Topics of interest to discuss

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SAC meeting
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(prepared days ago)

SAC mandate (reminder)

The charge to the council is to engage in **open discussion** on topics of interest for both short- and long-term plans for the **laboratory's research program**. The council **also discusses issues** related to **_careers and professional development_** of the Fermilab scientific staff.

SAC SharePoint:

https://fermipoint.fnal.gov/org/ood/dir/sac/SitePages/Home.aspx

(SAC_charter)

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Sources

Some of those come from personal experience, others - from conversations with FNAL employees
(either as a Magnet System Department Deputy-Head or not).

However, a prospective (i.e. not yet) member of the SAC wanted to know what we discuss in meetings and
we engaged in a conversation about what is up, what is not, and why it is not.
This made me think how we bring up issues of interest in the SAC.

Please note – the point is not to scrutinize all topics today

I expect we'll not have time to discuss all (if any) in detail, but we can think about those
offline and whatever generate interests we can spend time on

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Topics today

- Travel (conference?) policy

- Base for scientific/technology output

- Authorship at FNAL

- HR complaints

- ServiceDesk tickets

- Email interactions

- FNAL access (again)

- LDRD (process organization)

- "Training" organization (Inclusion Matters)

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Travel (conference?) policy

- Last FY we had travel freeze (no conferences for some scientists/engineers/researchers)

- There were exceptions to the freeze (for some well-established scientists)

  – People in their first year(s) of scientific development were still "frozen"

  – Same for people with less experience

- This year there are (<u>centralized</u>) travel restrictions - one size fits all?

  – Implications are yet unknown; however, people will miss out what other Labs are offering to researchers

Nothing stops this from happening again

For people in the beginning of their carrier inability to "engage" collaboratively may be the end of it
(some only have a year or two to prove themselves)
In some fields, conferences and publications are (typically) related

It is apparent that in difficult times the most vulnerable take the blunt –
what is the position of SAC?

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Base for scientific/technological output

- The Lab scientific output depends, at least, on the number of scientists (engineers, postdocs)

- What is the number of scientist (engineers) and their fraction of all employees, **vs time**?

- There are concerns that both are going down (voluntary or other separations, hiring "freezes") and we are still expected to achieve the same goals

- Which public markers for scientific output are tracked and shown (when, where, who)

September 2023

This is an old snapshot, and it is all I get

SAC may be interested to know about
the composition of the lab and how it changes
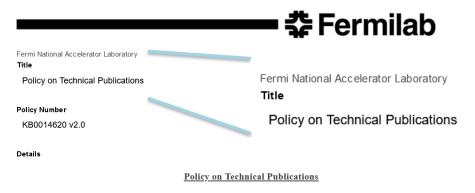(not just yearly)

https://www.fnal.gov/pub/about/demographics/

Authorship at FNAL

- FNAL authorship policy (nonexistent)

  - Do we, FNAL, need to have one?

  - Is it better Departments to handle this "locally"?
  - Or Divisions?
  - Directorates?

It's not it

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Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory
Title
  Policy on Technical Publications

Policy Number
  KB0014620 v2.0

Details

Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory
Title
  Policy on Technical Publications

Policy on Technical Publications

1. Purpose
This policy addresses the labwide management of technical publications at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab), which is managed by Fermi Research Alliance, LLC (FRA).

Why do we need any?
Nothing among FNAL rules stops me to take what you, a scientist, worked on for months and present it as my work (among other work), I'll thank you for your "help".
(this in not just a mental exercise)

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HR complaints

- We all go through trainings but very few if any remember EVERYTHING

  - And you don't have easy access to training material to refresh your memory (**!**)

- We know we have various options to file complaints if (we think that) something is wrong

  - There is also a special policy for whistleblowers protection

- It is fair to say we have the right to "complain"

- However, you will not be prompted to check any existing policy describing the process

  - Chances are, you don't know what your options are – what to expect and what actions you can take

  - What if no resolution is offered to you?

  INTERNAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURES - Policy on Administrative Grievance ☆   KB0013693

  Note that this is about (not) **communicating** important information   **1**

  Shall people filing complaints be referred to existing policies?
  How to be sure this happens?

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Service Desk tickets

- Tickets are one of the main, and streamlined, tools to utilize the existing networking at FNAL

- How are outliers, in terms of response time, handled

- I know of a case where a ticket opened in 2021 was never answered, let alone resolved

  – It is still opened

Do we aim the system to only work in average?
How do we make a self-correcting system (do we want to)?

Note that this is also a **communication** issue (no response)   **2**

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Email interactions

- What is the official way(s) of communication at FNAL?

  - I must assume that email is one (just like a phone is another, may be less relevant…)

  - This is a "tool" crucial for our work

- How do we do Lab-business if the official way(s) of **communication** does not deliver   **3**

  - In given cases, internal to FNAL

  - Generally: unanswered emails by employees (no time limit)

  - It is not just annoying, it drives productivity (of a network) down

Is it best to just refer a case directly to Supervisors?
How about passive retaliation (you will never be able to prove)?

Is it worth to establish basic rules (policy?)?

(I am not a proponent of policies for everything, per se, too detailed written rules lead to governing by different unwritten rules)

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Site Access (again)

- Certain four foreign visitors (non-sensitive country) came to visit in late October

  - Started the approval process in ~ mid-September

- The point of contact spent a lot of time tracking issues and ringing the bell, over one month:

  - Visitor 1: a step taking up to 5 days was taking 17 days ("did not integrate correctly to the next step")

  - Visitor 2: the same step was taking 7 days (bell "rang"); another step taking usually < 1 day took 4 days; the visitor email was mistaken at some point (email response is required for some steps)

  - Visitor 3: a step taking < 1 day took 10 days

  - Visitor 4: all good (they had a FNAL badge previously)

  - All: if there are two (contradictory) requests simultaneously, they are both frozen with no warning

That said, all visitors got access approved on time, in part because responsible for the process people worked hard to complete steps few days before the visits.

How are aberrations **communicated** to appropriate people?

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This is not about making mistakes; it is about **planning** how to catch and address them

Is it fail-safe?

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LDRD (process organization)

- LDRDs play an important role for some focused R&D developments

- LDRD proposals go in two phases – an applicant must pass the first one to be "recommended" for the second

- This year in at least two cases (in APS-TD) people were not notified in time

  – 1: Notified <u>one week before </u>the final deadline (<u>after persistent requests </u>for reply) – submitted

  – 2: Notified <u>one day before </u>the final deadline – **not submitted**

- Then the second phase rules are:

10/4/2024 "Typically we ask for a brief presentation on each proposed project. We are planning for the presentations to be held October 21-28. More guidance and a request for schedule information will be sent out soon."

10/22/2024 We are delaying the presentations (to potentially November 7 and 8, TBC) to ensure adequate committee and LDRD team review time. Depending on the outcome of initial scoring, we may not invite all proposers to give a presentation. If you are invited to give a presentation, you will be notified mid-next week.

11/1/2024 "PIs will receive an individual email with the status of their proposal no later than November 15."

There is something wrong with the **communication**

(is there anything to advise here?)

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Common denominator

- I counted several independent instances where <u>communication</u> was an issue

- In the past year SAC came to the same type of issue multiple times

  – We discussed it

  – We sent an advisory letter (SAC is an advisory body)

- We can only advise, but not recognizing the <u>communication</u> issue as a problem
  may have Lab-wide repercussions

  (
  Yes, if management abruptly closes your food/water source with no explanations you'll be naturally
      worried about yours and your loved ones' /at least/ health
   Yes, trust issues will come up in that case, rumors will spread
   Yes, adding "by the way" post-factum may be too late if this is perceived as a non-isolated incident
)

  However, SAC must recognize that it is not for it to opine how the Lab operates:
  we could discuss and advise. Does it affect "careers and professional development"? – yes!

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"Training" organization (Inclusion Matters)

- Inclusion Matters training consist of two (on-line) courses

  – This is unlike any other training

- You don't get clear recognition right away

- You rely on a (high) chance that your participation will be recognized

- You can try to verify by email (yes, by communicating)

- What happens if you ask for verification in March (after the first course), and you don't get a response; you go to the second course in June (say) and you are certain you are good for it; you ask to verify again later and you get a response in November that your participation in the first event can not be confirmed? Then you ask again for resolution - no response…

  It is a question of organization and communication; when both fail – too bad for an individual.
  However, statistically (on a colorful plot) there is no problem, those are "outliers" (one, few?)

  Do we care to advise improving the Lab organization elsewhere (for all of us),
  what are limits to improvements to suggest

Is it fail-safe?

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Conclusion

- I think it is easy to make this kind of feedback a "venting exercise"

- That should not be the point, avoid making it personal

    - Judge by yourself if I succeeded (not all cases are "mine")

- The guidance should be: is there anything useful from points we bring up and what useful advice we could possibly give

    - Judge by yourself if I succeeded

- People should feel comfortable to just verbally bring up issues for discussion (if this is what they want) and discuss on the spot, possibly prepare more if there is interest

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