

2018 Nuclear Physics Day on the Hill Report

- Based on the feedback and notes from participants, this year's meeting was very successful. The participants appreciated the fact that, in contrast with last year, we went to the Congress after a proposed budget and a very encouraging 2018 omnibus bill to comment on. Indeed, the congressional visit's date was wisely picked!
- JLab was represented by 27 participants from 13 states (~ 15% increase compared to last year's 23 attendees).
- The map of participants' state was slightly changed with TX and MA participating for the first time, and SC joined after being absent last year.
- Tripled the number of juniors attendees with 8 graduate students and 1 undergraduate student compared to 3 from last year. They represent 33.3% of this year's participants, and their contribution was well recognized and received by the congressional staffers, according to attendees' comments.
- Received mostly nice comments and compliments about the effort put into organizing the DC day both by JLab and by the BOSE public affairs group (bpag), however:
 - i. I believe the registration process could be improved to keep the local lab coordinators, who are contacting the users to encourage them to participate and register, up-to-date with the list of registrants. This year, the registration form made it easy for the bpag to get the participants' basic information needed for the event, but since it was linked to Lindsay's secure google account it was not possible to grant a direct access to it. I had to contact her several times asking for an updated list. Thus to be more effective, this form could be e.g. *a live password-protected google form* which the bpag can share its password with the local lab coordinators, or *program it in such a way when a participant register and specify the lab a notification message will be sent to the appropriate lab coordinator*. Personally, I prefer the first option! However, we can explore any other options that may keep the lab's coordinators up-to-date in the registration process. That would save time and effort and avoid many confusions! Most of the JLab users thought I am getting notified once they register and that, unfortunately, was not the case!
 - ii. Some participants got comments from the staffers who they visited that "we should spend more time and effort to talk to the representative's and senator's offices who are not yet supporting us, rather than concentrating on the offices that are already supporting us". While I think it's good to keep a connection with the offices that in general support the science/NP funding and revisit them, I do agree with the fact that we need to find a way to talk to non-supportive offices. In fact, I noticed based on my own experience last year and this year that even if we have a participant from some non-supportive districts, the bpag is not successful in setting up a meeting with them. E.g., this year no meeting was scheduled for a student in



my group from the MS 1st district, not sure why? While last year, it was no scheduled meeting with the MS senator, who was the chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee but retired this year! Although, last year we were provided with an extra NP day folder to drop off at the senator's office when a meeting could not be scheduled. This year, too there was one Congressman with whom a meeting could not be scheduled but we did not get an extra folder to drop off in his office, and, in fact, we were even discouraged to drop by! Not sure why?

iii. Some participants made suggestions about the Sunday-night dinner. While they thought it was pleasant, and a good chance to socialize, they wondered if the bpag could arrange a brief "pep talk" or even a short round-table discussion after or during the dinner? Probably, a chance for experienced folks to share an anecdote or two from previous congressional visits?

iv. Got comments about large groups and combined office's meetings. Some attendees felt that, with a group of 6 members or more, they were crowding the staffers and was a bit difficult for them to arrange in which order they spoke and when. They believe less members would have made the conversation easier! In the same context, other participants were also not entirely happy with the fact that 15 of them were meeting with two offices' staffers in the same time. On the other hand, some of the same group thought that is still fine because it's not a matter of "every person say something" but it's more of a subtle message in which they show, with their presence, that many of them care.

v. Got a request for the bpag to share a tentative schedule a bit earlier because some attendees has to cancel/miss the last 4:30 PM meetings that were conflicting with their arranged travel plans!

➤ Most of the participants complimented on the knowledgeable and supportive staffers with whom they met this time. They stated that several staffers were polite, very positive, very receptive to personal career stories, NP applications, and the budget ask, and were genuinely interested and aware of the value of basic research and STEM in general. It was quite compelling that some staffers had a Ph.D in different science branches, hence, sharp and very articulate on science and understood well the funding process. Some staffers expressed a desire for collecting multidisciplinary science stories and had an agenda of making a case on why it is necessary to support the full physics ecosystem, and even asked about the statistics on where physics degrees end up in the job market. Some of this information was sent to staffers in the follow-up messages. Although, some staffers mentioned they have been looking for a reason to support basic research, but couldn't really find solid reasoning before these meetings. Also, it was nice to hear that some staffers have already signed up for supporting increased research funding, and praised the fact of going to them to advocate for funding because the groups that do that might get bumped up with respect to other groups, which do not go to Washington.

- The only hint of a negative vibe that I got was from one group meeting when a RHIC participant mentioned he would be going to CERN to do his research. Thus, the staffer *inquired whether US funds were being spent at CERN, and muttered something about this money being kept in the USA*. Otherwise, the general message of these visits resonated – even in cases where legislators may not be strongly in favor of basic research, they were extremely pleasant and made supportive remarks.
- Specifically: Some MA legislators asked their constituents to inform them when “Dear Colleague” letters supporting basic research were circulating to ask them to co-sign them. They also suggested to send the written “ask” sheet earlier in the year, before the budget hearings were underway! Another interesting anecdote – the MA participants, even if they don’t live in the 6th district, have visited last year the 6th district Congressman Moulton office and met with him. The Congressman has a special interest to the Bates Research and Engineering Laboratory (which occupies the space remaining from the former Bates Electron Linear Accelerator Laboratory). This year, they stopped by his office and left a card. Later, in the follow-up conversation with his chief of staff, they got a request that the office would like to be kept informed about future NP day visits, such that they can be included in the schedule.