Leiden Observatory reply to the NOVA Evaluation Board report

Leiden Observatory greatly appreciates the comments and recommendations of the EB and will ensure that appropriate actions will be taken. We are proud to be *'one of the leading astronomy research programs in the world* '.

Two points are particularly noteworthy:

1. *The age and gender profiles for the Sterrewacht faculty are, as already noted, distinctly out of balance. These issues should be addressed proactively, since they will inevitably affect the long-term success of the Observatory. Current hiring strategies should be reviewed with this in mind.*

The Sterrewacht is fully aware of the lack of gender and age balance. The total number of faculty has been virtually stable during the last two decades. While the last two hires have been female, we agree that progress in this area has been slow. Due to retirements, we expect two to three new faculty hires during the next five years. Furthermore, due to the growing number of students, two to three 6-year, temporary lectureships (40% teaching, 60% research) will become available. Hiring excellent young female researchers on these positions will have top priority.

2. *The Sterrewacht appears to be justifiably proud of attracting the leadership role in the construction of METIS. The EB is concerned that the staff as a whole should recognize the very serious concerns regarding the level of risk in this venture and should support NOVA and the project administration in the wide-ranging monitoring that is required.*

The Sterrewacht realises that there are serious risks associated with the METIS project. Sterrewacht management closely follows all reviews by the NOVA instrument steering committee, the METIS project and ESO management, and we refer to the NOVA response to the EB report for further details. The Sterrewacht supports and will support the METIS project as much as possible. Together with NOVA, Leiden Observatory recently hired a METIS calibration scientist, who will not only carry out the specific calibration tasks, but will also assist the METIS PI with general project tasks.