

NOIRLab TAC Orientation for 2021B

Verne V. Smith, Mia Hartman, Chadd Myers



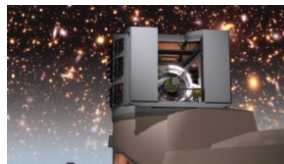
Gemini Observatory



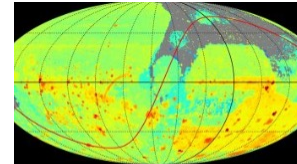
Cerro Tololo Observatory



Kitt Peak National Observatory



Rubin Operations



Community Science & Data Center

NSF's National Optical-Infrared
Astronomy Research Laboratory

*New NOIRLab e-mails:

noir:a genre of crime film or fiction characterized by
cynicism, fatalism, and moral ambiguity

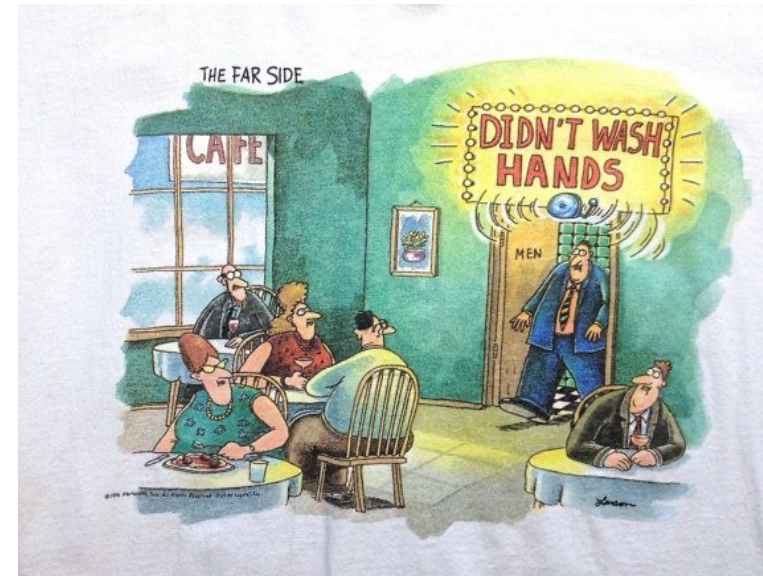
verne.smith@noirlab.edu

mia.hartman@noirlab.edu

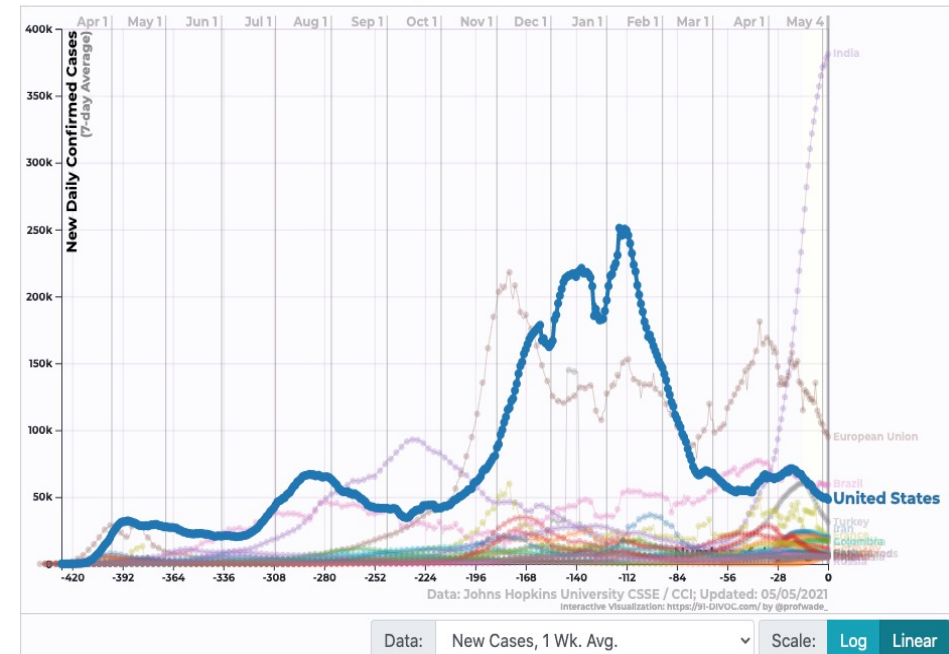
chadd.myers@noirlab.edu

Third Remote/Virtual TAC

- COVID-19 and the TAC
 - 2020B human virus: restricted travel and physical distancing
 - semesters 20A and 20B: observing severely impacted (esp. KPNO (WIYN), CTIO, Pachon)
 - 21A more normal
- Via Bluejeans
 - consider the medium
 - aware of mute on/off
 - delay in speaking
 - politeness
- Future TAC meetings
 - eventual in-person
 - 2022A?? (nominally late-October)



New Confirmed COVID-19 Cases per Day

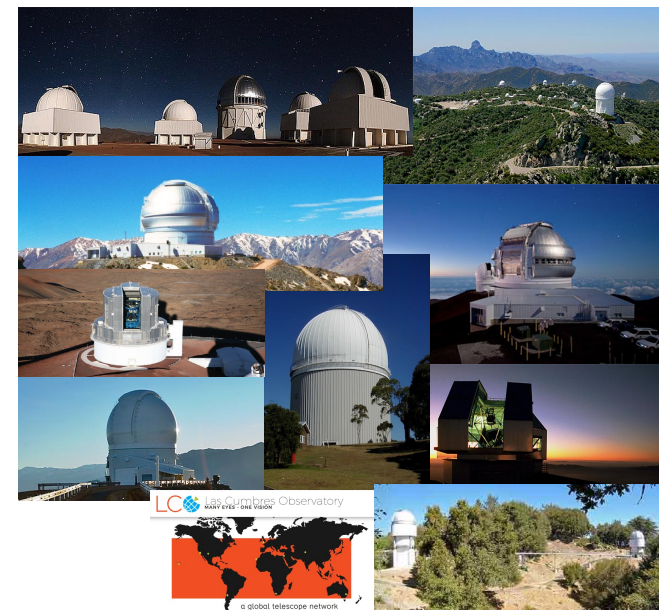


NSF NOIRLab Overview

- NOIRLab is a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC): “to conduct research for the US Government”
- The Association of Universities for Research for Astronomy (AURA) operates NOIRLab under a cooperative agreement with the NSF
- Part of the NOIRLab mission statement...”to promote excellence in astronomical research by providing access to information about the universe from state-of-the-art facilities, surveys, and archives.”
- In 2021B NOIRLab provides public open-access to:
 - Kitt Peak (WIYN 3.5m)
 - Cerro Tololo (4m, SMARTS → 1.5m, 0.9m)
 - Cerro Pachon (Gemini-S 8m, SOAR 4.2m)
 - Maunakea (Gemini 8m, Subaru 8m, Keck I, Keck II 10m)
 - Mt. Wilson (CHARA 6x1m)
 - Las Cumbres Observatory (1m and 2m ‘s around the world)
 - MINERVA-Australis (5x1m)



"It says it's sick of doing things like inventories and payrolls, and it wants to make some breakthroughs in astrophysics."





Workplace Conduct Policy

NSF is committed to providing a safe and respectful work environment, free of any form of harassment. All NOIRLab participating and collaborating organizations take this responsibility seriously.

NOIRLab staff are subject to the policies of its operating organization, the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy (AURA). Collaborating personnel are also subject to the various specific anti-harassment policies of their employing organizations. Additionally, the National Science Foundation's Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences has charged AURA with establishing and publicizing policies and methods for reporting harassment. These practices and procedures will apply to NOIRLab personnel as well as to all science and business associates, and all public and other visitors to NOIRLab facilities.



Reporting Harassment

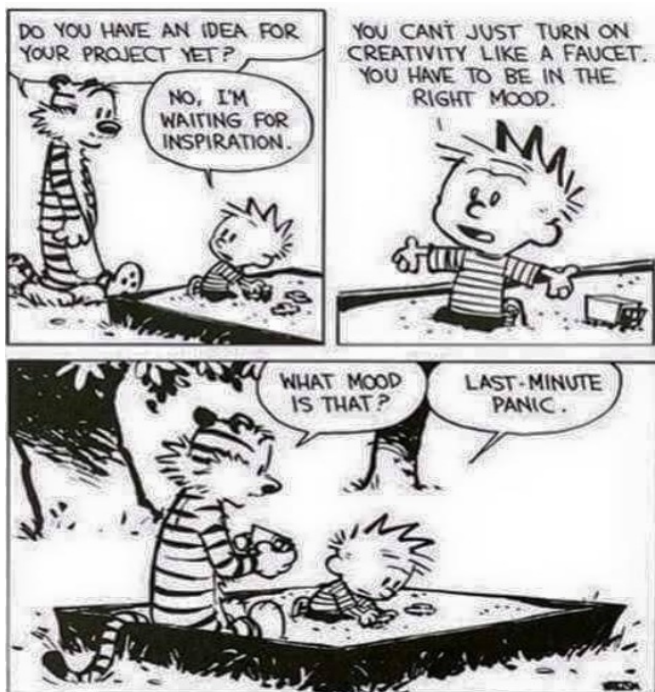
If at any time you feel that a member of the NOIRLab community, regardless of organizational affiliation, is violating any of these principles and standards, please report it promptly!

You should report issues to NOIRLab or AURA Human Resources, to your supervisor, principal investigator, department chair, ethics or legal representatives, as applicable, or the TAC meeting Host, Mia Hartman.

2021B Proposal Statistics

- In addition there are:
 - NOIR Lab Surveys (up to 20%)
 - Gemini Large Programs (up to 20%)
 - Gemini Fast Turnaround (up to 10%)

Telescope	Requested Nights	Available Nights (new programs)	Oversubscription
Gemini-N 8m	180	58	3.9
Gemini-S 8m	114	54	2.6
Subaru 8m	14	3	4.7
CTIO 4m	93	45	2.1
Keck	23	5	4.6
SOAR 4.2m	73	47	1.5
WIYN 3.5m	56	30	1.9
LCO 2m	35	22	1.6
LCO 1m	156	120	1.3
CTIO 1.5m	67	57	1.2
CTIO 0.9m	10	14	0.7
MINERVA-Australis	11	30	0.4
CHARA	92	20	4.6





Overview of the TAC

- NOIRLab TAC has 8 panels
 - 3 Extragalactic, 3 Galactic, 1 Solar System, 1 NASA/NNEXPLORE (WIYN (NEID)+1.5m/CHIRON + MINERVA Australis) Exoplanet
 - 5 panel members + 1 non-voting, neutral Chair
- Panel review assignments
 - Based on panel + individual expertise, science themes, and telescope
 - Try to minimize conflicts of interest
 - Speaking of which...E1 was re-assigned 2 additional proposals and E2 3 additional proposals. EGAL pressure is light for 21B, so can include in discussion order tomorrow. I can pop-in and discuss this.

TAC Process

1. Panels provide scientific ranking (based on grades within each panel – **please send in preliminary grades on time!**
Late grades impact the initial panel discussion)
2. Panel Chairs convey ranking and recommendations to Merging TAC meeting this Friday
3. Merging TAC combines lists, & resolves any conflicts
4. MSO Director reviews allocation, approves time allocation with an official “sign off”
 - the TAC is advisory to the Director
5. Ranked lists submitted to telescope schedulers
 - different for each telescope / observatory
6. When all telescopes are scheduled, letters go out to PI’s



TAC Timeline/Flowchart for 2021B

- 3 – 6 May: Regular TAC Panel meetings
- 7 May: Merging TAC
- 11 May: MSO/NSDC Director review
- 14 May: Ranked Gemini list sent to Gemini
- Later in May: Ranked lists to other observatories
- ~24 May: Gemini ITAC (US, CA, BR, AR, CH, HI, RoK)
- 15 June* – schedules ready, letters (OK, e-mails) sent
- 1 August 2021: Semester 2021B...and we're off

*Varies a bit by observatory

Implicit Bias

The bias in judgment and/or behavior that results from subtle cognitive processes (e.g., implicit attitudes or stereotypes) that operate at a level below conscious awareness and without intentional control. The underlying implicit attitudes and stereotypes responsible for implicit bias are those beliefs or simple associations that a person makes between an object and its evaluation that are activated automatically by the actual or symbolic presence of the object.

- NOIRLab (and AURA centers, in general) has made and is making progress in informing staff and astronomy community members on the affect that implicit bias can play in evaluating credentials or the work of astronomers (in hiring, promotion, recognition, etc.)
- As a human evaluation process, the TAC may be influenced by implicit bias
- Removal of PI and co-I names from front page and full first names to initials
- Research shows simply talking about implicit bias also helps
- Feedback on the NOIRLab TAC process is welcome



TAC Process Review and Upgrade

- The TAC process is well respected and held as a standard in the astronomical community.
- NOIRLab strives to have our TAC process as streamlined & user friendly as possible.
- This requires continuous improvement to adapt to the needs of the scientific community and the technology available.
- In the coming years, we will be upgrading our TAC system and processes in order to:
 - Modernize TAC system to take advantage of newer technologies
 - Identify and remove old and outdated information
 - Mitigate bias within the evaluation process
 - Better automate processes
 - Incorporate common data to simplify communication with the telescopes and across other NOIRLab processes.
- We hope much of this improvement will be transparent to panel members, but will greatly enhance the NOIRLab TAC experience for our staff and the community.



Review Criteria - I

<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1999/iin125/iin125.html>

- **Scientific merit**
 - Specific scientific goals + larger relevance
 - May include indirect scientific benefit
- **Experimental design**
 - Solid, well thought-out
 - Feasible ([see online technical reviews; ask for clarification if needed](#))—
- **Broader Impact**
 - Relevance to education, public outreach, participation of underrepresented groups: gender/ethnicity/other underserved minorities/institutions/geography, etc.
- **Other factors**
 - Prior allocations, need for completion/continuity
 - Past productivity
 - Can the team carry the project to completion



Review Criteria - II

- NOIRLab has an open skies policy – anyone can apply.
- For US proposers, other access is NOT a criterion.
- For foreign proposers, we request a justification for why the project cannot be done with facilities to which they have access; however,
 - Scientific merit + Broader impact
- Finally: try not to micromanage proposal requests.



TAC Panel Procedures - I

- Chair has latitude in organizing discussion
- Panel voting - open (no secret ballots, please)
 - Panelists can provide changes (“up a point”, etc.)
 - Start each grade-change round with primary reviewer
- Typically two passes by panels
 - Please try to finish 1st pass today, 2nd pass tomorrow before lunch
 - All discussions must have Chair present
 - Please consider technical reviews when reviewing ranked list on 2nd day
 - (ask for assistance if questions arise)
- Final written comments due before 5pm tomorrow
- Provide any feedback on process to Chair
- Please finish by 5:00 PM on each day
- Pre-meeting for Chairs tomorrow @ 8:30AM in Main Conference Room



TAC Panel Procedures - II

- Long term status
 - Approve only if additional observations needed to answer question
- Proprietary period
 - Extend only if scientifically warranted
- PhD Thesis projects
 - No official weighting but...
 - If a commitment has already been made, please consider carefully
 - May wish to consider broader impacts
- Final Ranked List
 - Include all proposals
 - Remove any grade degeneracies (manually, e.g. 0.01)
 - Use zero nights *only* for proposals that should not be scheduled
 - Long term / Proprietary period extensions: provide recommendation
 - Chairs: record issues for Merging TAC
- Feedback
 - Chairs can compile panel comments on process for feedback to NOAO



Conflicts of Interest

- TAC goal is an informed, unbiased discussion of each proposal
- Do not review proposals or listen to discussions on which you are a co-I or PI (!)
- Do not review proposals on which your close colleague/collaborator/student/relative/spouse is a PI/co-I: our knowledge about you is incomplete
- If there is something you feel could potentially be a conflict or a bias let us know
- If you have insights on a proposal on which you are conflicted and are not grading, be open and provide them fairly (if you can).
- If Chair is conflicted we will find a temporary Chair to lead discussion for that proposal

Writing Comments - I

- Guiding principle: *Ask yourself if you would be OK receiving these comments!*
- Be brief, clear, and polite
- Be accurate – ‘don’t make stuff up’
 - if the proposal is good but fails because of oversubscription you can say this
- Be fair - Judge the proposal on *its* merits
- Be constructive, if possible - how could the proposal have been better?
- Write in complete sentences
- Please, no slang, jargon or interjections
- Try not to pose unanswerable / rhetorical questions



Writing comments - II

- Lead reviewers compile final comments
 - Please use web-based form on TAC Web Page
 - Summarize written comments and panel discussions, and check “completed” box
- Panel Chairs:
 - Please review final comments, along with your panel!
 - Do not adjourn panel until you have checked all comments



Confidentiality

- *All proposals, TAC reviews, TAC discussion, and comments are strictly confidential*
 - Please do not discuss proposals outside your TAC panel with colleagues of other panels, or anyone else



Logisitics

- Assistant for each panel
- If any issues arise, Assistant can help
 - Mia Hartman, Chadd Myers, Verne Smith available all day
- Chairs: it is a virtual meeting, but please schedule regular breaks, plus ~1-hour “lunch” break



Special Thanks To:

- Mia Hartman – TAC Program Coordinator
 - Chadd Myers – Software Support/Database Architect and Developer
 - Jessica Harris, David Herrera, Alice Jacques, Jessica Rose, Dorian Russell, Heidi Schweiker, Karleyne Silva – **TAC Assistants**
 - CTIO, Subaru, AAO, Zorro/'Alopeke, IGRINS, CHARA, LCO for technical reviews.
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- Note: Josh Emery & Verne Smith – **lead reviewer assignments**



TAC



CTIO/SOAR/SMARTS News: 2021B

- Both Tololo and Pachon were shutdown in mid-March
 - Severe hits on 20A and 20B programs
 - Re-opened recently
- CTIO 4m Blanco: instruments available
 - DECam:
 - COSMOS: available in all modes (imaging, long & multi-slit)
- Lots of demand from NOIRLab surveys – especially on DECam
- Several ToO proposals
 - Rank by science
- SOAR 4.2m: instruments available:
 - Goodman: in all modes
 - SOI
 - Spartan
 - SAM
 - TripleSpec4.1
- SOAR ToO proposals
 - Rank the programs according to science and do not worry about implementation
- 1.5-m CHIRON:
 - 20 nights available for open access
 - 30 nights available for NNEXPLORE
- 0.9-m CCD direct:
 - 18 nights available to NOIRLab TAC

- Hit hard by COVID-19
 - Gemini-N and Gemini-S shutdown mid-March
 - Gemini-N re-opened late May
 - Gemini-S re-opened in mid-October
 - Gemini opted for a normal 2021A CfP
- Visiting Instruments
 - Alopeke (GN), Zorro (GS)
 - MAROON-X (GN)
 - IGRINS (GS)
-



KPNO News: 2021B

- KPNO shutdown in mid-March
 - Limited operations have started
 - Exercising telescopes at this point
- 4-meter Mayall
 - DESI installed and undergoing commissioning
- WIYN 3.5m
 - No new proposals solicited for 2021A
 - Back-log of 20A + 20B programs (mostly NNEXPLORE)
 - NEID commissioning continues
 - planned commissioning nights in 2021A
 - will be operated in queue
 - Up to 21 nights available on WIYN 0.9m w/HDI