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# *the* GIEC *Report*

DECEMBER 2006 - REPORT TO OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

December 4, 2006

Report II to the Oversight Committee:

Since our last meeting, the GIEC has continued its work towards building a strong community within SSC and larger IPAC. Below we note the most important things we have accomplished and a brief discussion of future challenges. Also enclosed is a detailed listing of our minutes.

1. Had an hour long meeting with Suzy Dodd to discuss outstanding concerns about future staffing, importance of performance evaluations and other related questions.
2. Gordon and Kartik continued to collect travel anecdotes to better understand the JPL rules. Most travel issues are resolved and scientists are particularly happy with the ability to use grant money via CIT to travel. This allows one to travel to conferences on short notices although the downside is one pays a much higher overhead.
3. New electronic system for travel approval etc. at JPL caused another stressful period of adjustment. With input from admin staff and scientists, a step by step process was worked out and added to the science FAQ pages. Most everyone is now in the system although occasional questions / complaints do arise about travel expenses / approval and audits. Admin staff has been particularly helpful with the process.
4. Through the GIEC, the admin staff requested help as they felt

overloaded with work. Mgmt responded by hiring a new person - R, Estrada which has helped lighten the load on the admin staff.

5. P-cards requested by postdocs. Ability to have them exists in the CIT system but the training / use was deemed too burdensome for individual people. Two admin staff are trained on this and can use it when necessary. It is still true that JPL will not cover hotel costs ahead of time. Some P-docs continue to feel financially stressed when traveling internationally and would like advances but this is not possible through JPL. It is possible through CIT so if their adviser have money at CIT, they can do so.
6. Science staff requested a seminar to better understand the grant spreadsheets they receive. This was organized by the mgmt and in general the science staff was very happy with the information received.
7. Last time we had discussed the issue of dispute resolution. Turns out that both JPL and CIT were in the process of clarifying the process. New pamphlet distributed to everyone at IPAC.
8. Postdocs requested a mentoring component to their experience at SSC. They requested three people who would have an open door policy with whom postdocs could go and talk to about career issues etc. John Stauffer, Andy Boden and Lisa Storrie-Lombardi have agreed to serve in this capacity.
9. Large turnover in the GIEC -- much better balanced with more non-science staff. This has been a really wonderful change as we are beginning to work more cohesively as a team and issues that come up (i.e., related to computing, administration etc.) can be immediately addressed. For instance, Schurr looked into the spam filter that was apparently blocking out an important email from JPL travel for some scientists and was able to confirm that this was not a ISG filter. We also have more people from Morrisroe which will help improve further the interactions between SSC and classic-IPAC folks.
11. Minor things:
  - a) GIEC - donated coffee table for lounge

- b) *GIEC* pages added off of local *IPAC* pages
- c) *giec@ipac* mail alias created
- d) Discussing a new work week format being adopted at JPL
- e) Info on how to request office supplied passed on to members
- f) Discussing how grad students can be included in the discussions

## 12. Future challenges:

No obvious large problems exist at this time, and current efforts are focused on our main goal of strengthening community interaction and cohesion at *IPAC*, including wider *GIEC* involvement. To this end we plan to:

- a) develop a more town hall style of *GIEC* meeting, and encourage community members to share their experiences at the meeting on a regular basis.
- b) organize social activities that include all *IPAC* employees and encourage interaction, such as a weekend star party retreat to Palomar or another site.
- c) deal with changes as Spitzer winds down and other missions wind up.