

# User Administration Report

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User Administrator

As we close out 2001 and begin the new fiscal year, we anticipate many new positive experiences for our users. Various projects within User Administration, described below, have moved through the blueprint stage to implementation. We expect several other efforts launched last year to come to fruition in 2002.

## User Statistics

Our final tally on badged researchers who conducted experiments at the NSLS in FY01 was 2523, of which 720 were first-time users. Our users come from a variety of organizations including academia, industry and government. Here's the breakdown:

1357	U.S. academic institutions
350	U.S. DOE (including BNL) staff
146	U.S. Other government users
189	U.S. Industrial users
116	U.S. Other
32	Foreign government users
245	Foreign academic institutions
17	Foreign Industrial users
71	Foreign Other
2523	Total

The 2523 users who visited our facility in FY01 are affiliated with 436 unique institutions or organizations including 30 federal government agencies, 156 U.S. academic institutions, 72 U.S. industrial institutions, 133 foreign institutions (academic, industrial, government, etc.), and 45 other institutions.

Based on data submitted during registration, the fields of research for our 2523 users are categorized as follows: 822 (or 33%) in the materials sciences field, 987 (or 39%) in the field of Biological/Life Sciences, 214 (or 8%) in Chemistry, 197 (or 8%) in Physics, 184 (7%) in Geosciences/Ecology, 117 (or 5%) in Applied Science/Engineering, and 2 (<1%) in unspecified fields.

Of the 1167 experiments performed by general users and Participating Research Teams (PRTs) with reported beamtime, 34% of the experiments were performed in the Materials Sciences field and 37% in the Biological/Life Sciences field. Physics, Chemistry, Polymers, Earth sciences, Environmental Sciences, and Instrumentation development made up another 23% of the experiments. Roughly 6% were performed in the fields of Medical Applications, Optics, Engineering, Particle Accelerator research and development, Radiation Source research and development, and other non-specific fields.

During FY01, 86 beamlines were in operation, 10 designated diagnostic. Of the 76 non-diagnostic beamlines, 52 are x-ray and 24 are VUV.

## Organizational Changes

Following the change in the management structure of the NSLS organization was the repositioning of User Administration (now a section) under the newly formed User Science Division and the creation of the NSLS Information & Outreach Section headed by Lisa Miller. A number of responsibilities within User Administration, primarily related to publications and the NSLS website, have been redistributed to this new section.

The changes have resulted in some staffing modifications. Nancye Wright will retain her role as Production Assistant processing abstracts, science highlights, and publication references in the production of the activity report and the tri-annual newsletter while working in the Information & Outreach Section. Nancye will also remain active with the NSLS Users' Meeting as Vendor and Exhibit Coordinator. Among her many other duties, Lydia Rogers is busy in her role as Deputy User Administrator training our new staff member, Liz Flynn, who recently joined the User Administration staff. Liz has worked onsite with the DOE Brookhaven Group for over 13 years, as did Gretchen Cisco before coming on board with us. Liz will be quite an asset to our little group and her database skills will benefit the office considerably. She replaces Wendy Spaeth who recently accepted a position with the NSLS Budget Group. Initially, Liz's principal roles will be to assist users in their appointments, registration, training, badging and in processing user agreements. She will maintain the BLOSA and Safety Approval Form data. Gretchen continues to be in charge of the proposal system as its coordinator and has provided significant input to developing the foundation for our proposed online proposal system, described later in this report.

## User Registration & Training

We hope a new positive experience for our users is the ability to complete user training online, both onsite at BNL and offsite. Combine this with BNL's new guest information system (GIS), which allows web-based registration, and we will soon have a complete online package to offer all our users, reducing the amount of time spent at User Administration for registration and training and getting users quickly onto the experimental floor. We tested our capabilities to process guests quickly through this mechanism last April with the arrival of 45

students who registered for BNL Biology's Rapid Data course. Nearly everyone completed registration and training offsite prior to arrival. Once at the NSLS, all students were granted full access to the experimental floor in less than 45 minutes.

The user training room in User Administration was enlarged in FY00 to accommodate seven users (formerly four). In FY01, training by video was discontinued and seven computers were added for web-based training.

### **User Obligations**

Following publication of any work based on research carried out in whole or in part at the NSLS, users are obligated to provide the NSLS with a full citation. Early in the fiscal year, the Inspector General's (IG's) Office performed an audit of DOE's Office of Scientific & Technical Information (OSTI) and each of the four synchrotrons were required to participate in the audit to provide citations for articles appearing in peer-reviewed journals collected from users and staff by the facilities over the past few years to compare them with those maintained in OSTI's online system. The IG's findings were that, on average, only 44% of the citations were reported to OSTI. Their initial recommendations were somewhat extreme and inappropriate in that users would be required to submit pre-publication abstracts to the facility, which would in turn submit them to OSTI. These unpublished works would be available online. For obvious reasons, these recommendations needed to be addressed quickly. User Administration and scientific staff from the four synchrotrons scrambled on short notice to respond to the draft report, as did staff at DOE's Basic Energy Sciences. The outcome was about the best that we could have expected. While some of the minor recommendations remained intact (having no consequence to users and little effect on the facilities), the recommendation to provide pre-published abstracts was modified to require only the collection of reference information *after publication*. We consider this outcome a significant achievement.

On the topic of publication references, User Administration put into production an online database for the submission of citations in FY00. The system has worked extremely well for our office, reducing staff effort significantly, especially eliminating the need to reformat references. More effort is now focused on gathering information on published but incomplete citations. We have had a small number of complaints that one section of the online form has too many fields—the authors' names. The form is designed to ask for a first initial and separately the last name for each author. The purpose is to allow formatting of citations for inclusion in the activity report and for submission to OSTI in the various formats needed. While it may be desirable

to reduce the requested information to just one field, this will result in going back to manual reformatting by our staff. The other fields users would like to see modified are those pertaining to the submitter so information does not have to be duplicated for additional references. This request is very reasonable and we will attempt to have this completed during the fiscal year with the assistance of an application developer.

To assist users (especially those new to the facility) with instructions in the close out of their experiments, shipping procedures, and also in the return of BNL property as they prepare to leave the NSLS, a new check-out form is provided to each user during registration at User Administration and is available on the User Administration webpage.

### **Office Automation**

Work continues on developing a link between the NSLS database and BNL's guest information system (GIS). Numerous issues were addressed in FY01 resolving database integrity concerns. The plan is to have a new executable in production by spring 2002. This would allow User Administration to import guests into the NSLS database who have registered in BNL's online GIS system, eliminating the need to register on arrival.

Late last year, User Administration formed a committee consisting of users who are members of Participating Research Teams (PRTs), Proposal Study Panels (PSPs), the General User Allocation Committee, User Administration and other staff members at NSLS to define the criteria for an online proposal system. Thanks to members of the committee, Andrew Ackerman, John Aloj, Michael Becker, Lonny Berman, Gretchen Cisco, Dan Fischer, Liz Hicks, Tony Lanzirotti, Craig Ogata, Kumi Pandya, Howard Robinson, Lydia Rogers, Peter Stephens and Vivian Stojanoff, the new system is being designed to reduce lead time between proposal submission and scheduled beamtime from three months to one, provide rapid access in the current cycle (1-7 days lead time) by back filling unallocated beam time, capture users who receive beam time but do not process proposals and are not therefore counted for reporting purposes, provide a paperless web-based system reducing considerable copying and freight charges for proposal distribution to committees, reduce proposal processing and routing time by approximately 50%, allow for immediate online panel reviews, and allow for an accurate count of all experiments at the NSLS versus only general user experiments. This project has been submitted to NSLS management for consideration and is awaiting approval at this time. It is hoped that once the project is approved, developed and in production, the next step would be to revise and connect the safety approval form system to the pro-

positional system thereby eliminating extensive redundancy of information currently requested by both systems.

### **Something Cool!**

We hope you will enjoy the fruits of a new endeavor taken up by User Administration this past year. Articles, photographs and images were collected throughout the year from the BNL Bulletin and other sources that pertain to work performed in whole or in part at the NSLS, meetings, conferences, visits to the NSLS, and various social events. We've created a new section in this year's activity report for this "scrapbook" collection, entitled, "Year in Review."

### **User Support, Services and Accessibility**

User Administration continues to remain open half a day on Holidays to support users in their registration and training requirements.

A large undertaking this past year involved the creation of a web-based beamline guide to provide users and those submitting proposals to easily find information about each beamline, its staff, equipment and techniques from one source and to access each beamline's homepage. Information was gathered from the NSLS database and the beamline annual progress reports. To ensure the beamline guide is always accurate, contact User Administration with any updated information.

Participating Research Teams (PRTs) are now afforded the opportunity to secure and maintain their own website in BNL's public domain. Refer to the User Administration webpage (under Computer Set Up) for more information. The Computer Set Up webpage was also a new addition this year, providing information to users on how to obtain email, computer, IDAS, and cryptocard accounts, how to set up computers, websites, and FTP sites, and also instructions on accessing the FTP site for transfer of research data.

In FY00, an anonymous FTP site was set up for users to transfer files created while performing their experiments here at the NSLS. The parameters set for this site included the deletion of files at the expiration of 72 hours. At the request of several users, the deletion time was increased to 120 hours (or 5 days) to provide more time for users to return to their home institution for file retrieval.

To provide users with information about upcoming user- and synchrotron-related workshops, conferences, and meetings at the NSLS, BNL and other cities across the country, a meeting webpage has been established in the NSLS website. Another webpage established provides a glossary of NSLS terminology and can be found by going to the Search button on the NSLS Home Page, then Glossary.

The annual Users' Meeting web-based conference registration system was upgraded to provide a calcu-

lated online invoice to registered attendees that could be faxed with credit card information or mailed in with a check, resulting in a more efficient method of registration and payment. This year's meeting resulted in the largest attendance in the meeting's history, at 370.

BNL's Quality of Life Committee, which was established last year to improve the quality of services for our guests and on which I am a member, implemented a lab-wide bicycle purchase program. The NSLS participated by purchasing five bicycles for use by users during their stay at BNL. This committee addresses all types of concerns and issues related to users, guests and their families. Onsite food service, transportation and housing are our users' main concerns. Shuttle services around the laboratory and on weekends for shopping have been increased. A pilot program for lending out BNL vehicles to user groups has been implemented (at RHIC at this time). Additional vending machines have been installed around the laboratory including additional sandwich and vending machines in the NSLS lobby as a result of a flood of user requests to provide more food and coffee for users. Lighting to provide a safe environment during the evening hours was installed on Yale Road to the apartments. The BNL pool and weight lifting facility were upgraded. A game room was constructed in Building 50. Users with suggestions on improving services for guests at BNL may contact me.

To improve our lobby presence at the NSLS and provide a brief presentation describing the research performed at the NSLS, Al Levine (one of the best techs we've ever had!) and I made a trip to California to meet with a video presentation company to design the graphical presentation for the four by five foot informational video screen installed last December. Its other capabilities include closed circuit telecasts from Berkner Hall, access to the Internet, and highlighting users' scientific accomplishments.

And, finally, we hope to receive approval by BNL Security and NSLS management to purchase and install a badge printing system allowing User Administration to immediately print badges at the time of registration rather than waiting until the afternoon to retrieve them from Security. This would allow users to get right on the experimental floor with their own badge and eliminate any problems for users who arrive in the afternoon but do not receive their badges until the following day. Many have had problems regaining access to the BNL site during evening hours. It will also provide a more simplified system of counting users for reporting purposes.