

Fermi Project Senior Review Report Clarification

The report of the 2014 Senior Review panel stated:

“The 2012 SRP recommended that the Fermi team develop and implement a plan for reduction of FTEs supporting instrument operations as the mission entered the extended phase. The SRP also recommended strong sustained support of the GI program. During the past two years the Fermi team has succeeded at reducing their operational budget by 27% while maintaining a strong GI program, according to Table 1 of the proposal. However, the identical table in the Fermi proposal for the 2012 SR indicated a substantially lower number of FTE during 2012 Fermi Prime phase compared to the same column in the 2014 SR proposal. Compared to the Fermi 2012 SR proposal, the Fermi team has met the expected FTE reduction for MO and for LAT activities, but has not met this goal for the GBM and FSSC.”

The purpose of the aforementioned tables in the 2012 and 2014 proposals was to demonstrate how the Fermi FTE have evolved since the final year in the prime phase, therefore each table included FTE numbers for both FY12 and an outlying year (FY14 or FY15). The tables in both the 2012 and 2014 proposals showed a significant reduction in FTE from the prime phase to the extended phase of the mission.

The above quote indicates that the panel compared the FTE tables in the 2012 and 2014 proposals side-by-side and found inconsistencies between the two tables. The panel apparently assumed that the two tables were constructed identically and incorrectly took the lower FY12 numbers from the 2012 proposal as a baseline for comparison, therefore concluding that the Fermi mission had not met the proposed FTE reductions. *Unfortunately, this assumption was not correct because the rules for constructing this table changed between the two reviews.*

Per the instructions in the 2012 and 2014 Astrophysics Senior Review Call for Proposals, the Fermi project *excluded* NASA civil servant labor in the table in the 2012 proposal and *included* NASA civil servant labor in the table in the 2014 proposal. The table in the 2014 proposal is correct, current, and reflects the reductions in the mission workforce from FY12 to FY15. Thus the FTE reduction was met as planned and as documented in the table in the 2014 proposal. As the panel noted, the overall Fermi mission budget decreased by 27%, and this was largely due to FTE reductions.

The Fermi mission is continuing to make reductions and enhance efficiencies as the extended phase continues, as recommended by the Senior Review Panel, and will present the case for continued operations of Fermi in the 2016 review.

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