



**GEMINI BOARD MEETING  
LA SERENA, CHILE – 11-13 NOVEMBER 2009**

**Resolutions Arising from the 11-13 November 2009  
Gemini Board Meeting**

**2009.B.1. The Board has executed an Assessment Point in accordance with Article 4 of the International Gemini Agreement. At this Assessment point all Parties except the United Kingdom stated their intentions to remain in the Partnership post-2012. The position of the United Kingdom is that it had not completed its process of review, but that it was almost certain not to continue in the Partnership post-2012.**

**The Gemini Board's intention is to allow the United Kingdom to withdraw from the Gemini partnership on December 31, 2012 without penalty should that be its intention.**

**After discussion by the Board, and in keeping with Articles 3 and 4 of the International Agreement, the representatives of the Parties agreed to extend its International Agreement for a further period, at least until 31 December 2015, but unanimously accepted that the United Kingdom was almost certain to not wish to continue as a Party beyond the current expiry date, indentified in Article 4.1 as 31 December 2012.**

**The Board further unanimously establishes another Assessment Point to occur no later than March 19, 2010, at which time the parties will restate their intention to continue or withdraw. The United Kingdom will make its final position clear at the Board's next Assessment Point agreed to be on or before 19 March 2010.**

**Accordingly the Gemini Board requests that National Science Foundation, as the Executive Agency, prepare an appropriate amendment to the International Agreement, with the expectation that this will be signed by the Parties after the March 2010 Assessment Point.**

**2009.B.2. The Board notes that the Observatory, in consultation with the Executive Agency, prepared a five-year proposal for future operations as the current Cooperative Agreement was set to expire. Given the large fiscal and organizational uncertainties that the Observatory and Partnership may shortly face in light of forthcoming actions at the 2010 March Assessment Point (GBOD Resolution 2009.B.1), the Board recommends that the Executive Agency seek an extension of the current Cooperative Agreement for two years until 31 Dec 2012.**



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**2009.B.3.** The Board approves the proposed minimum science fraction of 80%, with the goal of 85%, for Gemini North and a minimum science fraction of 80%, with a goal of 85%, for Gemini South for semester 2010B. Some additional science time could be re-directed toward instrument commissioning if it would expedite new or improved instrument availability to the community. Conversely, if circumstances are such that these commissioning projects slip or are delayed, the Board instructs that the Observatory re-direct the unused time back into the pool of available science time, following usual practice.

**2009.B.4.** The Board notes receipt of the AURA Observatory Council-Gemini (AOC-G) report and thanks the Committee for their detailed findings. The Board also notes the restructuring of the AOGC membership to include individuals with extensive management experience in large facilities operations.

**2009.B.5.** The Board welcomes and acknowledges the Gemini Science Committee (GSC) report .

**2009.B.6.** The Board accepts the Gemini Finance Committee (GFC) recommendation that “...*the Board review the composition, purpose and need for the GFC (Annex A – GFC Terms of Reference).*” The Board therefore tasks a subcommittee comprised of the Board Chair and the Designated Members, to review the composition, purpose, and need for a GFC and to report out the findings of their deliberation to the Gemini Board by 1 March 2010.

**2009.B.7.** The Board heard that the Australian member withdrew from the NICI campaign. The Board returns the unused time (16.8 hrs) contributed by Australia to the 500 hour campaign cap and reduces the cap thereby. The Board notes that this return of time to a partner does not constitute a precedent for policies regarding future multi-partner projects.

The Board requests that the Observatory charge the Planetary Finding Working Group of the GSC to review the management of the NICI Campaign and, if appropriate, provide recommendations to the Gemini Director to ensure that the Board's expectation of broad partner participation in the NICI Campaign are met.

**2009.B.8.** The Board welcomes and approves the Director’s action plan regarding the Gemini-South Laser. However, the Board is very uneasy about the suggestion of taking delivery of an uncompleted laser for MCAO, with the expectation that Gemini could complete and maintain it with its own technical resources.



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**2009.B.9.** The Board acknowledges the concerns expressed in the AOC-G report regarding instrument safety that were motivated by the failure of the FLAMINGOS-2 cryo-cooler. While the circumstances that led to this incident are understandable, the Board wishes to be assured that, in the context of the GNIRS incident and the recent damage to the GNIRS optics, current risk management strategies are effective and sufficient.

The Board requests that the Observatory present its risk management plan for instrumentation and related systems at its May 2010 meeting. The risk management plan should include at minimum, (1) a description of the systems in place to ensure that detector system temperatures, vacuum, etc. are properly monitored, (2) a clear delineation of lines of communication should a problem occur, and (3) the documented procedures for response, as well as the procedures to ensure that lessons learned from such incidents are captured and lead to change.

**2009.B.10.** The Board concurs with the sentiment expressed in the AOC-G and in the US ALTAIR reports and other surveys that identify critical instrument capability gaps on the Gemini telescopes and wishes to move swiftly to rectify this situation. The Board is concerned that the plan proposed by the Observatory, including holding a broad community meeting in late August 2010, could delay moving forward on this issue and may create unrealistic expectations within the Gemini community given the financial situation.

Instead, the Board prefers that the Gemini Science Committee (GSC) members, in concert with their NGOs, quickly ascertain their communities' instrument capability needs, especially in the area of "work horse" or non-niche instrumentation, using a common questionnaire (e.g., using questions or approaches from the ALTAIR survey). The GSC should rapidly rate or rank the responses so as to achieve clarity regarding the broad community's top one or two instrument priorities. In doing so, the GSC should be mindful of the many paths to closing capability gaps, including new instruments, refurbishing or borrowing existing instruments as well as partner- or party-supplied instruments. Priorities should include lower cost options which would likely better meet the swiftness criterion.

The GSC is asked to poll their communities and to draft a report, with clear recommendations, for delivery to the Gemini Observatory Director by 1 March 2010. The Director is asked to review the GSC recommendations and to forward a summary report to the Board Chair no later than 10 March 2010.



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**2009.B.11.** The Board accepts and appreciates the draft Large Projects proposal from the Observatory, which responds to GBOD Resolution 2009.A.4. The proposal calls for new support resources, creation of the Large Projects Time Allocation Committee (LP/TAC), and new software for scheduling large projects. The Board is concerned that these items would strain already tight budgets and planned efforts.

The Board is concerned that the policies and procedures for Large Projects, Key Projects, Campaign Programs, and instrument-based Guaranteed Time have unclear definitions and relationships. The Board establishes and charges a Board sub-committee, consisting of Board members Drs. B. McLaren (Chair), Kepler de Souza Oliveira Filho, and Professor Betsy Barton, to work with a similar sub-committee of the GSC and representatives of the Gemini Observatory to develop a coherent plan for large projects and programs. The plan should include goals, definitions, policies and procedures, draft calls for proposals, as well as a draft schedule for calls and observations. The Board calls for an initial report from the combined sub-committees by 1 May 2010.

**2009.B.12.** The Board directs the Observatory to develop, in consultation with the Planetary Finding Working Group (PFWG) and the Gemini Science Committee (GSC), a modified set of policies for the call-for-proposals for Gemini Planet Imager (GPI) Campaign science to enable a minimum of two and a maximum of six proposals to be awarded GPI campaign time on Gemini. The GPI Campaign call-for-proposals should enable groups to pursue different specific science goals, techniques, and samples. The GPI Campaign Program should embrace large, scientifically compelling and statistically significant investigations. The total time to be awarded for the aggregate GPI Campaign Program should be as recommended by the PFWG and GSC and confirmed by the Board. The Observatory is asked to provide the Board with a document describing the policies for the GPI Campaign Program and a draft call-for-proposals by 1 May 2010.

**2009.B.13.** The Board notes the review of the status of the Data Flow project presented by the Director in response to the discussion and inquiries arising from the May 2009 Gemini Board meeting. Based on the report of the Board subcommittee on Data Flow, the Board wishes to identify two courses of action affecting the priorities of existing developments for off-line tools and the development of future pipeline systems.

The Board recognizes the critical need for capable and efficient off-line data reduction tools for all operational Gemini instruments. The Data Reduction Working Group (DRWG) has identified requirements and priorities for these tools that have currently not been met by the Gemini Observatory. The Board therefore requests the Observatory to



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**redirect software development manpower to address the outstanding needs identified by the DRWG. The Observatory, through an Observatory senior scientist point-of-contact, must engage with the DRWG on a regular basis to ensure development priorities and manpower allocations are well-aligned with community needs.**

**The Board is of the opinion that there is a significant lack of clarity surrounding the operational requirements driving the development of an automatic data reduction pipeline system for Gemini. These requirements need to be clearly connected to, and grounded in, the Observatory's desire to control the quality of instruments, and of delivered and archived data.**

**The Board therefore instructs the Observatory to halt all development of pipeline systems pending a review by the Director of operations, of policies, and science operations plans with respect to instrument calibration, the number and accuracy of default data products delivered to users and the quality metrics used by operations to assess observation execution and data quality. This review will form the basis of any future pipeline development effort. The Board is of the opinion that it would not be appropriate to undertake any further development of pipelines, either in house or outsourced, until a clear vision and requirements statement for pipelines is developed and delivered to the Board for review.**

**2009.B.14. The Board notes the disposal of bHROS to the Argentine Gemini Partner.**



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**2009.B.17.** The Board in approving the provisional 2010 Operations budget (GBOD Resolution 2009.B.16) recognizes the recommendations of the Gemini Finance Committee (GFC) released to the Board as part of the November 2009 deliberations. To wit, the GFC advises “...*the Board to task the Observatory to consider forward look options in light of the financial pressures on the Partner Countries, the uncertainty of the partnership, and the financial pressures arising within the Gemini Observatory,*” and that “*any options should include consideration of an interim plan for the period 2011-2012.*”

In recognition of the GFC advice, the outcomes of the November 2009 Assessment Point (GBOD Resolution 2009.B.1.), and that the 2.5% indexing per annum is unlikely to be sustainable, the Board instructs the Observatory to compile an executable operations plan that involves a reduction of 7% to 10% per annum in current O&M expenditures, baselined to the 2009 revised budget (GBOD Resolution 2009.B.15.), that shall be phased into place during the period 2011 through 2013. Given the short term and immediate impact of such a material change, the Observatory is requested to identify both cash flow measures and reductions to specific programs or activities, with the exception of the Instrument Develop Fund (IDF).

As such reductions will fundamentally change the future nature of the Observatory and potentially a variety of services and capabilities the Observatory provides to the Partnership, the Board requests the Observatory to develop this budget scenario by 1 March 2010. This draft budget scenario should be delivered to the Chair of the GFC, the Executive Agency, and the Board Chair for consideration. As part of this process, the Board instructs the Observatory to focus their priorities on key O&M activities that maintain the basic functionality of the Observatory and that provide support for delivery of science, consistent with the guidance contained within GBOD Resolution 2008.B.17.

The Board recommends that the Observatory identify core staff vital for mission-critical projects, prioritize FTE in light of the likely impending budget reductions, and consider enacting a hiring pause in preparation for eventual downsizing of Observatory staff, including middle and senior management (as indicated in GBOD Resolution 2009.A.10). These steps will almost certainly be necessary to meet the challenges of downward budgetary pressures in 2011-2012 fiscal years.

The Board, in consultation with the GFC, shall review the repercussions of implementing such a plan as part its discussions at the March 2010 Gemini Board retreat and Assessment Point (GBOD Resolution 2009.B.1.). The Board anticipates conveying to the Observatory its decision regarding budget implementation by the end of March 2010.



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**2009.B.18. The Board warmly welcomes Professor Betsy Barton as a U.S. member of the Board.**

**2009.B.19. The Board warmly thanks Professor Isobel Hook for her many years of dedicated service to the Gemini Board and to the Gemini community.**

**2009.B.20. The Board warmly thanks Dr. Dan Clemens for his many years of dedicated service to the Gemini Board and to the Gemini community.**