

LSST:UK Newsletter 18 (December 2021/January 2022)

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Introduction

While we're well into the new year, those of you who have not already seen it may want to check out the [2021 Rubin Holiday Card](#), which shows a mosaic image of the telescope on the summit of Cerro Pachón composed of thousands of project-related photos.

Those who have been following the study of the potential impact of satellite constellations on astronomy - and, especially, on wide-field instruments like LSSTCam - will be interested in the release of [the report from the Dark and Quiet Skies II conference](#), which took place in October 2021. This substantial (~300 page) report also includes material from the *Artificial Light at Night and Radio Astronomy* Working Groups, but the bulk of the content comes from the *Satellite Constellations* WG, and includes a very helpful summary of relevant international law and policy, as well as coverage of technical and scientific issues. The WG has produced recommendations for industry and for the astronomical community, with the latter largely comprising a research agenda to be coordinated by a planned *IAU Centre for the Protection of Dark and Quiet Skies from Satellite Constellation Interference*.

Those with ideas for future newsletter items should contact the LSST:UK Project Managers ([@ George Beckett](#) and [@ Terry Sloan](#) [lusc_pm@mlist.is.ed.ac.uk](#)), while everyone is encouraged to subscribe to the [Rubin Observatory Digest](#) for more general news from the US observatory team.

[@ Bob Mann](#)

Rubin Director's Office appointments

In our [August newsletter](#) we noted that the 2021 Project and Community Workshop had closed with an announcement from Steve Kahn that he would be stepping down as Director for Rubin Construction. That was followed in December by the [announcement](#) that Zeljko Ivezic (right), the long-time Rubin Project Scientist, would be stepping up to become the observatory Director for the remainder of construction.



A [further announcement](#) has recently been made, to complete the rearrangement of responsibilities in the upper echelons of the Director's Office for the remainder of the construction project. Those changes are as follows:

- **Sandrine Thomas**, who has been the Rubin Telescope & Site Subsystem Scientist for several years, will assume the role of Deputy Director for Rubin Construction for AURA/NSF;
- **Aaron Roodman**, who has been the Camera Integration & Test scientist since 2011, will become LSST Camera Program Lead for SLAC/DOE and will be Deputy Director for Rubin Construction for SLAC/DOE; and
- **Steve Ritz**, who is the Rubin Camera Subsystem Scientist, and who was formerly the Project Scientist for the Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope, will take over as Project Scientist for Rubin Construction.



(Credit: Rubin Observatory)

Summary of Consortium Board meeting on 11 January 2022

The LSST:UK Board met online on Tuesday 11 Jan 2022. This was its first full meeting since December 2020 (although an extraordinary meeting was held in March 2021 to discuss a specific issue). A total of 32 Board members attended, together with members of the Project Office. The LSST:UK Board plays a vital role in the governance of the project – all key decisions are in the hands of the Board. Board meetings thus play an important role of discussing and ratifying major items in the development of the project.

The meeting followed the now standard format of a number of reports from the project leadership about key items.

- The Board heard about the most recent selection round for Rubin Affiliate PIs and Junior Associates and accepted the panel's recommendations that all applications should be approved.
- Bob Mann (Project Leader) provided reports on several topics:
 - An update on progress in the "In-kind Programme" representing a new mode of collaboration with the US Rubin project, new arrangements for UK contributions and a new means of distributing Rubin data rights. Progress on this programme has been good with the approval of the (international) In-kind Programme by the Rubin Management Board last July. Next steps in finalising the programme involve BEIS approval of the LSST:UK costs involved ahead of STFC negotiations with the US DOE on the individual Data Rights Agreement for the UK. It is hoped that this last step will be concluded by late summer this year.
 - A summary of the "Whole life finance plan" for the project which outlines the anticipated expenditure needed for the project up to 2036.
 - A description of the "Phase C" planning and review. Phase C of LSST:UK is the next phase of the project expected to start in April 2023 and a funding bid for Phase C will be made in the next two months ahead of review by the STFC PPRP in June. Bob outlined the procedures being adopted and the process for internal review and explained the different approach required for the Data Release Processing element of the bid.
 - An update on the recruitment process for three new positions in the project: coordinators for EPO, Training and Communications. An open call for interest in these positions had been made in 2021, but only the EPO Coordinator post was filled due to the difficulty of filling such positions with no guaranteed funding lines. The recommendations on how the remaining positions were to be handled attracted considerable discussion by the Board and were not fully accepted. They will be further considered in the coming months.
- After the lunch break, Stephen Smartt (Project Scientist) introduced a new initiative, a standard presentation about the Rubin Observatory aimed at increasing the scientific community's knowledge of the project and the role that the UK was playing. The idea was that this presentation could be used by anyone within the Consortium to inform their colleagues (or alternatively Stephen himself could present it online himself). The Board welcomed this initiative.
- The Board then had a presentation by the new EPO Coordinator (Chris Lintott). Chris outlined his initial ideas about EPO for the project, stressing the importance of public engagement and detailing the main aims of our programme and many other elements. Chris gave an excellent talk which highlighted the breadth of experience he brings to our project.
- Mike Watson (Board Chair) outlined the need to adopt the concept of individual consortium membership for LSST:UK for which there is currently no definition. This concept is needed in the context of the new data rights arrangements expected when the In-kind Programme is finalised, and to ensure that all involved in the project are properly covered by the project's Code of Conduct. The Board welcomed the concrete suggestions as to how this could be implemented but there was lively debate about some of the details and this matter will be considered again once the required changes the Governance document were drafted.
- Terry Sloan (Joint Project Manager) gave a Product Assurance Report summarising the programmatic status of the project. Terry emphasized that both the formal and real status of the project was excellent!
- Both the Project Leader and Project Scientist positions are appointed for a fixed term, so there is a need to periodically review them and decide on re-appointment or alternatively issue a call for new candidates. Mike Watson reported on the recommendations of the panel that had recently reviewed the posts. The panel noted the high level of satisfaction in the performance of both incumbents and recommended that the posts be renewed for 3 and 2 years respectively.
- [Note added by Bob Mann. The Board Chair is also appointment for a fixed term, and Mike Watson's current term is due to end on 31 March 2022. However, the Board agreed to extend Mike's term to April 2023, so that various activities in which he is personally involved can be concluded without disruption.]

Data Preview 0.2 applications open on March 1st

Most of you will be aware of the Rubin Data Preview programme, which is offering prospective users access to Rubin-like data - initially simulated data, and, later, commissioning data - together with support in getting used to the services provided through the Rubin Science Platform (RSP). Data Preview 0 is currently underway, and a number of LSST:UK members were selected as "DP0 Delegates" for its first phase. Those selected have been invited to a wide range of activities, organised by the Rubin Community Engagement Team (CET), and a very collaborative spirit has developed within the DP0 community, including the sharing of links to training resources in a range of topics (e.g. SQL, Python, machine learning) extending beyond the programme's initial LSST-specific remit.

The CET have recently [announced the details of the second phase of Data Preview 0](#), which will support a further set of researchers in analysis of simulated data from DESC using the RSP, and, given the success of the first phase, LSST:UK researchers are strongly encouraged to apply for this second one. The application period for DP0.2 will open on 1 March 2022 and close on 30 April 2022. Further details can be obtained in due course by subscribing to the News category on the [Rubin Community forum](#) or the Rubin Science email list (see <https://www.lsst.org/scientists>); we will also post reminders in future Newsletters, and information will also be circulate via the Science Collaborations.

@ Bob Mann

Leadership positions held by LSST:UK members

Here's the current list of significant leadership positions held by members of the LSST:UK consortium in the project and international Science Collaborations. This is the list submitted to the STFC in the most recent Project Assurance Report. If you are aware of any corrections or additions please contact the LSST:UK Project Managers ([@ George Beckett](#) and [@ Terry Sloan](#): lusc_pm@mlist.is.ed.ac.uk).

- D. Alonso: co-convenor of the DESC External Synergies Working Group, member of the LSST DESC Membership Committee, DESC Liaison with Simons Observatory.
- C. Alves: member of the LSST DESC Collaboration Council.
- M. Banerji: co-chair of the LSST Galaxies Science Collaboration, member of the Rubin-Euclid DDP Working Group and a member of the Rubin Contribution Evaluation Committee.
- M. Bannister: LSST Solar System Science Collaboration Outer Solar System Working Group lead, member of the of the Rubin Contribution Evaluation Committee
- M.G.Beckett: member of the LSST DESC High-performance computing resources committee;
- R. Bowler: co-chair of the SED fitting and Photometric Redshifts WG in the LSST Galaxies Science Collaboration.
- P. Bull: member of DESC Publication Board.
- T. Collett: member of the Rubin-Euclid DDP Working Group.
- P. Hatfield: co-chair of the Galaxy Environment WG in the LSST Galaxies Science Collaboration.
- C. Heymans: UK representative on DESC Operations Committee, member of DESC Advisory Board, member of the Rubin-Euclid DDP Working Group.
- S. Kaviraj: co-chair of the LSST Galaxies Science Collaboration; co-chair of the Low Surface Brightness Coordination Group (This is the first community driven Community Group).
- B Leistedt: co-convenor of the Large Scale Structure (LSS) Working Group; co-chair of the LSST DESC Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee.
- D. Leonard: DESC Core Cosmology Library topical team lead, member of the LSST DESC Publication Board and Collaboration Council.
- C. Lintott: leads the LSST EPO development of Zooniverse as a citizen science platform.
- J. Mullaney: Chair of the Active Galactic Nuclei WG in the LSST Galaxies Science Collaboration.
- H. Peiris: member of the Rubin Observatory Survey Cadence Optimization Committee (SCOC).
- M. Schwamb: co-chair of Solar System Science Collaboration, member of the Rubin Observatory Survey Cadence Optimization Committee (SCOC).
- S. Smartt: member of the LSST Science Advisory Committee.
- G. Smith: co-chair of the LSST Strong Lensing Science Collaboration (SLSC) and Commissioning Liaison for the LSST SLSC.
- M. Sullivan: co-convenor of the DESC Time Domain Working Group, member of DESC Speakers Bureau Policy Committee, DESC Liaison with 4MOST/TiDES.
- A. Verma: chair of the Strong Lensing Working Group in the Galaxies Science Collaboration, member of the Rubin Observatory LSST Contribution Evaluation Committee, chair of the Software Sub-committee and International Program Coordinator in the Rubin Director's Office (from Jan 2021).
- A. Watkins: co-chair of the low-surface-brightness working group within the LSST Galaxies Science collaboration, co-lead of the LSST LSB challenge 1: "How do LSST algorithms do at detecting LSB sources; co-chair of the Low Surface Brightness Coordination Group.
- C. Woolford: Member of the LSST DESC International Resources Committee.
- J. Zuntz: DESC Deputy computing and simulations coordinator.

@ Terry Sloan

Forthcoming meetings of interest

Several meetings of potential interest have been scheduled for the coming months.

Note that the current list of forthcoming meeting is always available on the [Relevant Meetings](#) page. You may also wish to check information held on the LSST organisation website [LSST-organised events](#) and the [LSST Corporation website](#)

- 21-25 February 2022. [DESC](#) (virtual) consortium meeting.
- 28-30 March 2022. [From Data to Software to Science](#). An in-person event at the Flatiron Institute in New York City, with remote participation supported on a best-efforts basis. [Applications](#) must be made by **January 26th** and successful applicants will be informed by February 7th.

Announcements

If you have significant announcements that are directly relevant to LSST:UK and would like to share the announcement in a future newsletter, please contact the [LSST:UK project managers](#).