

# **ALTAIR MEETING**

**June 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>**

**What is the US. Telescope System?**

- Public/ Independent O/IR facilities**
- Public has 20% of collecting area**
- Public has 90% of NSF O/IR funding**
- ACCORD represents US O/IR observatories; is a trade association.**

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## Collecting Area (D2) of U.S. O/IR Telescopes with D > 3m

<b>Independents</b>		<b>NSF Funded</b>	
• Keck (2 x 10m)	200	Gemini N/S (2 x 8m)(50%)	65
• LBT (2 x 8.4m) (50%)	71	KP 3.8m	16
• HET 9m (90%)	73	CTIO 3.8m	16
• Magellan (2 x 6.5m)	84	WIYN (40%)	4
• MMT 6.5m	42	SOAR (25%)	4
• Palomar 5m	25		
• SOAR 4m (50%)	8		
• ARC 3.5m	11		
• WIYN 3.5m (60%)	7		
• Lick 3.0m	9		
• SALT			
<b>Total</b>	<b>530</b>		<b>105</b>

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**Question: Is the community serious about “The System”?**

**Has been Key to US competitiveness in O/IR astronomy.**

**Will it continue that role?**

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**Question: Is the community serious about “The System”?**

**Advantages of System:**

- **Leverage independent investment.**
- **Exploits PI Passion and Originality**
- **Increases instrumentation /time for to US community.**
- **Key element in maintaining US competitive position**
- **Enables evolution to ELT era.**
- **Supported by ACCORD.**

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**Question: Is the community serious about “The System”?**

## **Disadvantages:**

- Requires financial support.**
- Implies changes in NSF funding priorities.**
- Care required not to discourage independent investment.**

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**Key Components for System to work:**

**Funding for:**

**TSIP (including buy time)**

**AODP**

**ATI**

**“Real” grants program**

**Look forward to GSMT and LST.**

**Need to contain operations costs etc.**

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From the ACCORD chair (S. Kulkarni)

- **The Independent observatories are an integral part of the system.**
- **The first and foremost requirement we have is stability in funding.**
- **An improvement in efficiency at the independents is beneficial to the entire system. This means steady funding for improvements in the telescopes, better detectors etc.**
- **Finally, AO is a big issue for all large telescopes; stable support is essential.**

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## What can ALTAIR do?

- Review System from perspective of optimum use of resources to maintain US leadership in O/IR research.
- Identify funded activities that do not contribute to research leadership goal.
- Recommend improved distribution of resources within current budget constraints
- Examine whether we are “headed in the right direction”.