

Minutes from SAC Meeting: January 9, 2025

Submitted by Adam Schreckenberger

SAC Members & Meeting Attendees:

Artur Apresyan, Nilanjan Banerjee, Daniel Baxter, Greg Bock, Elizabeth Buckley-Geer, Eileen Crowley, Jonathan Eisch, Bonnie Fleming, Jonathan Lewis, Kellen McGee, Vaia Papadimitriou, Robyn Madrak Plant, Stephen Parke, Adam Schreckenberger, Seon-Hee (Sunny) Seo, Stoyan Stoynev, David van Zanten, Si Xie, Shoajiang Zhu

These minutes were written by Adam Schreckenberger, who completely forgot to take attendance. In lieu of leaving someone off the attendance list, I have simply given everyone a free pass to start the new year.

1. David van Zanten commenced the meeting at 10:03 AM [FNAL time] and announced the agenda

- a. Planning for the All-Scientist Meeting on January 29
- b. Stoyan's presentation about SAC topics of interest with the goal of determining SAC commitment and priorities

2. What topics do we want presented at the All-Scientist Meeting (ASM)? –

This discussion topic took roughly 35 minutes of the allocated meeting time.

Sunny Seo raised the notion of discussing the PEMP scores at the ASM, which generated lots of discussion regarding **report accessibility**, **poor performance**, **negative outcomes** driven by the poor performance, and the lab's **remedies to address** deficient areas.

On the matter of report accessibility, Eileen Crowley indicated that Martha Michels was the point of contact, and Bonnie Fleming informed the committee that **previous PEMP reports had been made available** – and that she did not foresee any reason for that to change. Vaia Papadimitriou added to the statement on availability that the scientific community had not always been aware of those scores in the past.

With regards to the poor performance and potential negative outcomes, the SAC asked about the impact the Site Office might have on the PEMP grades. We were informed that the Site Office had input to Topics 4-8, which addressed Leadership & Stewardship, ES&H, Business Systems, Facilities, and Security. Early career members of the

committee expressed concern as to whether these scores could negatively affect opportunities at the lab.

The SAC had an extended discussion about potential root causes for the underwhelming performance in the PEMP review. Suggested factors included **decreased social cohesion and happiness, the influence of the budget situation on the S&T grade, and tension between parties involved.**

Jonathan Lewis spearheaded the discussion on the Directorate's plan to address the deficiencies indicated by the PEMP scores – with focus placed on the scientific program. This topic should be included in the ASM presentation, and Vaia Papadimitriou emphasized taking an approach where the scientific community contributes to potential solutions.

SAC members also raised concerns about the timeline for improvement. The Directorate has had years to implement plans involving some of the deficient areas, and the PEMP scores did not reflect improvement when looking at reviews over the years. This point rather naturally segued to the next topic to be included in the January 29 ASM.

Stephen Parke suggested that **FermiForward should be the second agenda item for the ASM.** Now that the prime contract is finalized, topics can be discussed more openly. Members of the SAC expressed that positive statements have been made in the past about the new stakeholders, but the scientific community has not yet seen the concrete plan, and there is some underlying skepticism surrounding the team's ability to implement tangible change.

Essentially, what makes FermiForward more than a “repackaged FRA” that could be destined to repeat the same mistakes? Safety culture was raised an example – as we have moved from a culture of safety to a culture of compliance, and yet the PEMP scores did not reflect a year-to-year improvement. Further discussions involved finding a balance between procedure-based and expertise-based approaches to safety. No solutions were determined beyond the SAC members wanting the same thing: a culture of safety that gets the work done safely.

SAC concluded that the January 29 ASM will focus on the PEMP grades and FermiForward. Presentations will be made by some combination of Greg and Bonnie. Suggestion made to schedule the ASM from 3:30 – 5:00 PM to accommodate potential evening family conflicts. In addition, as the committee found many subjects to touch on,

Stephen Parke suggested that we transition to having shorter, monthly All-Scientist Meetings.

3. Stoyan Stoynev gave a presentation on topics of interest for the SAC.

This presentation focused on specific areas we could explore as committee members – and hopefully areas where we can make an impact. The talk has been uploaded to Indico, and many of the subjects covered in the talk involve boarder issues, such as communication and a need for self-correcting mechanisms.

Travel freezes in FY24 were bad for the scientific community. Members had specific examples in which their travel was restricted, delayed, or impeded – even in instances when they were the principal investigators and had grant funds ready to deploy. Bonnie Fleming expressed hope that this would not be a problem in FY25 and shared that ALDs had made plans to prioritize early career scientists, which should have alleviated many of the issues experienced by some SAC members. Perhaps the bottom-up view that issues remained demonstrates to the committee that plan execution could use our support.

The SAC membership expressed a desire to examine the evolution of scientific and technological staff and output over time, in particular the statistics involving scientists lost through separations were sought. Issues regarding authorship policy, HR complaints, and Service Desk tickets were also raised – and all involved lacking communication channels, a need for self-correcting mechanisms, and a need for clear adjudication processes (especially in instances of scientific misconduct).

4. Scientific Appointments Policy

Bonnie briefly mentioned the Scientific Appointments Policy and announced that Stephen Parke would chair a committee to address issues that arose during the workforce reduction and revise the policy. This committee will consist of eight individuals, with four members coming from the SAC.

5. Preferred Name on IDs

Bonnie also announced that progress was being made, and Daniel Baxter volunteered to help if needed.

6. AOB

Adam does not recall a specific date being set for the next meeting and expresses apologies in not remembering this.

Stephen Parke sent out an email inviting SAC members to the Scientific Appointments Policy sub-committee.