

SURF User Association Executive Committee Meeting

Date: 02/27/2026

Attending:

Members: Oxana Gorbatenko, Mark Hanhardt, Frank Strieder, Sarah Keenan, David Woodward, Brianna Mount, Jeff Burghardt, Ed Blucher

Others: Christopher Kreitzinger, Jaret Heise, Stacie Granum

Quorum: Yes (8 members present, 5 members required for quorum)

Start Time: 10:03 PM MT

Welcome

- Frank: Welcomes everyone to the first meeting of 2026.

(10:03 AM MT)

SURF Update

- Jaret: Good news, very strong congressional support and in general resulting in \$44 million for SURF (\$6M above Cooperative Agreement). Allows Yates maintenance updates to begin and have proposed a 5-year plan. Infrastructure priorities are limited to pumphrooms and electrical infrastructure. One pumphroom has been fully refurbished, others to follow. Surface Yates complex electrical infrastructure to be replaced. Steering committee submitted the Strategic Plan for non-physics (big thanks to Chair William Roggenthen!). Now it is being reviewed by various SURF advisory committees. Excited about SURF joining High Energy Advocacy trip to DC (thanks Brianna Mount!). Continue pursuing private funding for additional lab space. DOE has paused generation 3 dark matter consideration for the next 5 years, so in the meantime they are asking for proposals from existing experiments like LZ. CAT has completed decommissioning and SURF is now advertising the 1700L space with potential from existing LOI. SURF write-up for *Annual Reviews of Particle and Nuclear Science* planned for publication in the Fall, preprint coming soon. LBNF/DUNE infrastructure continues along with concrete and door construction, and steel is set to begin next quarter. Co-hosting upcoming DUNE collaboration meeting in May with SD Mines and are expecting 200+ collaborators. SURF is participating in DUNE operations review which is a good opportunity for science and

technical support. The Institute has been producing some exciting programs such as the rebranding of Deeper Talks to the John Bahcall Colloquium (refer to individual invitations), a new Institute Science Planning Committee (ISPC) was recently established with the second meeting this week regarding looking for strategic outlook and what needs to be tackled next. CETUP* is celebrating its 10-year anniversary this year by including quantum in this year's workshop. The Quantum Partnership Workshop (QPW) has its third appearance this year.

- Ed: Can you speak more on the third-generation dark matter decision?
- David: Happened in December.
- Frank: Looking for cheaper solutions (below \$10 million).
- David: They're encouraging LZ to propose an upgrade plan through the 2030s. Planned to be an international collaboration, so others are working on deciding what to do.
- Jaret: This gives us a bit more room for hosting experiments by pausing this and providing more
- Frank: Any upcoming Ross infrastructure plans that may cause access impacts?
- Jaret: Few things moving forward such as restrooms and lingering piping issues still need to be resolved. Contracts being amended and work to pick up in mid-March, along with some changes operations are looking to include such as water descending the Ross, chiller system, and finding a better route for said water. A few LBNF/DUNE projects need to be completed prior to bringing water from the Yates to the Ross campus.
- Frank: Any double-decker cage updates?
- Jaret: Unsure, there are some large cryogenic vessels that are needed and require single deck cage, so they need to go down prior to. Looking at an April-May timeframe.
- Frank: Any interruption to the Ross when beams begin transportation?
- Jaret: Limited if any interruption. First beam transport will have the most impact, perhaps noon cages will be impacted, but there is also the Yates route down should there be any interruptions. Nothing immediately comes to mind regarding any hinderance to Ross science. The argon pipe will be installed in the Ross shaft at the end of 2026 early 2027 which will likely see a weeklong interruption, meaning going down the Yates will be needed.
- David: Status of MJD space and future plans?
- Jaret: Decommissioning continues and still on track to be done by the end of FY26. Quantum R&D could use that space (dilution fridge). Also promising leads on funding and opportunities to match state funding, making this

something that could happen soon. Will continue to look at other funding opportunities for the modest cost of a fridge and infrastructure to support it. Still open to additional LOIs.

(10:27 AM)

SURF UA EC Election

- Frank: Still looking for nominations, currently Brett Belzer is departing from EC. We thank him for his service. He nominated a colleague who is a SDSMT graduate in civil engineering and for several years worked on projects at SURF. Now an employee of RESPEC. He will be on the ballot, along with Oxana, Jeff, and myself.
 - Ed: Asked some DUNE folks for nominations but was not favorable. I am happy to continue as an EC myself but also happy to step down as well. There is one additional person who could be a good fit.
 - Frank: Julia Delgaudio is another individual who looks to be on the ballot.
 - Mark: Still waiting for her to say yes.
 - Frank: Need at least two people from biology, geology, etc. Three candidates on the ballots which fit, so any additional candidates can be from any field. Hoping to close by end of next week to begin preparation for elections.

(10:32 AM MT)

Subcommittee Report

- Frank: Have had several projects being worked on over the last few months.
 - Mark: Christopher and I have had a meeting with comms and are working on putting together materials for the website to share with the comms team. Looking at how to make it distinct enough to give the UA an identity. From there it'll be updating said information as they change.
 - Frank: Also looking at branding for emails, but unsure about the status on that at this time. Began email updates and would like to have branding.
 - Mark: Idea is to come up with a more attractive template to stand out as the UA.
 - Jaret: A logo would be nice at some point for advocating at future conferences.
 - Mark: Need to convince comms.

- Stacie: John Bahcall Colloquium (JBC) has the same challenge wanting something a little different. Comms didn't like it being referred to as a logo, so perhaps rewording it or looking at it different may help.
- Frank: Oxana has developed a short survey.
- Oxana: Looking at having a simple survey to reach user and science community. Looking at avoiding contractors. It's a simple five question survey concerning onboarding etc. akin to what you'd receive after staying at a hotel. This could be used to reach users who have been here once and to help fill in when interviews can't be held. Please review and consider any additional questions that could be included.
- Frank: Discussed combining a couple questions, but plan to roll this out to new researchers since they aren't captured in interviews. Supposed to be simpler and quicker than the SURF Safety and Perception survey in order to get better engagement.
- Sarah: Agrees that question 3&4 should be combined.
- Oxana: Can start with email link that takes them to this survey.
- Jaret: This will go to new researchers who are just leaving?
- Mark: Still need to work out the full process. Idea is that a handful of interviews will be held, but this will be provided partway through their stay to ensure we get input from everyone.
- Brianna: What about those who are here intermittently?
- Mark: A good idea but will need to make sure we don't double up on folks.

(10:45 AM MT)

Feedback From First User Interviews

- David: This is complementary to the survey, but the idea is to try to have a short informal interview with researchers at the end of their stay at SURF. Main goals include having them feel part of the UA and give them an understanding of what we do, but also to get their feedback to see if there is anything we can bring to SURF on their behalf. Drafted some open-ended questions like shown in the survey. Identified Mark, Julia, and Christopher will be those giving the interviews. Had two trial interviews via zoom. Couple themes that came out was that in person onboarding is ideal, and they weren't aware of the UA. Need to have a larger part when they first arrive like providing something physical when they arrive. Moving forward we'd like to do more of this while being conscious of everyone's bandwidth. Plan to give a summary/report at each EC meeting. Current goal is to get feedback but also have researchers feel like they are part of the UA. Mark and Christopher will

make note of new researchers coming to site and will schedule interviews accordingly.

- Jaret: Sounds great.

(10:51 AM)

AOB

- Jaret: Is there an update on Deep Thoughts?
- Frank: Priority is the website but it is worth another conversation with comms.
- Mark: Sounded like comms was in favor of this article. Currently waiting to find out when they have the space for it.

Action Items Resulting from Discussions

- N/A

Meeting End: 10:53 AM MT