

SURF User Association Executive Committee Meeting

Date: 12/04/2025

Attending:

Members: Frank Strieder, Mark Hanhardt, Oxana Gorbatenko, Sarah Keenan, Ed Blucher, Brett Belzer

Others: Christopher Kreitzinger, Jaret Heise, Stacie Granum, Mike Headley

Quorum: Yes (6 members present, 5 members required for quorum)

Start Time: 1:01 PM MT

Welcome

- Frank: Welcomes committee to the last meeting of 2025.

(9:02 AM MT)

SURF Update

- Mike:
 - Informs everyone that SURF didn't have to halt operations while the federal government was shutdown. Looking at \$40 million from federal FY26 budget proposal, SURF needs \$38 million for normal operations. Yates is operating on 90-year-old technology, and we are making the push to get funding to repair/update. After 5 years, CAT is winding down activities at SURF, and their demobilizing should be done by the end of January (essentially complete in December). MJD demobilization continues and is on track to be done by the end of the fiscal year (Sep 2026). Congratulations CASPAR on first beam. LBNF/DUNE continues on infrastructure work and deployment planning, plus a contract was signed this week to allow SURF to handle the end to end moving of the cryostat beams. All low-background counters are back at the Ross Campus BHUC laboratory except for one. Two SURF advisory committee meetings went very well prior to this Executive Committee (EC) meeting. The non-physics strategic plan had a lot of discussion and could be done by the end of the quarter.

- Jaret: Quick reminder that the SURF Safety and Support Perception survey is due this Friday, and SURF plans to make a more deliberate effort to bring those suggestions back to the EC.
- Frank: How is SURF's proposed 4850L expansion looking?
- Mike: There continues to be strong interest from several experiment groups, including XLZD (Xe-based dark matter) and THEIA (liquid scintillator-based neutrino studies). SURF continues to engage with potential private donors to explore funding for next-generation science at our facility.
- Frank: Ross shaft and cage swapping?
- Mike: Need to do a rope swap and the double deck cage is still in fabrication.
- Frank: What's the downtime for swapping?
- Mike: Shouldn't hold up underground trips during that period.
- Frank: And bringing down steel beams shouldn't impact regular science, right?
- Mike: Correct.
- Ed: More and more people are chiming in with their expertise regarding the logistics for bringing down the beams, is that culminating into something productive?
- Mike: We are getting to a good spot, but everyone has their own perspective on how to proceed.

(9:16 AM)

Update on Subcommittee Actions

- Mark:
 - Have had a few meetings already with the subcommittee that began by looking at the charter, the role we are supposed to fulfill and made a list of what we could do to satisfy that. The subcommittee talked about creating a webpage for our users, an article/corner of Deep Thoughts to highlight researchers or experiments, emails covering any news for those who aren't onsite, an online community space, conferences and meetings, interviewing researchers onsite about how we can better serve them and help with the transition to working on SURF and branding. The committee focused on four specific ideas, which are the website, Deep Thoughts articles, email and onsite interviews so we can roll them out sooner rather than later. *Shares screen showcasing a proto-webpage capturing some of the important items that are ideal to include. The focus would be to have information about being

welcomed to the area consisting of restaurants and things to do, PPE needed for working at SURF, etc. Science advocacy section for the public and congress, link to sign up for User Association (UA) if they haven't already, link to experiment implementation, EC charter and members, etc. A big part was to have a space for users to provide feedback and complaints, so a page was made for people to anonymously do that. Also discussed online community space but that will come later, as well as a space for news that might've been missed. Have presented this idea with Comms and a meeting is scheduled for Jan 6 to go over how to move forward. Considering branding for the UA, whereas the Comms department would rather have the UA stay under SURF branding.

- Mark: Email updates are the next item we are focusing on and the plan is to provide any PPE updates and other big changes that are important to share. If there's nothing to share, there will be a quarterly update with little things.
- Mark: Deep Thoughts article is in progress but still working with Comms on frequency. As an EC, we should consider who we would like to highlight in the first issue. Won't be rolled out for a while, but it would be good to know who to start with by the next EC meeting.
- Mark: Interviews are the final thing and David is working on a list of questions to ask those who have been onsite about their experience and suggestions.
- Frank: Hoping to roll out the interviews soon because that would be important and an easy thing to do.
- Ed: Appreciates the work being done.
- Mark: Please feel free to send any additional suggestions because we are looking to provide the best experience.
- Frank: The EC should figure out whether or not it makes sense to move forward with a separate logo and come up with ideas for it.
- Mark: It might be a good idea to have a distinct identity since our roll is to be medium between users and SURF, so being presented as a distinct identity may make sense.
- Jaret: Is this consistent with other UA?
- Mark: SNOLAB is not the case, but some of the other UA are distinct from their organizations.
- Jaret: SNOLAB may not be a good representation of UA, and Fermilab considers itself more distinct.
- Mike: Should provide branding ideas from other UA to Comms for the meeting.

- Stacie: Was thinking about some of the Institute programs and one thing is community outreach to share their work. Perhaps there is an avenue for collaboration here between the Institute and UA to fulfill both needs.
- Mark: Great idea, among all the outreach ideas this can be done. Next step is to figure out how to organize it on the backend.
- Frank: Could ask-a-scientist be taken over by the UA?
- Mike: Thinks that's a good idea.
- Mark: We have access to the researchers to do that, but that might be more than we can handle at the moment with the current projects the subcommittee is focusing on. In the future this can certainly be done.
- Mike: Perhaps just providing names to the Visitor Center (VC) would be beneficial for now and then allow the VC to handle logistics.
- Frank: Then could expand the program disciplines outside of just physics.
- Jaret: Could focus on local researchers as well.
- Mark: This could be a good opportunity to formalize signing up for the program.
- Jaret: Mark shares the schedule for the upcoming year with our science department to ensure that someone is there, but as they come and go, this could be used as an opportunity to include new people.
- Mark: Would the EC like to advocate a distinct identity?
- EC: Agrees.
- Mike: Perhaps an area to target would be UA that supports formal DOE facilities. Could leverage our desire to become a user facility and this would be part of it.
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- **Action Items Resulting from Discussions**
 - N/A

(9:42 AM)

2026 Election Cycle Nominations

- Frank: Shares screen showing the upcoming election cycle. For the election of spring 2026 (end of February) five terms are ending including myself. Three of these newly elected people will serve for three years and two will serve for two years. This means starting in spring of 2027 the EC will only need to elect three each election. EC Members on this call whose terms expire in Spring 2026 may decide whether they would like to seek reelection, so please let it be known soon and any additional

people who would be a good fit. I would be interested in another term to see through the work that's been started.

- Brett: Will consider it and respond in the coming weeks.
- Oxana: Would like to continue for the subcommittee is enjoyable.
- Ed: Happy to continue, but some turnover would be beneficial like including some of those in DUNE. Will provide suggestions.
- Frank: Plans to send out an email to ask for suggestions to the UA, but asking people individually might provide the best outcome. Should aim to send out ballot by middle of February.
- Mark: Should also pay attention to charter requirements for the makeup of EC.
- Frank: Need to take that into consideration depending on what other current EC members decide to do. Logistically I cannot run the election like last year since I'm on the ballot, maybe Sarah can?
- Sarah: Agrees and is happy to take that on.
- Mark: For consistency's sake, perhaps Christopher should take it over since we might not always have someone from mines on the EC.
- Frank: Agrees. Reminds folks to provide suggestions for EC.

AOB

- Jaret: There's no COSURF for 2026, perhaps next meeting is worth giving some thought.
- Frank: Agrees, will need to align it with the DUNE meeting.

Meeting End: 9:54 AM MT