

# Guidelines for the NYAC Telescope Proposal Review Committee

## Introduction

The New York Astronomical Corporation (NYAC) was chartered in 1968 with the goal "...to promote education and research in astronomy and astrophysics primarily for the scientific community of New York State and establish major astronomical facilities...". NYAC organizes meetings of the Astronomical Society of New York (ASNY) each April and October, provides travel grants to students for observing, and awards annual prizes for student papers. An earlier attempt to secure telescope funding was unsuccessful. In October 2008, the NYAC board of directors voted to renew the search for funding for a major telescope which would provide access to the entire NY astronomical community, enable front-line research, excite and train the next generation of students in the STEM disciplines, and stimulate public interest in science. A committee was formed which conducted a survey of the NYAC member institutions to determine the desired properties and science drivers for a major telescope. The survey found that the membership preferred a general purpose optical/near-IR telescope which would enable a broad range of research by faculty, postdocs, and students. (See <http://www2.newpaltz.edu/~forestea/ASNY/telescope.html> for the full results of the survey. A call for proposals was issued on August 3, 2010 with letters of intent due October 1, 2010, and ten page proposals due January 10, 2011. The proposals are required to provide 3 pages of scientific justification, 4 pages on the technical aspects of the telescope design, 2 pages on responsiveness to the desires of the NY community (as expressed in the survey), and one page on the funding model and potential partnerships.

Three proposals have been received.

## The Responsibilities of the Review Committee

The goal of the review committee is provide a written report to the NYAC Board of Directors, to be sent to the chairman of the board. The report should evaluate the three proposals based on the following criteria: (1) merits of the science case, (2) merits of the telescope design including reasonableness of the proposed costs and time to completion, (3) responsiveness to the desires of the NYAC community, and the expected breadth of participation across the NY State community, (4) importance of the NYAC telescope project in support of NY science and industry, (5) degree to which the proposed project places NY State at the forefront of astronomical observatories and astronomy, and (6) merits of the funding model and partnerships, including appeal of concept to NY State, potential partnerships and sponsors outside of NY State Government, including NY State industry, the Federal Government, other university or association partners, private donors, etc. The committee report should provide a ranked list of the proposals and a rationale for that ranking, in addition to their evaluation of each proposal.

## Logistics

The report of the review committee is due April 1, 2011. The committee may wish to hold a meeting at which the three proposal teams can make a presentation on their telescope concepts and answer questions posed by the committee. NYAC would cover the costs associated with travel to the meeting and would assist with scheduling and organizing the meeting, as well as the costs of any teleconferences.