



Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory

Sean Andrews
Astrophysicist
sandrews@cfa.harvard.edu
(617)-496-7645

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Dear NAASC “ALMA Community Day” Committee,

I am writing this letter as a proposal to host a one-day “ALMA Community Day” seminar, ***Preparation for ALMA Early Science Observations***, at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics (CfA) in 2011 April. With potentially the largest single-institution future user-base for ALMA, the CfA and its neighboring institutions (e.g., MIT, Boston University) are extraordinarily eager for the start of ALMA operations. Although there will be an additional opportunity to prepare at the summer AAS meeting, the local astronomy community has made it clear that their preference is to get started on their Early Science proposals earlier, soon after the expected call for proposals. To facilitate that desire, I am proposing to organize a full day of ALMA activities - devoted to both science talks from local astronomers and technical discussions and demonstrations by NAASC staff - here at the CfA on one of the following 4 dates: April 19, April 20, April 26, or April 27, 2011.

A preliminary program features 2 sessions, each with 4-5 short talks on **how ALMA can contribute to various science topics with the capabilities expected to be available during the Early Science phase** and beyond. I have speaking commitments from Edo Berger (*CfA*, on gamma-ray bursts), Jan Vrtilek (*CfA*, on galaxy cluster cooling flows), Michael McCarthy (*CfA*, on molecular astrophysics), Jim Moran (*CfA*, on the galactic center), and David Wilner or myself (*CfA*, on protoplanetary disks). Additional invitations have been extended to James Jackson (*BU*, on high-mass star formation), and Giovanni Fazio (*CfA*, on high-*z* galaxies), and I expect to make several more direct invitations to other colleagues (on low-mass star formation, nearby galaxies, the Solar System, etc.). Additional sessions lead by NAASC personnel would be focused on (1) an overview of Early Science capabilities, (2) a discussion and demonstration of simulating ALMA observations and sensitivity/feasibility estimates, and (3) a tutorial review of the tools available for proposal writing. These more technical sessions would be padded with significant time to address questions from the audience. The goal of these activities is to increase the local enthusiasm for the initial phase of ALMA observations, while also providing sufficient information to ensure that interested users will understand how to write high-quality, yet ***realistic and feasible***, Early Science proposals.

The community day activities will take place in the Phillips Auditorium at the CfA, in Cambridge, MA. This room can seat up to ~130 participants, although there is enough interest that I expect a registration process will be required (online, by the CfA). If the NAASC is willing to take part, I can finalize a full program and then announce a registration process sometime in late January, circulated via email at the CfA, MIT, and BU. Event information will be featured off a link on the main CfA webpages, and program posters will be distributed throughout the CfA buildings (and circulated to the neighboring institutions). Given the early positive response to planning this event, I expect space will fill up rather quickly. If that is the case, I will work to make the talks and discussion available live via webcast throughout the local CfA network (a relatively common practice here), and will make sure that the entire program is video recorded and available online soon afterwards.

If additional information is necessary, please do not hesitate to contact me directly (by phone at 617-496-7645 or via email: sandrews@cfa.harvard.edu).

Yours sincerely,

Sean Andrews