NCNR User Group (NUG) Executive Committee
Minutes from conference call on April 4, 2018

Present from NIST: Dan Neumann, Julie Borchers, Bill Kamitakahara

Present NUG executive committee members: Megan Robertson, Mike Crawford, Rafael Verduzco, Julie Hipp, Carlos Lopez-Barron, Dmitry Reznik, and Igor Zaliznyak.

Topic 1: NCNR Update

vSANS is active and collecting data in SANS mode. Experiments which received time through the proposal process will start next month. vSANS operations should begin shortly as well. CHRNS MACS has a new cryostate for use with a new Helium-3 polarization cell. Helium delivery has not met current needs. This is a problem across all of NIST that will hopefully be resolved soon.

Topic 2: Federal Budget, NIST and NCNR Funding

NIST received a budget increase, including funds for construction of a new building. NIST labs received an increase of $35M, including $11M which is not dedicated to a specific purpose. However, the NCNR budget is identical to the previous year. The FY19 President's Budget Request includes a significant decrease in NIST funding.

Topic 3: CHRNS Review

The CHRNS program is being reviewed by NSF program officers on Tuesday, April 10. NIST NUG members have been asked to participate in a conference call – Megan Robertson, Carlos Lopez-Barron, Rafael Verduzco, Igor Zaliznyak, and Julie Hipp. CHRNS supports 5 instruments: NGB SANS, backscattering, spin echo, USANS, and MACS. CHRNS also supports sample environments, lab support, and educational activities including the summer school and REU program.

Topic 4: ACNS Meeting

There is time at the ACNS meeting for each user group to present to users on the activities of the executive committee. Two years ago NCNR survey results were presented during the meeting. Megan will update the NCNR user community on NUG executive committee activities. Igor suggested soliciting ideas for the CHRNS renewal proposal during the meeting. Rob or Dan will provide a facility update.

Topic 5: Exit Survey Results

Most users had a positive feedback. Issues identified by users include: challenges with data reduction and analysis, a few instrument-related issues that were mostly resolved, failure of a hard drive, access to sample cells, and dissatisfaction with the pressure cell on MACS. Specific concerns will be addressed by the facility.