

January 8, 2020

The NuSTAR Users Committee (NUC) met at the Honolulu AAS on January 5, 2020. The following includes a list of attendees from the NUC, a list of ex-officio attendees, and minutes of the discussion.

**NUC attendees:**

John Tomsick (chair)  
Marco Ajello  
Anne Lohfink  
Jack Steiner

**Ex-Officio attendees:**

Fiona Harrison (NuSTAR PI)  
Karl Forster (SOC manager)  
Hashima Hasan (NASA HQ Program Scientist)  
Rich Terrile (Project Manager)

**Meeting agenda:**

1. question about dual-anonymous system and “balancing”
2. conference in Sardinia in June, 100 person capacity, SOC is currently Daniel and Matteo
3. direct funding of Co-Is?
4. how we should rotate the NUC membership?
5. walk-on topic (about communicating actions taken to the 2019 Senior Review)
6. walk-on topic (about calibration)

**Meeting minutes:**

1) Discussed concern raised by a NuSTAR community member about the possibility of an unbalanced selection for cycle-6 due to the dual-anonymous review (DAR) process

Hashima is the selecting official and agreed with Fiona that it was unlikely that the process will result in an unbalanced selection (e.g., one PI with multiple selected proposals). However, the balance of the selection will be examined (by Hashima, Fiona, and the GOF team) at the merging session when the identities of the PI’s will also be known by the panel chairs. If there are any issues they can be discussed and resolved.

-> NUC suggests to GOF (Katja) that sufficient time be budgeted at the end of the peer review to allow for examination, discussion, and resolution of possible issues of balance. Particularly as NuSTAR cycle-6 is the first DAR!

A request was made that there should be an FAQ on the NuSTAR GOF proposal webpage to describe the “Team Expertise” document that is required for every proposal. The DAR is described in the proposal thread webpage:

<https://heasarc.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/nustar/nuprothread.html#dualguide>

and there are templates available for the “Team expertise” document in section 7:

<https://heasarc.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/nustar/nuprothread.html#dual>

which is linked directly from one of the boxes at the top of the webpage.

-> Karl will ask the GOF team to add more text to section 7 to explain the purpose of this document and may add a FAQ to the “proposals and tool” webpage

[https://heasarc.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/nustar/nustar\\_prop.html](https://heasarc.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/nustar/nustar_prop.html)

-> suggest GOF/HEASARC advertise through the NuSTAR mailing list NASA/SMD Astrophysics division Virtual Town Hall to discuss dual-anonymous peer review (Thursday, Feb 27 from 1pm to 2pm).

Note added by Karl: This meeting is for proposal review teams. NASA SMD will host a virtual town hall in Spring 2020 to discuss dual-anonymous peer review with the community (Paul Hertz, NASA Town Hall, AAS January 2020)

2) NuSTAR meeting in Sardinia, 2020 June 2-4th

-> NUC suggests that additional people should work with Daniel and Matteo to organize the schedule for the conference, maybe pulling people in from the NUC?

->The maximum of 50 attendees from NASA funded contracts is unlikely to be reached as most attendees (limit 100) will be grant funded or from Europe

3) Direct funding for Col's

May need a change in the text of the solicitation (for cycle-7 onwards) to allow multiple phase-2 proposals for the same selected proposal. Perhaps just for the Large proposals?

Question: What fraction of Chandra proposals does this occur?

-> Hashima and John will discuss with Andy Ptak

4) Rotate NUC membership

Hashima is the constituting official. There are 9 members + 1 chair.

The charter indicates that the NUC term is 2 years and that people should not serve more than 2 terms (4 years). The first NUC meeting was April 2018, so it is time to start rotating membership.

The NUC agreed that the project should send out a request for self-nominations for membership soon. Once we decide on 3 new members, we will rotate three current

members off the NUC, making sure that the balance in the NUC is conserved (expertise, gender, seniority, geographic region).

-> Karl will send Hashima the URL for the NUC webpage to review the NUC charter [https://www.nustar.caltech.edu/page/nustar\\_users\\_committee](https://www.nustar.caltech.edu/page/nustar_users_committee)

5) Fiona had a question for Hashima about the directive from the NASA response to the 2019 senior review report that all legacy survey observations be halted (this was also in one of Paul Hertz's slides in the NASA town hall).

We would like to keep the legacy survey Swift-BAT selected AGN sample (from the 104-month catalog) because they are useful for leaving space in the schedule to be replaced by ToO observations as well as increasing observing efficiency between targets that would otherwise require long slews.

-> NUC agrees with Fiona and this should be mentioned in Fiona's response letter to NASA HQ

6) Karl mentioned that a calibration update is planned for this year that will include improvements in RMF and ARF files that will (hopefully) correct the problem of a mismatch at low energy (<4 keV) between NuSTAR/Swift-XRT and NuSTAR/XMM.

The SOC team is also examining the recently discovered difference (~5%) at low energies between FPMA and FPMB seen in bright sources.

-> Suggested that Jack see if this can be seen in the recent Cyg X-1 data, perhaps comparing to observations earlier in the mission

-> Karl will make sure that the NUC is included in the discussions about significant CALDB changes before they are released