

# STB News

June/July 2004

## All-Hands Meeting Kicks Off STB's Planning Effort

Don Rej, new leader of Science and Technology Base Programs (STB), began a major planning and improvement effort June 23 with an all-hands meeting at the J. Robert Oppenheimer Student Center.

Reviewing his experiences during his first few weeks at STB, Rej said that he had visited several other laboratories to find out how they handle tasks that Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has assigned to STB. He said he also met with STB customers and stakeholders and reviewed findings from recent interviews of STB personnel.

Summarizing his conclusions, he said that STB is an institutional service organization that should "enable LANL's future in programs, people, and knowledge," and "ensure quality, integration, and strategic alignment of LANL science and technology."

He said he found no exact equivalent to STB.

LANL's STB is "acknowledged as best in several areas," he said, listing, as examples, postdoctoral programs, the Research Library, science and technology reviews, and the scientific quality of Laboratory Directed Research and Development (LDRD).

He also said that LANL can learn from other sites in strategically aligning planning, investment, and assessments; in leveraging university partnerships; in tying student-intern programs to the staffing pipeline; in consolidating and improving access to classified reports while reducing classified removable electronic media (CREM); and in improving line management approval of foreign travel.

He said STB's employees are skilled and committed to their jobs, but collective performance could be better.

(Please see **PLANNING**, page 3.)



**Thomas J. Meyer (right), Laboratory associate director for strategic research, and Ileana Buican (center), project leader for the science panel display, greet team member Gail Flower during the June 3 opening. (For more photos, see page 2.)**

## Panels in Ad Building Profile Outstanding Laboratory Research

A large and enthusiastic crowd of scientists, engineers, writer-editors, graphic artists, and Laboratory leaders attended the June 3 opening for the 40 new informational panels now on exhibit in the east hallway of the Administration Building.

The panels present the best in current research from eight divisions—Computer and Computational Sciences; Earth and Environmental Sciences; Engineering Sciences and Applications; Health, Safety, and Radiation Protection; the Los Alamos Neutron Science Center; Materials Science and Technology; Nuclear Materials Technology; and Physics. In addition, three special panels highlight pit manufacturing.

During the opening ceremonies, Don Rej, leader of Science and Technology Base Programs (STB) introduced Thomas J. Meyer,

(Please see **PANELS**, page 2.)

## PANELS (Cont'd from p.1)

Laboratory associate director for strategic research, who served as host for the celebration. Meyer spoke of the high quality of the Laboratory workforce and the wide variety of science done at the Laboratory. He said he was “delighted to see these posters”—and he added that they were so attractive that they would fit in well “in one of my favorite galleries.”

Ileana Buican, project leader for the science panel display, said, “I would like to thank all the people who produced these wonderful panels.” She called up each of the writer-editors and graphic-arts specialists who worked on the panels for individual applause. She thanked Nikki Cooper, leader of LA Science, “for her steadfast support” and “sharing her knowledge of science” at all times. She also expressed special appreciation to Joy Baker (administrative assistant in LA Science), Gloria Sharp (graphic artist in LA Science), and Allen Hartford (former leader of STB) for their efforts on behalf of the project.

Cooper told the crowd, “I think the exhibit is spectacular ... They keep getting better and better.” She added that the panels were produced despite the fact that people were “working under severe budget restrictions.” Those who created the panels, she said, had to “work fast and work well.” She then gave special recognition to Buican for her leadership and initiative in working individually with all the participants.

The crowd applauded all the speakers and then enjoyed fruit, cheeses, and soft drinks donated by the staff of LA Science. Many lingered to take a close look at the photos and read the text of individual panels.



**Clockwise from top left: Ileana Buican surveys the new display; Don Rej (center) applauds the teams that worked on the project; a card notes that LA Science employees donated the food; Buican (left) and Joy Baker of LA Science prepare a bowl of fruit; and LA Science leader Nikki Cooper talks with writer-editor Brian Fishbine during the opening.**



## PLANNING (Cont'd from p.1.)

He said STB needs to clarify its mission and its relationships with other organizations, with particular emphasis on LANL core values of teamwork and respect.

Interorganizational interfaces at LANL are many and need strengthening, he said.

### Major Efforts Are Planned

In the next three months, Rej said, he wants to complete strategic planning; communicate and model expectations for behavior; build bridges to other organizations; improve the STB customer focus and projectize work; and conduct external reviews.

In a slide summarizing his expectations of employees, Rej said: “Engage! This should be *our* plan. Suspend parochial interests! Do what’s best for the Laboratory. Focus on our customers’ needs. Synergize! The STB organizing principles are compelling, so let’s rise to the occasion.”

### The Work Has Already Started

The Strategic Planning Team began its work in a four-hour meeting on July 1, and the work continued in another four-hour meeting on July 6. A third session was scheduled for July 12.

The group’s efforts followed an outline that Rej had distributed at the all-hands meeting. The next all-hands meeting will include a review of developments in the planning process; answers to employee questions regarding the draft STB mission, vision, and strategic direction; and an opportunity for employees to comment on the draft.

The outline calls for additional Planning Team meetings after that; another all-hands meeting; a final Planning Team meeting; and a recommendation to the Laboratory Senior Executive Team in August.

In addition, external reviews of the Research Library, LDRD, and the Education Program Office are planned in August. Reviews or surveys of LA Science and the Postdoctoral Program will be scheduled later.

## The Next STB News Will Be in August

The *STB News*, normally distributed the last week of each month, is late this time because the editor, Charmian Schaller, had to go to Utah for the premature delivery of her first grandson, Morgan William Schaller.

She said the delivery was “a little too exciting,” but both baby and mother are doing well now.

Because this edition of *STB News* is coming out so late, because of an unusually heavy press of work, and because of an anticipated vacation, there will be no newsletter at the end of July. *STB News* will return to its normal schedule the last week in August.

## Students Take Center Stage in EPO Events

**Editor’s Note: Spring at Los Alamos National Laboratory always brings a huge influx of students. As a result, for many employees in Science and Technology Base Programs (STB), spring and summer are the busiest times of the year. Recent days in STB featured student orientation meetings, brown-bag luncheons with the Los Alamos Women in Science, a postdoctoral employees’ meeting with the Director, a University of New Mexico-Los Alamos luncheon for students at the Laboratory, and a student/mentor picnic in Urban Park that drew approximately 1,000 people. In some ways, the All-Student Meeting set the tone for all of the events, welcoming students, providing them with timely reminders of security essentials, and introducing them to important people. The story below—and the photos on pages 4-5—provide a flavor of several student events.**

An All-Student Meeting, sponsored by the Student Programs Advisory Committee (SPAC) drew 145 students to the Physics Building Auditorium June 10.

Jerry Foropoulos, SPAC chairman, opened the meeting, providing an overview of the organization, which assists in a wide spectrum of student events and activities. “We’re here to listen,” he said in one of his slides.

SPAC members serve as advocates for the quality of student experiences at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). The organization works to ensure effective communication about student programs and recommends policy changes and initiatives for improvement. SPAC also provides advice to its parent organization, Science and Technology Base Programs (STB).

Foropoulos noted that the Laboratory will employ 2,000 students this fiscal year—including 1,500 this summer. Of that number, 400 will be new to the Laboratory.

(Please see **STUDENTS**, page 4.)

## STUDENTS (Cont'd from p.3)

Foropoulos touched on several major student issues. Housing, he acknowledged is hard to find in Los Alamos—but, he said, the situation is improving. Commenting on transportation, he said, with a smile, “Getting here is part of the challenge”—and he spoke of the Laboratory taxi service, LA Bus, and the commuter bus.

### Some Security Tips

He then introduced Bob Lopez, a deputy group leader in S Division, who commented that 30 years ago, he himself was a student employee at the Laboratory.

Lopez outlined the security challenges that face the Laboratory in the post-9/11 era, pointing out that LANL has 12,204 cleared workers, 100 security areas, and 6 metric tons of special nuclear materials, and is under virtually constant attack by people trying to break into its computer systems.

Lopez said security issues of special concern include classified material inappropriately transmitted as e-mail; safes that are left open and unattended; computer worms and viruses; people who don't stop for security posts; and people who break the rules and take personal electronic devices such as cell phones into security areas. “If you do run a SECON post, they *will* chase you down,” he said, touching on just one of the most common problems.

He also warned the students that certain legal infractions can hurt one's ability to receive or maintain a security clearance. Driving while intoxicated, illegal drug use, improper use of prescription drugs, alcohol abuse, spousal abuse, credit card abuse, and defaulting on student loans can all affect an employee's ability to get a clearance, he said. Providing an example from his own area of expertise, he said that there are 500 Protective Force jobs at the Laboratory, and they are in demand because they pay well. However, out of 200 applicants, 65% “don't make the cut,” and out of the average class of 40, 7% can't get a clearance—usually because they have lived a “colorful life.” He warned his audience members that if they go to a fraternity party and drink, then, “Walk home, man.”

He reminded them that everyone at the Laboratory is responsible for helping to maintain security, and he provided them with the telephone number of the Security Help Desk: 665-2002. The help desk has received 20,000 calls since it was founded four years ago, he said,

and he told them, “If in doubt, ask first ... Don't wing it.”

### Student Association Information

Omar Wooten, chair of the Students' Association (SA), introduced the other SA officers— Vice Chair Kristina Lindquist, Treasurer Leah Sandoval, and Web Master Kimberly McCormick—and told the crowd about SA's social, professional, and educational activities. He noted that student employees recently organized a bicycle swap that did \$10,000 in business. He pointed out that tickets to the annual student/mentor picnic and Chamber of Commerce student-discount cards were available in the hallway or from an officer.

He said SA is holding brown-bag luncheons with interesting speakers every other week this summer, arranging free student breakfasts, and setting up tours to places including the Los Alamos Neutron Science Center and the Laboratory recycling facility.

He urged students to attend SA meetings (every other Tuesday at 3 p.m., frequently at Daylight Donuts, 112 Central Park Square, Los Alamos). “We need your ideas,” he said.

Activity information, schedules, and a forum are all available on the web at <http://sa.lanl.gov>, he said. He also urged students to get onto the student list serve by contacting [saexec@lanl.gov](mailto:saexec@lanl.gov).

### Questions and Answers

Foropoulos returned to the microphone to conduct a question-and-answer session during the last few minutes of the meeting.

The first person to take the microphone, Gus Takala, asked how undergraduates could make contact with experts in groups outside their work areas to learn about interesting fields of graduate study. Subsequent questions involved details of student classification (technical staff member vs. administrative employee) and security clearances.

Carole Rutten of Science and Technology Base Programs responded to Takala's question. She said, “We're working on cases like yours,” and urged him to meet with her after the meeting. As people were drifting out of the auditorium, he linked up with Rutten and STB leader Don Rej and took the first steps toward finding sources of information on various forms of alternative energy.

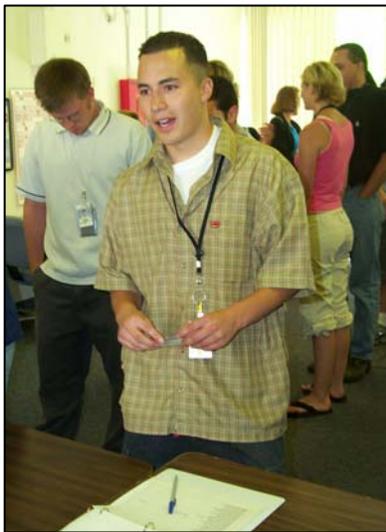
Rutten said later, “I continue to be impressed at how the attendance of the students (at SPAC meetings) increases every year.” She also spoke of the quality of student questions and SPAC's own growth and improvement.

(Student photos appear on pages 5-6.)

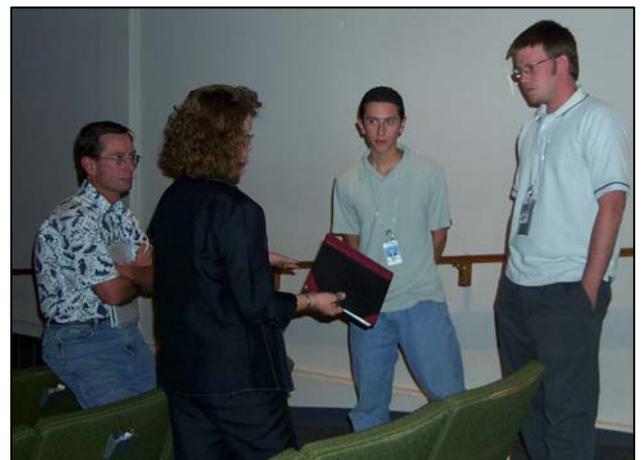


### All-Student Meeting

At left, Omar Wooten, chairman of the Students' Association, gives directions to a group of students at the Physics Division Auditorium. (That's STB's Carole Rutten at far left.) At center left, a student signs in. At center right, a large crowd listens to the speaker. At lower left, Wooten and Leah Sandoval, a student who works at STB and also serves as the Students' Association treasurer, watch the action. And at bottom right, Don Rej, STB leader (at left), and Rutten (with back to the camera) provide answers for a student with a question (Gus Takala, at right) while a friend looks on.



Photos  
By  
Charmian  
Schaller





## The Student/Mentor Picnic

The annual picnic was a great success. About 1,000 people attended to talk and laugh and eat. The work of STB employees made the good times possible. Below, Sandra Landry serves a student. In the next photo below, Daniel Duran grills burgers in a cloud of smoke. In the picture to the left of the Duran photo, Cynthia Bustos dishes out food.

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### Good Conversations

In the photo at right, a student and two mentors chat during the University of New Mexico-Los Alamos luncheon for Laboratory student employees. In the photo at far right, Tinka Gammel answers a student's question during a brown-bag luncheon featuring Los Alamos Women in Science.



**Jeanette Gallegos**, who works in the Science and Technology Base Programs (STB) Office, experienced a double tragedy in June.

On Father's Day, June 20, her son Carlos, 21, and his good friend Philip Morphin, also 21, were killed in a roll-over accident on U.S. 285 near Tres Piedras. The funeral was held June 23.

Gallegos came back to work June 28.

On June 29, her other son, Jerry, 17, was seriously hurt in an all-terrain vehicle accident. He was taken by ambulance to the Trauma Center at University Hospital in Albuquerque. He had three breaks in his pelvic bones. After many days of pain and very difficult treatment, he underwent surgery on July 7.

At this point, the news is good. Doctors say he has good prospects for complete recovery—but first he must spend six weeks in a steel stabilizing device and go through extensive physical rehabilitation.

STB employees did their best during these hard days to provide strong support to Gallegos as she faced the loss of one son and terrible worry about the other. Despite her grief, she found the time to send out a thank-you note.

At the highly regarded Joint Conference on Digital Libraries in late May, a poster with authors from STB-Research Library was awarded "best of the conference" honors. The poster was entitled "Toolkits for Visualizing Co-Authorship Graph," and the authors were **Xiaoming Liu**, Johan Bollen, Michael L. Nelson, Herbert Van de Sompel, Jeremy Hussell, Rick Luce, and Linn Marks. Luce, director of the Research Library, said that the poster "was primarily the work of our postdoc Liu." "In addition," he said, the Library Without Walls Prototype Team presented several papers, chaired a session, and, in general, achieved more visibility than any other organization attending."

**Lisa Carlson and Caroline Trujillo** of STB-Foreign Travel will be going to the "2<sup>nd</sup> Foreign Travel Workshop" Aug. 2-5 in Chicago. Foreign Travel leader Debbie Martinez said that she went to the meeting last year in Washington, D.C., and found it worthwhile. It provides staff members with supportive, useful, interesting interactions and a chance to put faces with names, she said. Representatives of the Department of Energy and programmatic sponsors are among those who attend.

**Ed Hildebrand**, an employee in STB-University Relations, retired June 29—but not before attending his last two-hour meeting of the Science and Engineering Advisory Council (SEAC), where he served as STB liaison.

SEAC thanked Hildebrand warmly for his good service, and he told SEAC members that he had enjoyed working with them.

For the time being, **Howard Hanson** of STB-Laboratory Directed Research and Development (STB-LDRD), will take over as SEAC liaison.

Carole Rutten in the STB-Education Program Office (EPO) reminded STB News that the annual **Student Symposium** is scheduled Aug. 3 at the University of New Mexico-Los Alamos.

Students working at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) use the symposium to present poster sessions and lectures on their latest scientific research. Those who have gone say that the symposium is always interesting. Anyone may attend.

Sandra Landry of STB-EPO will be taking several LANL students to the Sandia National Laboratories Student Symposium on Aug. 2, and, under a reciprocal agreement, several Sandia students will attend the LANL Student Symposium.

STB has two new student employees this summer.

**Ryan Uhlenbrock** will be working with Peter Haase in computer support until September. Uhlenbrock is a 2004 graduate of Los Alamos High School who plans to attend the University of California-Los Angeles this fall and major in electrical engineering.

**Severo Martinez** has joined STB-EPO as a part-time student employee working with Carole Rutten. Martinez is a recent graduate of McCurdy High School and a LANL Foundation scholarship recipient.

**David Watkins, Howard Hanson, and Lisa Harris** of STB-LDRD will be in Las Vegas, Nevada, for the entire week of Aug. 23 for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) tri-lab annual review of LDRD.

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Sandia National Laboratories will also be participating.

Watkins said he plans to take several LDRD grant recipients along to speak about their LDRD-funded research.

He explained that NNSA holds in-depth, on-site laboratory LDRD reviews every other year. On subsequent years, the agency holds a single meeting at a central site and attempts to engage more NNSA personnel. Las Vegas was chosen (instead of Washington, D.C., where meetings have been held in the past) in an effort to bring people away from their normal surroundings and help them to focus, uninterrupted, on the review.

The host for the meeting will be Bechtel Corporation, which runs Nevada Test Site.



**STB Staff 2004**  
Taken at the J. Robert Oppenheimer Student Center  
during an all-hands meeting on May 26, 2004