

# The Role Of The Scientific Advisory Council

The Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) is responsible for making recommendations on scientific and technical matters to the Board of Directors and the Executive Director of CFHT. In doing this over the past six years, the emphasis of its work has evolved from a primary concern with the telescope and dome, through questions of ancillary instruments, to the current preoccupation with the initial operating phases and arrangements for observing.

The interaction of SAC with the Project Office and the Board of Directors resulted in recommendations which modified some of the original plans for the telescope and building or produced new items, such as a separate upper end for infrared work. Such questions are now in the past.

The instrumentation program for the telescope has been and will continue to be a major responsibility. The initial instruments were planned through Working Groups established by SAC following an overall plan to provide basic instruments. Specifications for spectrographs, photometers, detectors, etc. were produced for consideration by the full committee. To provide basic equipment, SAC adopted the policy that none of the funds provided initially would be used to support the development of new instruments, but would leave this to groups within each member country. Recommendations to the Board for construction of instruments frequently included a recommendation for construction by some particularly well qualified observatory or other group. The arrangements for the contracts and monitoring of the construction were primarily the responsibility of the Project Office.

Since SAC wants to have instruments provided which will serve the observing needs of the astronomers, it has been glad to receive proposals for any instruments of interest to a number of different observers. Of course it is desirable to have the cooperation of some of those astronomers in setting the specifications and in helping to realize the instrument if it becomes part of the observatory program. The annual instrument budget is intended to provide both replacement for obsolescent items and new types of instruments.

Recently SAC has devoted considerable effort to the establishment of procedures for the allocation of observing time. Although the Board has not yet

adopted them, the current proposals call for the time allocation committee to include five members of SAC. In the meantime the allocation of observing time is being handled by a subcommittee of five members of SAC.

Other aspects of the operation of the observatory have concerned us since the beginning of the CFHT project, but are especially important now. The numbers of astronomers, engineers, technicians, etc. on the observatory staff in the operating phase of the telescope is limited by the available budget, but it has been one of the duties for SAC to make recommendations on what is desirable and necessary for operation and how to compensate for any shortage of staff.

For the intermediate level (Hale Pohaku) decisions were required on the number of rooms and the technical facilities required. Undoubtedly SAC will maintain an interest in the operation of the intermediate facility to represent the views of visiting astronomers to the University of Hawaii through the observatory Director and the Board. The electrical power supply for the observatory and the condition of the road to the summit may appear to be remote from astronomy but comments on these items in the semi-annual SAC reports to the Board have appeared regularly as the University of Hawaii has attempted to meet our needs.

Planning for the permanent headquarters at Waimea is just beginning. There will be a separate building for CFHT as well as facilities shared with other astronomical groups. SAC will soon be reviewing the plans with the observatory staff and making recommendations concerning what is needed there and how these needs can be met.

In all these activities SAC attempts to keep the scientific aims of the observatory paramount. With four members from each of Canada and France and two from the University of Hawaii, the different astronomical interests of each member of CFHT are represented. This has led to interesting meetings, conducted in English and French, and to increasing collaboration between astronomers of Canada, France, and Hawaii. We look forward to the scientific results that come from these efforts.

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Chairman,  
Scientific Advisory  
Council

The Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope Corporation (CFHT) is a joint organization of the National Research Council of Canada (NRC), the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique of France (CNRS), and the University of Hawaii (UH).

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