RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

(1) When the VLA-Pie Town link is in use during the A configuration, we will try to substitute EVLA antenna 13 for Pie Town in a concurrent VLBA dynamic program; for a list of restrictions, see http://www.aoc.nrao.edu/~lsjouwer/y1gotcha.html

(2) Color figures can now be accepted as part of observing proposals. Details appear in the July NRAO Newsletter, posted at http://www.nrao.edu/news/newsletters/

CURRENT PROPOSALS

GENERAL: Information about the status of all current proposals on which your name appears has been E-mailed to you, in a format described on page 2. Paper copies are no longer distributed. That E-mailing (a) includes proposals just considered for trimester 2004-T3 plus those waiting for future trimesters, whatever their date of submission; and (b) does not include proposals submitted earlier that are waiting in the VLBA dynamic scheduling queue (see http://www.aoc.nrao.edu/vlba/schedules/this_dir.html) or multi-configuration VLA proposals for which time in the A or subsequent configurations has been previously allocated.

VLA: Time was allocated for the A configuration (17 September to 10 January) and the associated move time (30 August to 17 September). Proposals requesting future configurations in some cases have been allocated time in those configurations, and in other cases have been retained for future consideration. We rejected proposals which we were unable to schedule and require only the A configuration. We also, in most cases, rejected unscheduled proposals which were submitted more than one year ago, or for which it is clear, due to referee ratings or other reasons, that the proposal will not be accepted within one year from its submission date.

VLBA: Scheduling takes two forms, dynamic and fixed date. Most approved proposals are accepted for dynamic scheduling, with notification to the observers as described on page 2. Rare proposals, particularly those requiring other resources such as a non-VLBA antenna, will be scheduled on fixed dates with notification to the observers about six weeks in advance.

STATISTICS: Subtracting the time allocated for maintenance, software development, and preallocated large proposals (Continuum survey of the COSMOS field), the oversubscription rate for the VLA A configuration was 2.4. The oversubscription rate was much higher at the COSMOS survey field (0700-1300 LST) and in the galactic center region (1500-2100 LST). There were 313.5 hours requested for the High Sensitivity Array (HSA); we allocated 74 hours. There were 1961 hours of requested VLBA observations, not counting the HSA, compared to 1504 hours observed in a recent trimester, including 186 hours of Global VLBI. There were 197 active VLA proposals, 69 active VLBA proposals (23 requesting the HSA), and 6 new Global VLBI proposals. We allocated time for 98 VLA proposals, marked 17 for possible use as filler, and rejected 67. We approved 14 VLBA proposals for fixed date scheduling (9 of these were HSA proposals), and 23 for the dynamic queue (7 at high priority, 14 at second priority, 2 at low priority). We rejected 27 VLBA proposals, 13 requesting the HSA. Excluding Large Proposals, the average allocated time per proposal is 11.7 hours for the VLA, 8.2 hours for the HSA, and 44 hours for non-HSA VLBA proposals. A table of approved VLA/VLBA proposals can be found at http://www.aoc.nrao.edu/~schedsoc/

FUTURE PROPOSALS

GENERAL: Trimester 2005-T1 for the VLA and VLBA starts in January and ends in May. The VLA will be in its BnA and B configurations. Proposals for either the VLA or VLBA for trimester T1 must be received at NRAO Charlottesville by paper or E-mail by 1 October 2004, 5PM Eastern Time. See the latest NRAO Newsletter for details, including a list of which types of VLA observations are more difficult in daytime than at night. B-configuration daytime will involve RAs between 21h and 04h.
PROPOSAL SUMMARY: The first line contains the proposal code and title. The second line informs you if we have scheduled time for the proposal, and whether it will be considered for more time in the future. If you expected the proposal to be considered for a future trimester, and this is not indicated in this line, please let us know by the next proposal deadline. This line is followed by comments from the Proposal Selection Committee, or from other considerations of the proposal, and then the list of authors of the proposal. For proposals for which we have allocated VLA or VLBA time, a list of the times tentatively allocated, with configuration, and a breakdown in terms of sessions with approximate centering in VLA sidereal time is given. We also list the times requested, with a similar breakdown, and times previously scheduled. The reports from the referees follow and they contain a numerical rating. The referees use any numerical system with which they are comfortable, subject only to the convention that the smaller the rating, the better the proposal. We include the numerical average of the ratings given us by that particular referee in order to judge the relative rating of your proposal. The referee ratings are strongly advisory to the Committee, which, however, may also apply considerations of similar archival observations, logistics, resources used, etc., to decide which proposals to schedule. For most proposals that supplied a source list we have searched the VLA or VLBA archive for previous observations of the same sources, except for the Galactic Center and Orion A in which the listings would be too voluminous to be very informative. We include this listing in the printout sent to the lead proposer only. These listings give the name, position, type of observation (blank indicates continuum, codes starting with a number are line modes, VLBA observations show recording mode), frequency of observation, bandwidth, time on source in minutes, number of antennas, proposal code, observer’s name, configuration and date. Observations are selected on the basis of positional agreement only. We include this information since it may be of value to the proposer, as it often was to the Committee in evaluating the proposal.

VLBA DYNAMICS: Observe files are selected from the dynamic queue, perhaps only hours in advance of actual observing, that are appropriate for the state of the array. Dynamic scheduling ensures that all stations are working for the most delicate observations, preserves flexibility for target of opportunity observations of very rapidly varying objects, and allows utilization of the array for proposals that do not require all antennas when an antenna is unavailable or stowed for weather. We routinely approve for dynamic scheduling more observations than we expect to be able to actually make. In your proposal summary, the priority of the observations is indicated. Priority bins are high, medium (second), and low, and reflect the probability of actually being scheduled. A separate communication will shortly be sent to the contact person of all proposals approved for dynamic scheduling, with information about how to prepare your observe files and how to improve your chances of being scheduled at your current priority.

VLBI GLOBAL NETWORK PROPOSALS: NRAO evaluates these but the final choice of proposals for scheduling, for either the centimeter or the 3mm sessions, is done by negotiation between the US and European schedulers.

MODIFICATIONS: Unless stated otherwise, any time allocated is only for the proposal given, and no substantial modification in the program should be made without consulting with scheduled@nrao.edu (and R. Porcas for VLBI Global Network proposals) before doing so.

REGULAR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION: Please use the most recent proposal coversheets, which can be retrieved at http://www.nrao.edu/administration/directors_office Proposals in Adobe Postscript format may be sent by E-mail to propsoc@nrao.edu. To be acceptable, these must be printable on our printers. First time users of this, and all cautious users, should submit their proposals three working days early to allow time for iteration in case you have prepared something which will not print on our printers. The usual failure mode is specification of the wrong paper size. An increasing number of systems appear to be inserting a requirement for the local default paper size in the postscript files they generate. If your default is not US standard letter paper, you should take care to override that default. Proposals sent to propsoc are usually acknowledged within one working day if they print satisfactorily. Proposals may also be sent to Director, NRAO, 520 Edgemont Road, Charlottesville, VA 22903-2475, USA by regular mail or by UPS, Fedex, etc.

PUBLIC OUTREACH: The NRAO can help observers and their home institution prepare joint press releases, and/or help prepare enhanced graphics for publications. The NRAO encourages observers to submit images from their research to its on-line image gallery. Contact: lshapiro@nrao.edu.