

NASA Herschel Science Center Response to Users Panel Report for meeting on March 2 & 3, 2010:

To: Margaret Meixner, Chair of the NHSC Users Panel (NUP), and the NUP

From: William Latter, Deputy Director of the NASA Herschel Science Center (NHSC)

The NHSC wishes to once again thank the NHSC Users Panel for their valuable input to the NHSC. We have been somewhat slow to put our response into writing, for which we apologize. However, the time since the meeting has been fruitful and the NUP's suggestions have been taken into account whenever possible. It is, of course, a busy and exciting time.

Rather than cite each suggestion and comment within the NUP report, we will be brief – the NHSC agrees and supports all of the recommendations made. We have taken action on most items directly under our control, and have worked to put into effect the ones for which we are collaborators.

Website Information Dissemination: The NHSC has begun the process of cleaning up our web pages and providing better linkages. We have created a “Hot Button” page that is easily found on the side menu that contains many important links, both internal and external. The Home Page is improved with better and more complete news and other reports. Cookbooks are in work as is other key information. This will be an ongoing process. Comments and suggestions from the NUP as they use our pages will be most welcome.

The other top level recommendations are addressed at a high level in the following discussion. If more information on specifics is requested, we will be happy to provide what we can. Basically, as a team, the NHSC has carefully gone through the NUP report. We have made the recommendations a part of their normal work plan as we move forward..

As of this writing the Herschel Announcement of Opportunity from ESA has been released, with a supporting Call for Proposals from NASA for Data Processing Funding of successful observing proposals. These are posted on the NHSC website with links as appropriate to additional information. The NUP's recommendations have been taken into account in this process. The NHSC requests comments and/or suggestions if the information is not clear or anything else that you think could be helpful, especially that we are still four weeks from the due date of proposals to NHSC for funding.

In addition, in support of the AO, the NHSC has held an Observation Planning Workshop earlier this month. It was very gratifying to have overfilled the space

available. We supported those that could not travel or registered late with a videoconferencing tool called WebEx. By all reports both the in-house and remote participants were very satisfied with the workshop. The attendees range from well-known established researchers to graduate students. The US-based community should do very well in the Herschel competition.

To support those with data and need for processing for follow-up proposals, the NHSC has offered a Data Processing "School" (more problem oriented, hands on than a standard workshop) for later in June. The number of requests to participate is not large (10 – 12 individuals). This should make the school very effective for those attending. This also is based on a NUP recommendation.

After the DP School, the NHSC support for the AO and CP will turn to answering specific questions via the Helpdesk. We will use WebEx to provide direct support as needed. Visitors are welcome. We will attempt to support the Helpdesk 24x7 during the last two weeks of the AO period.

Our ability to support the community with high speed computing continues to improve. We are not yet ready to deploy the system to off site users, but visitors, workshop attendees, and DP school participants will be able to take advantage of the system. It is our goal to have the full system operational in time for intensive need by the projects accepted in the current AO.

NHSC continues to make Herschel as visible as we reasonably can. Attendance at the Miami AAS meeting was low. However, attendance at the Herschel Special Sessions and the plenary talk by the Herschel Project Scientist was much better. If attendance at the NHSC Observation Planning Workshop is any indication, the US-based community is excited. We feel the NHSC has met its objectives in making the Herschel opportunity accessible and known to the US community.