April 25, 2018

The NuSTAR Users Committee (NUC) met via telecon on April 19, 2018. The following includes a list of attendees from the NUC, a list of ex-officio attendees, a summary of the outcomes of the discussion, and the detailed minutes.

NUC attendees:
John Tomsick (chair)
Marco Ajello
Enrico Bozzo
Stephanie LaMassa
Anne Lohfink
Andreas Zezas
Jack Steiner
Fred Baganoff
Slavko Bogdanov
Raffaella Margutti

Ex-Officio attendees:
Fiona Harrison (PI)
Karl Forster (SOC manager)
Kristin Madsen (Instrument/calibration lead)
Bill Latter (NASA HQ Program Scientist)

Outcomes of discussion (summary/recommendation/action):
Topic#1: Not a lot of enthusiasm for changing the general GO data right policy.
Topic#2: Recommendation is to write a specific policy for DDT data rights and announce it widely to NuSTAR users.
Topic#3: The NUC is happy to see progress on cross-calibration.
Topic#4: The COSPAR is looking like a good option for the face-to-face meeting. John will check with Daniel and then make a Doodle poll to decide on a day/time for the meeting.

Telecon minutes:

Introductions:
- As this was our first NUC meeting, the telecon began by everyone introducing themselves.

Topic#1: Do people see any reason to remove or reduce proprietary rights to data taken during Guest Observer observations?
- Fiona pointed out that a reason to discuss this now is that the policy gets written into the Senior Review proposal (next proposal will be due in January 2019), so this is the time to discuss. Fiona also pointed out that a lot of the NuSTAR data (e.g., from the Legacy Surveys and from DDTs) are immediately public.

- In the discussion, nearly all of the comments were reasons why proprietary rights should remain: a lot of the observations are coordinated with other observatories with proprietary rights; such right provide some protection to grad. students, who might be doing a large thesis project, and postdocs; Fred pointed out that analysis planning in large multi-mission or multi-wavelength collaborations is difficult if some data has proprietary time and others does not.
- John said that he would describe this in the minutes, but the conclusion is that it did not seem like there was a lot of enthusiasm for changing the policy.
- Enrico mentioned that XMM-Newton often grants 6 months of proprietary time for DDTs (which would actually be an increase for NuSTAR). We discussed DDTs next.

Topic#2: Why does there seem to be different access to data from DDT observations when the policy is that the data should be immediately public?
- Enrico described the case of Swift J1658.2-4242, a black hole transient where a DDT TOO observation was granted recently. Enrico said that an ATEL was published by another group while his group still did not have access to the data. Fiona was familiar with the case and said that access to the data was given to the two groups that requested the DDT before the data were QA'ed and made public. John made the comment that ATELs can be an important way for people to let the community know that they are planning to work on the data. Enrico said that INTEGRAL deals with this by having the INTEGRAL Science Data Center (ISDC) send basic results to the observation PIs. Often, the PIs decide to go for an ATEL and ask support to the ISDC scientists on duty, involving them into the communication or thanking them in the ATEL. Fred said that a policy might be to allow only basic info to help other observers plan. John said that it seems like the policy of allowing the DDT requestor to have first access to the data might make sense except that this is not a well-documented policy, which leads to confusion, and there is some concern that there is a perception that there is not a level playing field.
- The recommendation from the NUC is for a policy to be written and then widely announced.
- There was some discussion about how NuSTAR makes announcements to the community, and the NUC also recommended the development of some way of doing this (perhaps a NuSTAR news e-mail list, perhaps an e-mail list of all proposers, perhaps announcing through HEAD).

Topic#3: Calibration update from Kristin
- Kristin and Karl were at the recent IACHEC calibration meeting, and Kristin talked about the status of the cross-calibration with Swift/XRT.
- There can be a spurious low energy excess/tail in NuSTAR alone, but it is no more than a 5% effect. Sometimes residuals can be as large as 20% when fitting with XRT.
- The problem arises especially for bright sources (typically need to use an annular extraction region to avoid pile-up) and for high column density sources (which have a dust scattering halo).
- Using only grade 0 events for XRT is important and helps, but does not solve the problem.

- The Swift/XRT team is also working on this, and the expectation is that they will release some instructions or guidelines for getting the best agreement between XRT and NuSTAR. We cannot necessarily expect for the XRT normalization to be correct, but getting the spectral shape closer to NuSTAR's would be a big help.
- Jack mentioned that the MAXI J1535-571 data would be good to look at because we have NuSTAR, XRT, and NICER, and NuSTAR measures a much different column density than the other two instruments.
- Fred mentioned Lia Corrales' work on the dust effects.
- Andreas pointed out that XMM also has issues with cross-calibration. John added that this is especially bad with the XMM/EPIC/PN timing mode.

Topic#4: Face-to-face meeting
- We have been discussing having our next meeting during the NuSTAR science meeting; however, the date and location of that meeting is still uncertain (John said that the most recent information he has is that dates in September and October are being considered).
- Before we started targeting the NuSTAR meeting, the COSPAR meeting had been considered (the week of July 16th in Pasadena). Although we did a Doodle poll for that, and I believe that some people couldn't make it, it still might be the best option. John will ask Daniel about whether this would work. If it will, then John will put together a Doodle poll for which day/time is best for people at COSPAR.