

NOAO CURRENTS



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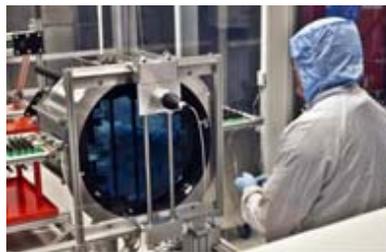
Currents

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The annual NOAO Town Hall will be held on Wednesday, 11 January 2012, from 12:45 to 1:45 at the Austin AAS meeting. We invite everyone to attend. Topics for discussion include exciting new instrumentation (especially Dark Energy Camera), updates on LSST and BigBOSS, System Roadmap Committee survey results, the NSF/AST Portfolio Review, and the overall budget situation.



DECam in the clean room at the Blanco 4-m. Credit Tim Abbott

In this Issue...

System Roadmap Committee ([Strong Response to Survey](#)): More than 1100 community members responded to the survey of the [System Roadmap Committee](#), with the vast majority intent on pursuing Astro2010-related science in the coming decade. The survey solicited input on the capabilities that would be needed to carry out these science programs. We report here on some early trends found in the survey.

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Strong Response to System Roadmap Survey

More than 1100 members of the astronomical community responded to the System Roadmap Survey by the 2 December deadline. As described in the [last issue of Currents](#), the survey, carried out on-line by the [US Ground-based OIR System Roadmap Committee](#), was designed to gather input on both how the community uses current facilities as well as how these facilities will be used to carry out the science described in the Astro2010 Decadal Survey report ("New Worlds New Horizons"). The System Roadmap committee, a standing committee formed by NOAO, is charged with assessing the state of the ground-based OIR system of observing facilities (i.e., both federal and non-federal facilities).

The survey captured the views of astronomers at different stages of their careers (graduate students, postdocs, faculty and staff) as well as those with and without institutional access to observing facilities. The vast majority of the respondents (>80%) were US-based. Nearly all respondents are intent on pursuing Astro2010-

related science in the coming decade. The survey solicited input on the capabilities that would be needed to carry out these programs.

The survey results showed several clear trends:

- The need for a “system” of resources in order to carry out Astro2010 science. A large fraction of the science programs described in the survey require multiple capabilities, e.g., imaging and spectroscopy on facilities of different apertures.
- Open access resources are highly valued *throughout* community, i.e., by both communities with and without institutional access to observing resources. More than 80% of respondents identified NSF-supported facilities accessed through the NOAO time allocation process as being critical or important to their research.
- Non-federal facilities are also highly valued throughout the community.
- The ground-based OIR community is poised to go to work on Astro2010 science in this decade using existing facilities.

The System Roadmap Committee is now analyzing the survey results in detail. The survey data will be used in identifying the capabilities that are in high demand by the community or are currently missing from the System. The committee will also develop recommendations aimed at helping the community and the funding agencies that support us maximize the scientific return from the US ground-based OIR system. Committee findings and recommendations will be presented in a white paper on the status of the US ground-based OIR System that will be forwarded to the [NSF/AST Portfolio Review Committee](#).

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Contact Us

Did something interesting, inspiring, or surprising happen on a recent observing run? Please tell us about it! Is there a topic that you would like to see covered in a future *Currents*? If you are planning a regional astronomy meeting or department internal symposium, would you like someone from NOAO to give a presentation on our new program? Please contact us at currents@noao.edu. We look forward to hearing from you!

Currents is a sparkplug for communication between NOAO and our community. It provides updates—and solicits community input—on NOAO observing opportunities and NOAO programs and policies on a more rapid timescale than is possible with the *NOAO Newsletter*.

NOAO is the national center for ground-based nighttime astronomy in the United States and is operated by the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy (AURA), Inc. under cooperative agreement with the National Science Foundation.

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