4-12 meeting notes from Andrew

Version 1 contained Andrew's raw notes. Here's my quick, doubtful pass at merging in my interpretations and afterthoughts. Others are welcome to add /modify/correct this, create new pages etc. The wiki guards the past.

Attendees (seating order)

Andrew Gettelman (former PS), James Hannigan, James Done, Daran L Rife, Jason Knievel, Doug Kinison, John K Williams, Qian Wu, Dieter, Jordan Powers, Julia Lee-Taylor, Simone Tilmes, Aimé Fournier, Stephen Jascourt (COMET)

Initial discussion

- What is the context of exploring PS issues now?

- What defines the project scientist position?
    - Is it a track? No. What does a position-based description entail?
    - Is it tied to the category funding?
    - Is the point not to tie it to the category funding?
    - Practice of what is a PS or not is variable across UCAR.
    - UCP part of UCAR does not have Scientist positions, all are (or were as of 2002 ASPS report) PS due to importance of functions other than publishing in peer-reviewed journals
    - Also, practice differs from project to project: criteria differ (e.g., mentoring, supervising, papers)

Look for some kind of definition which is more stable.
Need recognition of different things.
Distinction: do different things, not publish or perish.
Seek to have something that represents an institutional commitment.
Lots of ways that people can contribute, but not all conform to academic experiences. [See here Aimé trying to decypher Andrew trying to decypher Aimé.]

How to reconcile base funding with flexibility?
The PS wants more secure funding, but how to get that 'recognition' in the context of the institutional commitment and flexibility.

The PS is still judged by academic standards (e.g., discounted for not being on scientist track).

Whether we like it or not, science funding is becoming increasingly sponsor and deadline driven. Put otherwise, many funding agencies expect a product or capability at project's end, beyond a publication in a peer review journal. This is one key way in which NCAR fulfills one of its missions: "To foster the transfer of knowledge and technology for the betterment of life on Earth". Publications are still important, because they help validate our science and technology. However, for many projects this is not the core goal. Examples include "delivery" of the HAIPER and designing and building the NWSC. Nevertheless, these are complex projects that require significant management effort and scientific oversight. This is far different than the traditional tenure track faculty position seen at a university, and upon which the Scientist track is modeled. Thus, the PS should not be judged by these standards.

Project scientist position has evolved. Still value in it.
People have worked their way up, although it is not a track.
What is needed is a broader view and institutional support.

"Flexibility" of good and bad kinds:
bad is if people are let go after project ends.
Deeper commitment from institution to provide a 'buffer' when people may be negotiating new projects.

Confusion: Associate scientists (e.g., AS4).

- AS is a person based position, not a project based position.
- Is Associate Scientist a track? If so then PS is only one that is not a track.
- Nevertheless PS are promoted 'informally'; never supposed to 'work your way up' but in practice people do.
- In practice it resembles a track. Formal *reclassification* process from II to III. No clock, no up or out.

Many project scientists do not want to be scientists.

- Some want to change over.
- Changing over is another issue: usually there is no opportunity to change over.
- There are cases of transfer due to leverage from external offers.
- Why don't they want or afford to have more scientists? How does that push people into being project scientist?
- Some do not want to be ladder scientists. Codify what that means.

Can we distill a short list?

- Define PS: what does that mean?
  Satisfy people in the position.
- Transfer from *PS* to *S*: down the road.
- PS4, what, when, how?
- Codify evalutation criteria: unify
- Long term commitment?
- Perception of position
    - inside institution
    - outside institution (outside peers are confused: is PS same as S?)
- How to give people choices.

Flexibility may need a different job category.
Too flexible now. Is more uniformity good or bad?
Uniformity, or Parity.

RAL and others:
How pay for time to do participate on this?
Need to charge to account key: Andrew **?** to talk to Brant and Roger/Maura.
Can't charge to bid and proposal.

Process forward

Representative from each lab and division? Meet with Chris, HR, Maura/Roger

Volunteers to go to next step: solicit by email.

1. Asking Chris what he wants next. Want to know what is needed.
What is the Timeline.
2. Write down suggestions: Wiki page. (Aimé)
3. Get time and support to help with process.