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I am currently a Professor of Physics at Wayne State University, and have worked extensively on experiment E814/E877 at the AGS from 1989 until 1995, E896 from 1996 until 1999, and the STAR experiment at RHIC since 1991. As such, I have experience as an "outside" user of the BNL facilities, and am quite familiar with the issues facing such users, in particular foreign users, in these times of heightened security concerns.

The RHIC/AGS Users' Group has several focal points. One is to assure that BNL management is aware of the needs and problems facing users of the facility. UEC has made great strides in the past decade by working closely with the lab management, in particular in the areas of housing, computing access, safety, and lab access. I am interested in continuing this long legacy of user representation through the UEC.

The main topics for our community in the years to come will be the funding issue and the future scientific direction of the laboratory, though. The scientific future of the lab will be significantly shaped by the upcoming NSAC long range plan and we need to become unified behind common ideas for a BNL future, such as the QCDCLab blueprint. The global financial crisis threatens not only RHIC, but our field as a whole. The hostile funding environment is a symptom of a more fundamental problem: a deep lack of public appreciation of the importance of large-scale basic research to the educational, intellectual, security, and economic welfare of our nation. My experience with outreach programs at the University level have been extensive and generally very positive. I think the user community needs to take an active role in shaping our message to the public, and we need to step up the lobbying efforts of the UEC with our local and national politicians. The imagination of national leaders needs to be sparked, and, our many accomplishments during this first phase of a hopefully long RHIC era need to be conveyed. We need to renew interest in U.S. leadership in basic science, and first signals of a better future were apparent in the latest State of the Union address by the President and the projected DOE budgets for the years to come. I plan to devote most of my attention to the important issues of lobbying and helping to shape the scientific direction of the laboratory based on the input of all users.

Best regards, Rene