



SARA-CTIO Observatory Director's Report

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I. Introduction

The SARA-CTIO telescope this semester worked reliably, but our largest issue has been the network connection. Many observers either could not connect at all, or had significant issue connecting. A secondary issue has been the (I think related) issue with not being able to establish an outgoing connection from the observatory computers in order to transfer data out.

II. Telescope Usage

In total 50% of nights were reported (from April 21 through the end of October). 38% of the total time was reported as being used for observations, 39% of the total time was reported as lost to weather, and 3% lost to technical issues. Of the *reported* nights, 48% was observed and 52% of the time was lost.

III. Usage by others

Lowell and Chilean observers continue to make use of their time allotments (neither of those groups seemed to have significant connection issues).

IV. Observatory Problems

There were no reoccurring issues with the *telescope* operation this semester. The obvious primary issue has been the issue of network connection. After several months of back-and-forth with the IT representatives handling the network connection changes, we were able to finally establish the new method (using Cisco AnyConnect). That method has been distributed to users and all should not be using the new method. Recall that our Acceptable Use Policy requires us to use the new method once it is available, as it is now.

For those able to maintain a connection, there were no ongoing issues related to the use of the telescope.

At present the major issue is the inability to make an outgoing network connection from the observatory computers. I believe that this issue is most likely related to the changes to the network on the mountain, specifically the connection methods. However, I do not know for sure. I have tried repeatedly over the past month to contact multiple people in IT at CTIO, with no response. My next step will be to contact the observatory director (or assistant director).

The only method at present that seems to work is through a Radmin connection (if anyone else has discovered a method please let me know). I use a Mac, so do not have a Radmin connection, but over the next week I will use one of our departmental PCs to set up a Radmin connection and begin downloading observer's data to Google Drive. I will send an email to sara-tech to ask which observers would like for me to download their data and will do so as quickly as I am able. This is obviously not a good solution, but until I can get a response from CTIO, it may be the only real option.

V. Instrumentation

1. Science Camera

The camera has continued to work well with no noticeable issues.

2. Spectrograph

The spectrograph is installed, but the camera failed and Peter was looking at possible replacements prior to the network shutdown. Gary and I communicated briefly about replacements, but other issues this semester a replacement has not yet been ordered.

VI. A Request and Personal Apology

There have been a number of issues this semester that I have not addressed well, or have missed entirely for some period of time. I have had a number of significant personal issues arise in the past year, but especially in the past six months that have dramatically affected my productivity in these areas. Unfortunately, most of those personal issues continue and I fear that I will not be able to respond to SARA-CT issues as quickly as the consortium deserves.

For that reason, I would like to request that someone else on the board take over as the SARA-CT director. If there is a board member willing to do so then I will help with the transition to the best of my ability. If someone is not willing at present, then I will continue as director, but with the ongoing request that a new director be found as quickly as possible.

I apologize for the time and efficiency that this has cost the consortium. I also apologize for not recognizing more quickly that my ability to act effectively as the SARA-CT director was being so negatively impacted.