

January 11, 2013

## Scientific User Facilities (SUF) Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Susan Strasser (APS), Susan White-DePace (APS), Andreas Roelofs (NST, industrial liaison), Marcia Woods (NST), Rod Gerig (APS), Mike Skwarek (CIS), Penny Kolpecki, Hubert Ley (ES), Alan Bernstein (ATLAS), Deb Clayton (TDC), Russ Cook (EMC), Diane Hart (TDC), David Martin (LCF), Connie Vanni (APS)

**Welcome** (Gerig): Three to four years ago, ANL went through the Laboratory Management System process, which brought all of the scientific user facilities (SUFs) together with the common goal of identifying procedures and protocols that are unique to user facilities, such as registration, training, etc. Mark Peters (ANL) is now the process owner of SUF. New business system integration processes are coming on line at the Lab, and the motivation for this meeting is to review and see how the SUFs might integrate and to determine possible interface opportunities for this group.

**Introductions and Purpose of Meeting** (Strasser): APS User Program management is undergoing change: Strasser will be going to half time, and a new management team of White-DePace and Vanni will be taking on the general program responsibilities (with Strasser continuing on special projects). White-DePace was introduced with an overview of her history and former responsibilities at Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL), including a brief look at the BNL system of user and visitor site access. Attendees introduced themselves and provided general overviews of their facilities, their current roles, the state of their facilities, and interests related to the meeting topics.

**Centralized Site Access Process at BNL--A case study** (White-DePace): White-DePace moved to ANL in October 2012 from BNL. She started her career as the user administrator at NSLS (the first user office at a national laboratory) and saw a lot of “firsts” in developing the infrastructure to support the user community there. She also worked at RHIC and developed user program there, and from there was asked to develop the Guest, User, Visitor Center, which administered all guests for BNL.

### Historical Recollections:

- 1980's: paper and physical check in by HR for NSLS—database was eventually developed
- 1990's: BNL's HR starts using PeopleSoft platform to develop an employee/guest data management system in an effort to decentralize
- 1999: DOE order 142.1 issued
- 2000: Opened RHIC and AGS—start up was all paper-based, PeopleSoft process was made available to RHIC and this forces the discussion to centralize processes. NSLS is pressured to use BNL's system. BNL moves to centralize guest, user, and visitor processing (prompted by DOE 473s) and the NSLS database is no longer being used.
- 2006: Proposal approved to form the Guest, User Visitor Center (GUV Center, which opened in 2007)—pulled in all the user facilities, department guests, and

casual visitor to the laboratory under one umbrella. The effort to open GUV center involved cooperation and expertise of many groups.

The experience and scope of BNL's centralized system can offer insight into a possible course to a similar set-up at ANL. The GUV Center's key roles include the global oversight and management structure of BNL's scientific guests, users, and short-term visitors (but not employees or contractors—those are managed under HR); host approval; and a single-site (“one-stop shopping” paradigm) for processing registration and foreign visits and assignment (FVA) requests. Facility-specific tasks remained in the individual user offices. The GUV Center handles all registrations, processes, policies, procedures, check in, basic training, foreign national access, badging/encoding, identification requirements for FVA, user agreements, the central web page for BNL, management of user records (registration history, signed forms, user agreements, immigration documents—all paperless except for user agreements), dissemination of important info/announcements (communication center), advocates for guests and users, etc. White-DePace showed the GUV check-in web page (incl. Guest Central, a user portal for individual user's information). The main page has links to the individual user facilities where the scientific access processes were managed (e.g., proposal submission). A flow chart of BNL's Guest Information System begins with a web-based form that directed registrants to either HR or the GUV Center and then through more detailed levels of reviews (see slide). One of the reviews, the upload process to FACTS was compared to the ANL process that has FAVOR as an intermediate system (where a full record must be constructed before an upload is done to FACTS). The processing system is faster at BNL—this is a big topic that could be revisited at a future meeting. A color-coded graphic of *some* (20!) of the database uploads that fed and uploaded to BNL's Guest Information System was also shown.

White-DePace offered several comments about the system and how it evolved:

- **SCOPE:** The initial scope was inadequate and it changed over time. Unexpected DOE mandates necessitated changes in scope. Key players were not informed or engaged in process at the start, which caused problems (this highlights how critical communication is).
- **SECURE:** Make sure that adequate resources are available from the start, esp. IT support. Having “buy-in” from employees, facilities, and laboratory management from the start is very important. Know how to set priorities.
- **COMMUNICATION:** White-DePace stressed the importance of communication—need to have everyone discuss, present, solicit input, brainstorm, ask questions, etc. including MIS, HR, scientific departments, financial, FVA, training, staff, people using the system, etc. Use subject matter experts (SMEs), give them authority, and appoint a few key people rather than using the committee approach (ensure that the SMEs are well-chosen to represent stakeholders).

These types of projects do not have concise end dates—it is an evolutionary kind of process. Integration is challenging but very positive for all.

White-DePace also discussed how ANL is uploading multiple records for a single person (using the FAVOR system) while at BNL, a single record for a user is uploaded to FACTS. Another aspect of this topic is who has permissions to view and work with these approvals.

**ANL's Business Integrations System** (Clayton, Hart, and Skwarek): The question at hand is what impact, if any, will this have on user facilities and their administrations? Jean Shaheen is leading the project—it's the largest change at ANL in years. There are 144 business systems at ANL. User facilities are involved with many of these systems and thus should potentially be the "fourth pillar" of the system. The older, modular systems will not move ANL into the future. This is a large multi-year effort that is more than just an IT project—it is a complex system. Much process review is taking place to determine the history behind the systems. Systems have historically been "built"—purchased systems that are "turn-key" represent a better pathway.

The old business system is no longer effective for the Lab's needs at this point and the work for others (WFO) database is antiquated; data extraction is difficult and time consuming. Interfacing with the user communities is important with respect to work for others proposals and early communication is critical to maintain efficiency and transparency. In the improved system, a single database will manage the workflow and approval chain required for WFO/CRADA proposals and, when needed, could interface with the user facilities. Currently when WFO/CRADA proposals need a user facility, it is handled on a case-by-case basis (inefficient). Communication is a critical tool as is the interfacing of processes (e.g., how does a WFO PI who needs the APS integrate their proposal into the APS proposal system and get time at the facility, etc.)

The group briefly touched on the role and purpose of NUFO at the Laboratory. ANL has paid "dues" to NUFO, which automatically allows any user facility at the Lab to participate in NUFO activities. Those user facilities that are not currently in NUFO should join soon.

A Doodle poll will be sent out for a follow-up meeting to discuss NUFO and ongoing discussion of these topics.

Gerig did an informal query about each facility's perspective on the direction the Lab's integrated business system is heading. Some of the comments made included the following:

- Integrating external people into ANL's HR may prove to be very challenging, but believe this is the right way to go.
- Support was expressed for being able to tap into Lab-wide systems rather than developing separate systems ad hoc.
- A "yellow-pages" of users that covers the Lab would be hugely useful.
- Smaller facilities that have a small user base and no or minimal overlap with other facilities may benefit from certain ANL-level functions in an integrated business system, but small facilities don't have the ability to dedicate significant effort to integrating

Conclusion: Thanks were expressed to all. Minutes will be sent out along with a poll for the next meeting. Topics of the next meeting will include Shaheen providing an overview of the Lab's business systems integration effort and whether or not the user facilities should be a fourth pillar of the effort.

AI: Next time invite Jean Shaheen to attend.

AI: Try to meet more regularly, not so much on a process development basis but more to share ideas and information.