

The STUC is pleased to hear that HST and its instruments are operating efficiently at a high level. As usual, we would like commend the staff at STScI and GSFC for their excellent and dedicated service.

While there are some ongoing issues with the telescope and instrument performance (see Sembach's HST Mission Report and Niedner's HST Project Update), most of these are being addressed or monitored. The STUC strongly supports the calibration efforts to (1) address the WFC3 IR persistence, develop methods to map and flag these effects in DQ maps, and possibly to correct it; and (2) correct the bias striping in post-SM4 ACS images and update CTE corrections, including exploring pixel-based solutions. If new, more effective methods to correct the CTE are developed, it might be worthwhile for STScI to revisit the WFPC2 archival data if sufficient resources are available. The STUC is pleased to see progress on TinyTim to reflect the on-orbit behavior of WFC3 and is looking forward to a public release.

Concerning the Science Policies, the STUC identified a few issues and had the following recommendations :

(1) The STUC agrees with the decision to include NICMOS in the Cycle 19 Call for Proposals. However, given the limited resources, a NCS re-start would only be justified by a sufficiently high demand or an exceptional science case. In the case that NICMOS is revived, the STUC suggests that STScI re-evaluate the Cycle 16 & 17 proposals with uncompleted NICMOS orbits before executing them.

(2) In order to encourage community use, it is reasonable to try eliminating the 15-orbit surcharge for the ultra rapid ToO ($t < 2$ days) in Cycle 19; however, the STUC suggests that STScI consider keeping the surcharge (assuming that it is an accurate reflection of the overhead involved) but increasing the number of allowed rapid (less than 2 weeks) ToOs. Such a policy would allow science cases that require multiple ToOs and let the TAC determine the allocation based on scientific merit. In this case, it would also be useful to allow multi-cycle ToO programs.

(3) Given the larger number of orbits available in Cycle 19, the STUC recommends returning to the subsidy for the medium proposals since the acceptance rate of proposals in Cycle 18 between 51-99 orbits appears to be lower than previous cycles.

The STUC strongly supports the continued expansion and improvement of the STScI Archive and the HLA, both widely utilized by the community. In particular, the Committee has two recommendations :

(1) we appreciate the development of the webpage listing the Large, Archival, and Treasury proposals and their available high-level data products. Links to this website should be prominently displayed on the HST and Archive websites, listed in the Cycle 19 Call for Proposals, and highlighted to TAC members. In order to ensure that the program information is accurate, STScI should send a generic email to relevant PIs asking for corrections and/or updates.

(2) Given the increased usage of HST's spectroscopic capabilities and the demise of ST-ECF, it is important that the grism expertise is transferred to STScI (starting with the 2-day workshop in November); there is continued, high-level support for this mode; and STScI supports efforts (either in house or by the community) to make additional grism extractions available through the HLA.

While the STUC regrets the demise of ST-ECF, it is pleased with the ongoing support from ESA and the expected positive outcome of the senior review. The 15 ESA staff members at STScI comprise 30% of the research staff supporting the Hubble mission. As such, they are absolutely critical to HST's continued success, especially because of their instrument calibration expertise. The STUC also encourages ESA/ESO to continue their fruitful efforts at public outreach in Europe.

There is wide enthusiasm from the community for the software compilation SCISOFT originally collected by ESO. While ESO will continue to support the linux version, the STUC strongly encourages STScI to provide formal support to Nor Pirzkal at STScI who currently retains and updates the Mac version on a best-effort basis.

Over the years, there have been mixed efforts at ensuring that Large and Treasury proposals deliver on the promised high level data products. Given the resources being allocated to the MCT proposals, STScI needs to ensure that these programs meet their stated obligations. That being said, the STUC was very impressed with the thought that has gone into the implementation of these ambitious programs and their initial plans/timelines for HST and ancillary data releases. The STUC suggests that the PIs continue to present to this committee updates (biannually in 2011 and yearly thereafter) on their progress, including revised schedules for the release of their high level data products.

Given the large scale of these programs, the STUC feels that the MCT programs should be funded at appropriate levels. However, in order to justify continued and future funding, it is important that the MCT programs provide detailed budget justifications and, most importantly, achieve their goals for deliverables. STScI should contribute to the team's success by assisting with observation planning, providing improved calibrations, and streamlining the ingestion of data products into the Archive.

With the new suite of instruments, HST is poised to realize its most significant scientific advances to date. In order to realize the full potential of the revitalized Hubble, the STUC firmly believes that the GO funding needs to remain at a healthy and effective level going forward.