

LCLS Users' Organization and Executive Committee (UEC) Meeting

October 20, 2009

2009/2010 LCLS UEC Chair Dick Lee called the meeting to order at 3:50 pm PST.

UEC Election: Dick Lee announced election results and introduced the new members of the LCLS Users' Executive Committee (LCLS UEC) who were present at the LCLS Users' Organization Meeting: Todd Ditmire (AMO), Jan Luning (SXR), Oleg Shpyrko (XCS) and Martin Meedom Nielsen (XPP). The 2009/2010 LCLS UEC now includes:

Dick Lee, LLNL Matter in Extreme Conditions (MEC) - CHAIR
Anton Barty, LLNL Coherent X-ray Imaging (CXI)
Todd Ditmire, U Texas Atomic, Molecular and Optical Science (AMO)
Thomas Earnest, LBNL Coherent X-ray Imaging (CXI)
Phil Heimann, LBNL Soft X-ray Science (SXR)
Hyotcherl Ihee, KAIST X-ray Pump-Probe (XPP)
Jan Luning, UNIV.PIERRE MARIE CURIE-PARIS VI (SXR)
Martin Meedom Nielsen, Nielsen Københavns universitet X-ray Pump-Probe (XPP)
Art J Nelson, LLNL Matter in Extreme Conditions (MEC)
Oleg Shpyrko, UC San Diego X-ray Correlation Spectroscopy (XCS)
Mark Sutton, McGill U. X-ray Correlation Spectroscopy (XCS)
Linda Young, ANL Atomic, Molecular and Optical Science (AMO)
Cathy Knotts, SLAC LCLS/SSRL Liaison (Ex Officio)
Katherine Kantardjieff, CSU Fullerton, Crystallography (Ex Officio, SSRL UOEC Chair)

Dick Lee encouraged the user community to send nominations for the position of Vice Chair to Cathy Knotts. Once nominations are received, UEC members will be asked to vote for the Vice Chair by email. The Vice Chair is primarily responsible for co-organizing the annual users' conference and will take over the position of Chair the following year.

Proposal Process: There was a discussion of the extended proposal deadline (due November 3, 2009) and new format for LCLS proposals. Some users mentioned problems with listing/saving collaborators (this was subsequently corrected). Users also requested a sample proposal and information on the safety questions to prepare to submit proposals. The user portal development and proposal submission is work in progress.

Dick Lee introduced Uwe Bergmann (appointed LCLS Deputy Director as of October 2009). Uwe thanked Jochen Schneider for his previous leadership for the LCLS photon sciences/experimental x-ray facilities group. Uwe welcomed questions and feedback from the user community. Uwe outlined updates to the LCLS access policy, proposal submission, peer review process and guidelines which were subsequently posted to the web <http://www-ssrl.slac.stanford.edu/lcls/users/proposals.html#peer> .

The goal is fair and transparent process, recognizing that there could be complexities that are not even known yet since the LCLS facility is so new, the first of its kind, and very much in demand by the broad scientific community. New applications that may be believed to work may not. Processes and procedures may continue to evolve.

There was a suggestion to post the abstracts from all submitted proposals, and after a lively discussion, it was decided that the title and proposer of approved proposals would be posted, but that more detailed information such as abstracts would not be made public.

Uwe commented that the previous call for proposals had been very successful with 25 proposals in the first call, 62 proposals in the second call, and over 100 new proposals anticipated in the next call (statistics on November 2009 call for proposals subsequently posted at http://lcls.slac.stanford.edu/Article.aspx?article_id=141).

Uwe acknowledged that because of the overwhelming interest in using LCLS, users should expect significant competition and many users may be unhappy that cannot be offered beam time due to very high demand and very limited capacity currently available at LCLS. Remember that there is just one instrument commissioned and available in the first round of initial user-assisted commissioning experiments to be conducted October-December 2009. Two instruments (AMO and SXR) will be available in the second round of initial user-assisted commissioning experiments which has been rescheduled May-September 2010, but only one instrument can be operated at a time.

As requested by the user community, the schedule for experiments in 2009 has been posted to the LCLS website (with proposal title and lead person's name) <http://www-ssl.slac.stanford.edu/lcls/users/schedules.html>. The schedule of instrument commissioning and experiments for May-September 2010 is being finalized and will be distributed shortly. An outline of planned activities was subsequently posted at <http://www-ssl.slac.stanford.edu/lcls/users/schedules.html>

The proposal review and ranking by the LCLS Proposal Review Panel (PRP) is the primary criteria for scheduling proposals, but feasibility, safety, instrument availability and other criteria are considered by management in developing the final schedule. Responsibility for the schedule resides with LCLS Director Jo Stohr. Questions about general administration should be forwarded to Cathy Knotts, but users are welcome to contact Jo Stohr or Uwe Bergmann directly for other issues, requests for appeals, or feedback on the overall process.

Uwe reviewed proposal review changes which involve expanding the PRP to 14 members and requesting at least three suggested reviewers from each proposal spokesperson (as well as names of people with conflicts that should be avoided); the actual choice of reviewers will be determined by the PRP. Rather than divide proposals by instruments, the PRP will be encouraged to divide into approximately seven scientific fields: biology, AMO, MEC, hard condensed matter, soft condensed matter, chemistry, methods & instrumentation. Ideally there will be at least 2 members per field to screen proposals, identify external reviewers, check referee reports, and rank proposals. If proposals cover multiple fields, the PRP will decide which field will review the proposal(s). The full PRP would then reconvene to compare their highest ranked proposals and determine the top ranked proposals. This dual stage review/ranking process is similar to other facilities and other granting agencies. The PRP will meet in closed session, but they can invite LCLS staff or scientist to participate or answer questions as needed in specific situations. Information on the ranking and PRP review reports will be communicated to proposal leads by LCLS management.

A desire for a shorter turnaround time of proposals to keep up with latest developments in science was expressed; however, the longer lead time allows the facility and users to adequately prepare for and conduct the best experiments.

Operations: Uwe gave a brief update of LCLS operating parameters. Currently, we are limited to a spectral range down to 750 eV which we expect to deliver for experiments scheduled in Spring and Fall 2010. We are also developing operations at lower energies, down to 510 eV. We cannot guarantee it at this time (subject to Radiation Physics review and approval), but we are confident enough to solicit proposals for the Fall 2010. The minimum pulse duration in standard operation is ~ 70 femtoseconds. We have developed lower current operation which is now available for users. In this low current mode, pulse lengths have been shown to be less than 20 femtoseconds. We believe the pulses are much shorter (for reference see <http://www-public.slac.stanford.edu/sciDoc/docMeta.aspx?slacPubNumber=slac-pub-13642>). The maximum repetition rate of the X-ray flashes is expected to be 60 Hz and we are working on moving to 120 Hz. We will provide updates on additional parameters as they become available. Uwe encouraged users to check the website frequently where parameter updates will be posted http://lcls.slac.stanford.edu/Article.aspx?article_id=86

Users requested that new features and other news be shared through an rss feed to help push news to user community, and LCLS management agreed to pursue this mechanism.

Communications and Publications: Uwe shared lessons learned about the importance of having agreed upon guidelines for publications and press, particularly since LCLS collaborations may be significantly larger than SR collaborations and groundbreaking science will occur. High levels of publication are expected, and press will likely be involved which requires careful sensitivity to what, when, and by whom results can be discussed. In addition, high profile journals have very strict rules that must be followed, particularly in medical and imaging research. Uwe encouraged users to proactively consider the importance of coordinating collaborations, publications and press well in advance of having exciting news to share. Uwe outlined guidelines which were subsequently posted to the web <http://www-ssrl.slac.stanford.edu/lcls/users/logistics.html#cppguidelines> .

The meeting adjourned at 7 pm and was followed by a joint reception for the LCLS and SSRL user communities.