Lowell Observatory Advisory Board  
Meeting of the Executive Committee  

Tuesday September 16th at 11am

I. Welcome and Introductions  
The meeting was called to order by Chairman Michael Beckage. Present were Executive Committee (EC) members Robert Ayers (Secretary), Michael Beckage (Chair), Leo Crowley, John Giovale, Michael Kitt, and Kent Robinson. Also present was Jeffrey Hall (ex officio). Staff members in attendance included Steven Levine (Deputy Director of Technology), Kay McConagha (Deputy Director of Operations), and David Schleicher (Deputy Director of Science). Lowell Putnam (Trustee), James McCarthy, and Pamela Ross participated by phone. Committee members, Drew Barringer, David Connell, and Mary Lockett were unable to attend. Catie Blazek (Observatory Administrative Assistant) took meeting minutes.

II. Minutes of Meeting on 5 June 2014  
The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as written.

III. Millennium Fund  
Michael Beckage reported that the value of the Millennium Fund was $1,977,368 as of 31 August 2014, up from $1,944,385 at the end of May 2014.

Jeffrey Hall made a disbursement request of $20K from the Millennium Fund. $12K will go to furnishing the old library in the Hendricks Center for Planetary Studies building, creating a new meeting/colloquium room. $8K to purchase “SAP Crystal Reports” business report generation software that will improve the Time and Effort reports each month. Leo Crowley made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

IV. Director’s Report  
In August there was a meeting with the Navy Partners of NPOI (Navy Precision Optical Interferometer). Ground breaking for the 1.8 meter outrigger telescope expansion will likely happen in the late fall or early winter of 2015.

The Cerenkov Telescope Array (CTA) committee expects to be negotiating with all the Northern Hemisphere sites over the next few months.
Jeffrey Hall visited Yale on September 11th along with Lowell Putnam. Hall would like to have Yale as a full partner in the DCT (Discovery Channel Telescope). Debra Fischer of Yale is the instrument lead on EXPRES (Extreme Precision Spectrograph), an instrument we would like to use on the DCT. In the event that Fischer obtains NSF funding to create the instrument, Yale plans to become a $1 million DCT partner.

The Strategic Plan has been sent to the EC, The Deputy Directors, management staff and the Astronomers. It will be reviewed quarterly.

Two candidates for the position of Deputy Director of Development were interviewed. An offer was not extended to either candidate. We are considering using an executive search firm. The deadline for applications for the Deputy Director of Science position is set for October 15th. The hope is to have both positions filled early next year.

V. Deputy Director Reports
   a. Budget and financial performance – Kay McConagha
      Expenses are on track. Revenue is currently lower than expected per budget. Hope was to have $1-1.2 million by the end of the year, however, Grants, DCT observing time funds release and board giving are lower than estimated. We are now projecting to have $600,000 - $700,000 for operations going into next year. A budget review will take place at the next meeting.

   b. DCT status – Stephen Levine
      The DCT has provided 146 science nights so far this year with 66 of those nights going to partners (53 billable). By the end of 2014 we estimate a total of 215 science nights, with 96 going to partners (80 billable). 80 partner nights equals $1.072 million releasable, of which $600k is for operations.

      The DCT is performing very well, requiring only 3-4 engineering nights per month. The primary mirror was washed this year instead of re-aluminizing. This reduced the risks and time associated with the process. Mirror washing has become standard practice at other observatories. Washing the primary mirror took 1 week, instead of the 3 weeks it would have taken to re-aluminize it.

      Staffing - Michael Lacasse (Software Engineer) has left Lowell Observatory’s employment. Rich Oliver (Electronics Specialist) will be retiring. We will be looking to hire a Software Engineer, Mechanical Engineer, and an Electrical Engineer. A third full time Telescope Operator (TO) was hired for the DCT. The new TO, was previously at NPOI. Lowell will be hiring two NPOI Operators.

   Instrument Update
   LMI (Large Monolithic Imager) was tuned up this summer and is performing well. DSSI (Differential Speckle Survey Instrument) was built by Elliott Horch at SCSU (Southern Connecticut State University) and has been used on the DCT.
DeVeny, a low to medium resolution spectrograph, was previously used on the 72 inch telescope at Anderson Mesa and is expected to begin testing on the DCT by quarter 4 of 2014. With regular use expected to start in January 2015.

**NIHTS** (Near Infrared High Throughput Spectrograph) is being built at Lowell. NIHTS is due on the DCT the first quarter of 2015 for testing.

**RIMAS** (Rapid Infrared Imager Spectrometer) is being built at Goddard Space Flight Center. No update currently.

**IGRINS** (Immersion Grating Infrared Spectrograph) built by Daniel Jaffe at UT Austin, in collaboration with a group in Korea. The instrument is already in use at McDonald Observatory in Texas and we are negotiating possible use at DCT.

c. Deputy Director for Science – David Schleicher
   Gerard van Belle was awarded tenure. Evgenya Shkolnik passed her three-year tenure review with more than satisfactory progress toward receiving tenure at the end of her sixth year.
   We have two new Post Docs; Tomas Allen, and Audrey Thirouin, with a potential of two more next spring or summer.

   As we get more instruments online at DCT, partners will be using the majority of the nights. We will be instituting a Telescope Allocation Committee.

**VI. Lowell Observatory Foundation (LOF)**
The creation of a new foundation must not conflict with Percival Lowell’s Will. There was much discussion around the draft documents that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Michael Beckage noted that the new Deputy Director of Development (yet to be hired) should be involved in the process and take ownership and help guide the creation of the final LOF document.

Lowell Putnam would like to file a Form 1023 with the IRS by the end of October to start the process of establishing non-profit status for the LOF. The process may take several months and we can refine the details of the LOF documents concurrently.

**VII. Other Business**
Next EC Meeting – Michael Beckage proposed the next meeting during the week of December 15th, 2014.

The meeting was adjourned at 1pm