AAS SOFIA Splinter Session – 1/4/10
Notes on Feedback from the Audience

120-130 attendees

Questions, Answers, and Requests for Action

Q1: What kind of proposals will get awarded for Basic Science? Short or long science investigations?
A1: There are no predefined guidelines, everything will depend on the quality of the proposed investigations

Q2: Have you thought about awarding telescope time to custom observations with no proprietary data period (I think that the questioner must have been thinking of Spitzer Legacy Programs)
A2: This is not in our present plans for Early Science

Q3: It may be difficult to remove the residual atmospheric effects from the science data, how will this be done?
A3: A high fidelity atmospheric model will be used to do this.

Q4: What is this high fidelity model?
A4: Steve Lord's ATRAN model. We have a link on the SOFIA website that gives access to a web-based version of the program. The link can be found at:
http://atran.sofia.usra.edu/cgi-bin/atran/atran.cgi

RFA1: Please make sure that SOFIA provides the specific corrections algorithms for each instrument and each instrument observing mode so that the observer can properly correct for residual atmospheric effects.

Q5: Why does it take as long as 14 days for the data to be placed in the archive?
A5: This is only the worst-case requirement, we expect to do much better than this.

Q6: Are there any plans to supply Users Data Manuals?
A6: Yes

RFA2: SOFIA needs to provide more clarification between facility-class and PI-class instruments – what it means for the users. In particular, what is the difference in the data analysis tools.

Q7: Is SOFIA going to have observation planning tools like Spitzer's SPOT?
A7: We have been in contact with IPAC regarding the adaptation of SPOT for SOFIA. This version of SPOT will not be in place for Basic Science, but should be available for subsequent proposal calls. Currently there are no examples of SOFIA-SPOT on the website.
RFA3: SOFIA should check out SPOT's functionality that allows overlaying instrument apertures onto sky images and make sure that the SOFIA observation planning tool does this as well. You might also check to see if you can modify SPOT for SOFIA.

Q8: What is the split between the SMO and the instrument teams in developing data reductions tools? In particular, how will this be handled in the development of second-generation instruments.
A8: This is still under discussion within the SOFIA Program.

Q9: Will there be some sort of SOFIA Users Group?
A9: Yes, in fact the precursor to this group is already in place. The SOFIA Science Steering Committee has members from both the instrument teams and the general observer community. As we transition into science operations, this Steering Committee will become the SOFIA Users Group. In addition, the SOFIA Science Projects Council gives strategic advice on the operation of the observatory.

Q10: Will enough calibration data be provided to the observers so that they can calculate the effects of the atmosphere?
A10: That is our intention.

Q11: You are asking for our input on what ancillary and engineering data we would like to see in the archive. How can we find out what is in your present plans?
A11: Good question, we'll have to post the data in our current plans on a web site for inspection by the Community

RFA4: Post the list of the planned ancillary and engineering data on a web site, and advertise this site to the Community for their comments.

RFA5: Add the SOFIA FITS keyword dictionary to a web site for Community comment.

Q12: Will the vibration data from the telescope control system be part of the ancillary data?
A12: Not in our present plans, but this is a good idea.

RFA6: Look into including vibration data in the ancillary data in the archive.

Q13: Will all the Early Science flights be launched out of Palmdale?
A13: Yes.

Q14: Are you planning on any training sessions for astronomers wanting to use the SOFIA planning and data reduction tools?
A14: We plan to hold SOFIA holding training sessions when we go into regular operations. For Basic Science, the Science Mission Operations staff will work closely with the investigation teams to plan their observations.

Q15: Would you consider offering observing time for significant software contributions.
A15: This is an interesting idea that we had not considered. We will bring up the concept with our Science Steering Committee.