User Survey Summary

EMSL is committed to continually improving the users' experience. Although change cannot always be implemented overnight, we rely strongly on the input received from our user community and encourage you to continue providing feedback to our technical staff, our User Support Office, and through the bi-annual survey. Users can also provide comments and feedback to the User Executive Committee and should feel free to contact anyone on the committee at any time.

Currently, user surveys are administered biannually for experimental users and are sent only to those individuals who have accessed our resources during the prior six months or annually for computational-only users and are sent only to those individuals who have accessed computing resources during the prior year. The results of the most recent survey are posted here with management responses to concerns or issues identified by our user community.

April 2013 Survey

Surveys Submitted Between April 11, 2013, and May 2, 2013.

Survey Satisfaction: 93.4 %

Survey Responses: 109

Surveys Sent: 447

Survey Response Rate: 24.4%

1. How satisfied were you with the availability of facilities and equipment?

- 61 Very Satisfied
- 44 Satisfied
- 2 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 0 Dissatisfied
- 0 Very Dissatisfied
- 0 Not Applicable

2. How satisfied were you with performance of facilities and equipment (e.g., were they maintained to specifications for your intended use, ready when scheduled, etc.)?

- 61 Very Satisfied
- 40 Satisfied
- 5 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 1 Dissatisfied
- 0 Very Dissatisfied

- 1 Not Applicable

3. List additional capabilities that you think EMSL should have.

User comments to this and other survey questions are below.

4. With the new knowledge gained at EMSL, I expect to (check all that apply):

- 97 Disseminate new knowledge via publication in peer-reviewed open literature
- 79 Disseminate new knowledge via presentations at professional society meetings
- 9 Acquire a patent
- 47 Further Department of Energy mission(s)
- 63 Facilitate collaborative interactions (e.g., stimulated new ideas for future experiment; increased work; etc.)
- 45 Train students (undergraduate, graduate or postdoctoral associate)
- 63 Use data for a future proposal
- 55 Establish or grow network and/or further collaboration
- 1 Other

5. How satisfied were you with the assistance provided by the EMSL technical staff?

- 77 Very Satisfied
- 24 Satisfied
- 3 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 0 Dissatisfied
- 0 Very Dissatisfied
- 4 Not Applicable

6. How satisfied were you with the assistance provided by the EMSL administrative staff?

- 62 Very Satisfied
- 34 Satisfied
- 5 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 0 Dissatisfied
- 0 Very Dissatisfied
- 5 Not Applicable

7. How appropriate and user friendly were the training and safety procedures?

- 42 Very Satisfied
- 42 Satisfied
- 9 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 3 Dissatisfied
- 0 Very Dissatisfied

- 12 Not Applicable

8. How satisfied were you with the proposal process (e.g. submission & review)?

- 45 Very Satisfied
- 36 Satisfied
- 11 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 0 Dissatisfied
- 1 Very Dissatisfied
- 15 Not Applicable

9. How did you learn about EMSL?

- 16 Scientific meeting/conference
- 6 Internet search
- 12 Journal publication
- 24 Previous EMSL use
- 42 Colleague
- 73 PNNL staff member
- 1 Other

USER ENDORSEMENTS AND COMMENTS

Although not all comments are shown, below is a representative sampling of the positive user comments received.

- Researchers and staff…were extremely helpful at every turn.
- We are obtaining high quality mass spec data from very small quantities of sample (sub-microgram), indicating that sensitivity is excellent.
- Assistance to researchers was absolutely great, including the assignment of office space.
- At every turn, [our host] was communicative and helpful in establishing connections and providing information on the application and research process.

EMSL's Response

As always, our goal is to provide a positive user experience—and we accomplish that most often because of the high level of assistance and expertise provided by our staff. We want to especially thank Zihua Zhu, Bruce Arey, Alex Laskin, and Theva Thevuthasan, who were mentioned with high praise by our users.

User Concerns and Suggestions

While user satisfaction rates very highly, we carefully review any comments in which users expressed concerns or suggestions for improvement. These have been compiled into several topical areas and representative comments are provided below, along with EMSL's response.

USER COMMENTS

OVERSUBSCRIBED INSTRUMENTATION OR STAFFING

- Training of visitors to use the computational software, the staff unlike the experimental scientist not very accommodating/helpful.
- The data analysis support has lagged behind the technical support, but is catching up.
- More interaction between EMSL staff: once you arrive in EMSL is hard to know in a short period of time capabilities, and scientists that can help you.

EMSL'S RESPONSE

We fully expect experimental users to receive the same level of support on our supercomputer as we provide to our computing users who are using experimental resources. In 2012, we reevaluated the process used for estimating user support on our computational resources and have tried to adjust our calculations for fiscal year 2013. Users who encounter delays or problems with their projects are encouraged to contact their host or the User Support Office.

Our goals are to schedule effectively so users have the appropriate level of and access to staff support, and to provide an open atmosphere where interactions are encouraged. For 2013, we made a special effort to link onsite users with their project hosts, who serve as an information source regarding capabilities and as a conduit to staff with the appropriate expertise to assist you during your visit. We encourage you to contact the host or the User Support Office at any time with questions or problems that come up during your visit.

USER COMMENTS

TRAINING

- I think they are fine.
- Too much time spent on things like climbing ladders.
- Not entirely necessary. Bit of an overkill.

EMSL'S RESPONSE

As reported in the prior survey response, PNNL has begun an effort to focus the training for our users into role-specific modules. The first course, PNNL Orientation, rolled out in early fiscal year 2013 and has reduced training by at least 3 hours. Additional courses are being refined for release in fiscal year 2014 and 2015. Based on the reduction in user complaints in this area, we think the changes are starting to have an effect and look forward to even more improvements.

USER COMMENTS

TRANSPARENT PROCESSES AND COMMUNICATION

- It was very timely.
- Very prompt decision.
- Very easy to use—I found it easier than [other user facility's] submission and review process.

EMSL'S RESPONSE

We are pleased to see that the external user community has seen improvement with the proposal process. We appreciate suggestions for further improvements and incorporate them to the extent possible into each year's work plan.

USER COMMENTS

OPERATIONAL DELAYS OR DOWNTIME

- The data analysis support has lagged behind the technical support, but is catching up.
- The time allotted was too short. However, I understand that this is to be expected with a Rapid Access Proposal. A full proposal has been submitted to follow up. All EMSL technical staff with whom we interacted were very helpful.
- The LEAP system failed. But there was prompt service to fix the issues.

EMSL'S RESPONSE

Most of the comments provided indicated delays that were related to juggling student schedules with available time on instruments or difficult samples and project scope, which are of course inevitable. However, a couple of users commented about scheduling conflicts that prevented instruments from being readily available or instruments that were semi-broken too many times causing delays. Because we schedule instruments based on user visits, these may be related to intermittent or local users who have a less structured schedule for use. In these cases, it's difficult to have all the instruments in ready condition. Unfortunately, no details were provided so it's difficult to determine underlying causes or potential solutions. We encourage you to contact the User Support Office or User Program Services Manager during your visit if you encounter any delays so we can work on a more permanent solution for the future.

USER COMMENTS

ADDITIONAL CAPABILITIES REQUESTED BY THE USERS

- MOLCAS software
- Atomic EELS on electron microscopes.
- Cryo-EM and high sensitivity magnetic resonance

EMSL'S RESPONSE

User surveys are reviewed for suggestions that can enhance our suite of instruments, and requests that are in high demand by the user community are considered as part of our annual capital planning. These requests were fairly modest but we want to point out that we do have a cryo-TEM and several high sensitivity NMRs. For details of these or to provide more information

related to the experiments you have in mind, we encourage you to talk to the appropriate Capability Lead (http://www.emsl.pnl.gov/contacts/) or your host.