.7	93.9		23.7	48.8	392.0

South										
Total	6	116.6	209.3	219.7	93.9	13.5	56	23.7	48.8	787.3

Proposals		Altai									Total
Telescope	Acq Camera	r	GMOS North	GMOS South	GNIRS	Michell e	NIRI	Phoenix	T-ReCS		
Gemini North		4	16			1	5				26
Gemini South		1		13	5			2	3		24
Total	1	4	16	13	5	1	5	2	3		50

The TAC process and packaging of the results to send to Gemini also went quite well. As the Canadian deadline was earlier than previous deadlines, more time was available for the process, which helped it run smoothly.

Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of PIs have completed their Phase IIs so far. The database has MUCH improved since last semester. This semester we had only three incidents:

- Could not access two of the programs Canada was supposed to support (in the list accessible to "NGO-Canada"), because these were joint programs with a PI from another country (GN-2004B-Q-55 and GN-2004B-Q-66). This was quickly fixed by Gemini staff.
- Did not receive any notification email from the ODB that the PI of GS-2004B-Q-49 had stored his phase2.

The OT library examples are great, but they should really be accessible directly from **within** the OT like it is done in the JCMT-OT.

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 is generally less confusion in the way to construct offset sequences and instrument sequences. Most users though did not know that an instrument sequence can have many steps; they almost all had a series of instrument sequences each with one step, rather than a single one going through several steps. It is clear that some PIs had not even looked at their fields with the Position Editor (i.e.: they had guide stars outside the OIWFS FOV etc). Many users had apparently not found the web pages "OT tips & tricks" and "OT checklist" since many did not have any calibration files at their first iteration.

The information required is quite substantial and with many links. The impression is that some users did not even bother going through the manual anymore but simply cut and pasted some of the OT examples and made up the rest freely (with some strange results sometimes). Producing a downloadable complete manual for each instrument (as discussed at the NGO meeting) is very important -something which users could follow in a (more or less) linear way and that they know is complete, rather than letting them guess if they really have clicked to all possible links and all the way to those hidden 3rd level pages somewhere.

AUSTRALIA – report from Warrick Couch

Phase I

The 2004B CfP saw Australia have its best ever response in terms of the demand for time on the two Gemini telescopes. A total of 30 proposals were received, 13 requesting time on Gemini-North and 17 requesting time on Gemini-South. Almost half (14/30) of the proposals were ‘joint’, involving time requests to other partner NTACs. The overall oversubscription rate on the two telescopes was 3.5, with that for Gemini-South almost reaching 5! Two other pleasing aspects of this round were (i)the large number of excellent proposals received, and (ii)the significant number of ‘new entrants into the market’ – viz., astronomers in our community submitting Gemini proposals for the very first time.

The 13 proposals received for Gemini-North requested a total of 158 hours, representing an over-subscription factor of 2.55. Once again, GMOS-N was in greatest demand, with 11 of the 13 proposals requesting this instrument, for a total of 129 hours. The other two proposals requested NIRI and NIRI+ALTAIR; notably, no proposals were received for time with MICHELLE.

The demand was even higher for time on Gemini-South, with a total of 222 hours requested, over-subscribing the 47 hours available by a factor of 4.73. Again, the majority (12/17) of the proposals were for GMOS(-S), requesting by far the largest fraction of the time (151 of the 222 hours). However, the interest in GNIRS was very encouraging, with 4 proposals received for this instrument. There was also time requested on T-ReCS.

The Phase I (proposal submission and evaluation) process generally ran very smoothly, with only a few very minor problems:

- The backend software for receiving proposals still appears to jump in its numbering of proposals for no apparent reason.
- There is still confusion amongst some of our users who submit ‘joint’ proposals as to how to differentiate in the PIT between the time requested from a given NTAC and that required in total from all the NTACs. This caused me to misreport our proposal stats in the email I circulated just after the proposal deadline, due to overestimating the total time requested from our NTAC.
- The technical assessment of proposals was a little squeezed for time on this occasion, with the date of our NTAC meeting having (unnecessarily) been brought forward a week in anticipation of a similarly earlier deadline for having proposals transmitted to Gemini. While this did not have a detrimental effect on the quality of the assessments, it did make the process of resolving any problems with applicants very rushed.

With the large demand for time, our NTAC on this occasion looked much more critically at the use of previously allocated Gemini time, and the need for results to be forthcoming before further time could be awarded. In the end, 19 proposals were forwarded to Gemini.

Phase II

While still in progress, Phase II preparations by our observers and the subsequent checking by our NGO support staff appears to be going well. The only points to note at this stage are the following:

- The (ordinary text) file containing the ITAC outcomes and feedback that was sent to us by Gemini, contained some serious errors. In particular, there were two programs which came back to us with the wrong NTAC ranking, SRB number and allocated time.
- Yet again, there was disappointment that the Observing Tool was released much later than envisaged (as indicated at the last OpsWG meeting).
- One of our programs, which went through the NTAC and ITAC processes and was awarded time on T-ReCS, has subsequently had to be rejected from the queue by Gemini as a result of a technical problem. This relates to the use of a high-speed readout ('speckle') mode for T-ReCS, which was incorrectly assumed was available and feasible at the NTAC assessment stage, mainly on the basis that the instrument builder – Charlie Telesco – was on the proposal. We are currently working with the Australian PI to resurrect the program in a different form that will be acceptable to Gemini (and our NTAC).
- There has been very positive feedback from one of our users regarding GMOS pre-imaging being done almost a month in advance of the commencement of the 2004B semester.

BRAZIL- report from Max Faúndez-Abans

Brazilian Proposals 2004B

Phase I

As for the submitted proposals for Semester 2004B, a total of 31.8 hours at Gemini North have been requested, representing an oversubscription of 1.45. For Gemini South, 39.83 hours have been requested, resulting in an oversubscription of 1.99. Table 1 displays the final allocated time schedule for the Brazilian proposals after NTAC evaluation. The one unsuccessful proposal had requested 6.4 hours and the one which fell below the cut-off line had requested 3.6 hours.

Table 1: Phase I – Brazilian 2004B – Final Telescope Time Allocation

Instrument	Proposals	Requested Time [hours]	Allocated Time [hours]
GMOS North	5	21.30	15.10
GMOS South	6	25.86	18.22
NIRI	2	10.50	4.10
T-ReCS	2	7.90	7.90
GNIRS	2	6.07	6.07
Total		71.63	61.11

Phase II

We have only 15 proposals in Phase II, eleven of them were set to activation on July 13, 2004. No problems have been detected until now

Suggestions for the improvement of Phase I-II processes

In the last OpsWG at Waikoloa, I highlighted that we have realized that, in some occasions, proposals approved by the NTAC suffer from some typically technical problems as described below (e.g. based on the GMOS experience):

- (1) The target is in a field lacking suitable guiding bright stars (OIWFS stars).
- (2) The only suitable guiding star is so far, that it compromises the science observations with longslit and IFU.
- (3) The suitable OIWFS star compromises the longslit angle position.

Our colleague, Mariângela de Oliveira-Abans, also raised this issue in the NGO meeting in Victoria, Canada.

We then 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' work by allowing them to check the technical viability of executing the projects "right from the start".

Brazilian Questions

I would like to present some points, which we wish that could be taken into account. As a small partner, we would like that the Ops. WG derived some resolutions about them, when applicable.

1. Let us examine closely and in detail the whole process of electing the projects that compose each queue and how they have been executed over the last few semesters. Are we happy with the procedures?
2. I wish we spent a few minutes discussing about Band 1 programs: what is the executed percentage? What about the data quality?

3. Would it be possible to have any guarantees that Band 2 programs are executed?
4. How does the time accounting system currently work? Are we happy with the system?
5. Gemini keeps careful track of the telescope time used. The Brazilian community thinks it should be possible to have, at the end of each semester, a short and compact report on each program, highlighting the following points:
 - a. The overall conditions of the completely executed programs (e.g. quality data, weather conditions, seeing)
 - b. For the partially executed programs, the reasons for this partiality: (i) weather conditions, (ii) instrumental failure, (iii) problems with the program itself, (iv) queue order, to mention a few. NOTE: Point (iii) is important to find out how well the NGOs, NTACs and contact scientist have been working.
 - c. Not executed programs: the reasons why!
6. How much do the rollover programs "damage/interfere" the next semesters' Band 1 and Band 2 programs? This is a critical point for the Band 1 and 2 proposals of the small partners.
7. Are the rollover programs broadening the Band 1? Could they hinder (or even prevent) the execution of new Band 1 programs?
8. I think that Gemini should open the internal instrument web pages for the use of NGOs exclusively or create a restricted copy of those web pages, at least.

Brazilian Gemini Support

Training

We, as NGO, continue to successfully provide the Brazilian Gemini community with instrument support. However, to improve our efficiency even more, the Brazilian NGO continues to be in the process of developing a staff-training program on the Gemini instrument's Phases I and II processes. Our colleague Mariângela de Oliveira-Abans participated at the NGO meeting at Victoria, Canada. On the other hand, Alberto Ardila participated and got training during the commissioning and science verification phases of GNIRS at Gemini South.

Reminder

As a reminder, I would like to state that besides the lack of personnel at the LNA, we are strangled by both bureaucracy and budget, which make our Gemini support work very difficult.

Gemini Public Information and Outreach Network

Mariângela, the Brazilian liaison at the Gemini PIO Network has also participated in this group's annual meeting in Victoria, Canada, from May 28 to May 29. During that meeting, many aspects of the present and future PIO actions taken by the Gemini 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. The first press release on Brazilian Gemini scientific results ("OSCIR goes to Mickey") has had broad coverage by the media in Brazil. These results, together with the one on the Stephan's Quintet, have been published on the Gemini Newsletter of June 2004, as well as an article on SOAR's mirror aluminizing at the Gemini South facility, with the contribution of SOAR's Director, Steve Heathcote. Two more press releases on Brazilian Gemini results are planned for this semester.

The next-generation Gemini instrumentation

The Brazilian community has just started the discussion about the new instrumentation for the Gemini Observatory; the cost, the science and how it should be used by the community are a concern.

CHILE – report from Sébastien Lopez

Phase-I

Chilean 2004B proposal deadline was on April 6th. This was a record semester in terms of oversubscription factor. The statistics is as follows:

Time requested for GMOS-S: 281.8 h in 13 proposals

Time requested for T-ReCS: 12.5 h in 1 proposal

Time requested for GNIRS: 88.4 h in 4 proposals

Total 382.7 h in 16 proposals (2 GMOS+GNIRS proposals)

Oversubscription factor = $382.7/119 = 3.22$

One of the (unsuccessful) proposals requested classical time but this might be a typo given that it asked for 26 hours. The Chilean TAC did not flag any proposal with rollover-status. After TAC/ITAC process there are 6 proposals on schedule (one is a joint proposal with US). Two of them are GMOS/GNIRS, 3 GMOS and 1 GNIRS. (The CH/US one was first ranked by the Chilean TAC, is it because of a low US rank the fact that there is no Chilean proposal in Band 1?)

Worth noting is that 3 out of the 6 Chilean proposals have already been awarded time in previous semesters, and 2 out of these 3 declared to be continuations of a program in progress (with successful Gemini runs in 2004A and before). This might reveal a current TAC preference for large programs, rather than for 'snap-shot' programs.

Finally, upon Gemini suggestion we will change the submission mechanism from simple e-mail to PIT submission, in order to contribute with more homogeneity to the whole process.

Phase II:

Besides the normal pressure (on PIs and NGO) to meet deadlines, I have not encountered big problems yet. All PIs in 2004B are former Gemini PIs and the interaction with us at the NGO has become natural. However, submission to this NGO of phase II in a too precarious form (e.g., 'I'll be off in a conference thanks for fixing errors in my phase II') is still present in 2004B.

Thanks to the GNIRS team for making GNIRS pages available in advance.

Finally, to add a word on NGO observing support: despite our wishes to be trained and to help at the telescope Luis and I have not been able to find a time gap that matches Gemini needs. We are aware that help from our side is expected.

ARGENTINA – report not yet received

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII- report from Richard Wainscoat

Phase 1:

University of Hawaii astronomers submit a single research proposal for all telescopes on Mauna Kea (with the exception of IRTF). This is done using an internal form – not PIT.

For 2004B, 15 proposals requested a total of 179.7 hours on Gemini North. 93 hours were expected to be available. These proposals comprised:

- 5 queue proposals for GMOS seeking a total of 45.7 hours
- 3 classical proposals for GMOS seeking a total of 7 nights
- 4 queue proposals for NIRI seeking 30.5 hours
- 1 classical proposal for NIRI seeking 2 nights
- 2 queue proposals for NIRI/Altair seeking 13.5 hours

Additionally, the Time Allocation Committee considered whether proposals submitted for observing time on Keck 1, Keck 2, and Subaru would be better done on Gemini North,

The overall quality of proposals for Gemini North was higher this semester than in previous semesters, and the Time Allocation Committee had a tough task.

The committee recommended observing time on Gemini North for 8 queue proposals and 1 classical proposal. The committee also discussed the issue of carryover, and recommended that the existing 2004A band 1 proposals with carryover status be extended into 2004B.

The successful applicants were asked to complete the PIT form. The NGO completed one of the PIT forms from the original proposal.

Of particular note for 2004B are:

High fraction of joint proposals, particularly with GN staff (only 3 successful new proposals were not joint).

A complex joint UH/GS/US proposal for GN and GS.

Relatively high final fraction of queue observations – in previous semesters, UH has allocated more classical time than queue

Phase 2:

Because of the joint nature of the proposals, the UH NGO does not have responsibility for all of the UH proposals. Only 4 queue proposals and 1 classical proposal will be handled by the NGO. One proposal has already had preimaging data acquired.

During preparation of Phase 2, one PI made a major update, then left on vacation without saving it to the database. This was solved by NGO going into their office and saving from the OT left running on their workstation.

It would have been very helpful to have had the 2004B Observing Tool available earlier. Summer travel seems to be an issue that is delaying completion of Phase 2; earlier access to Phase 2 would have helped.

In the messages to NGOs informing that programs are ready for review, it would be very helpful for the subject line and introductory line to also reference the PI's name. An email message concerning one program came in the midst of intense work on another and its corresponding flurry of email, and was overlooked.

Three Phase II programs are not yet submitted by the PI. One person is away on travel. Another program is related to GRBs. The third (classical) is a collaboration with a Gemini Staff member, and it is expected the Gemini Staff member will prepare the Phase 2 program.