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**From:** Martin Elvis [mailto:elvis@head.cfa.harvard.edu]  
**Sent:** Sun 1/27/2008 7:58 PM  
**To:** Andy Lawrence  
**Cc:** elvis@head.cfa.harvard.edu  
**Subject:** Gemini News (fwd)

Andy:

I assume you saw this. It just came around to all US astronomers.  
What a \*\*\*\*-up! You still have to pay full whack for 2 years, but instantly  
get no observing time. Yuck.

-m.

----- Forwarded Message

Date: Fri, 25 Jan 2008 20:42:57 -0700  
From: Todd Boroson <tyb@noao.edu>, "Verne V. Smith" <vsmith@noao.edu>  
To: elvis@cfa.harvard.edu  
Subject: Gemini News

As you are probably aware, at the November 2007 meeting of the Gemini Board, the UK announced its intention to withdraw from the Gemini Partnership prior to the end of the current Operating Agreement on 31 December 2012. This intent was reiterated in a 12 December 2007 letter from the UK's Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC).

The Gemini Board conducted a telecon on 24 January 2008 in which it was agreed that as of 12 December 2007 the UK was no longer a partner in the International Gemini Observatory. As part of the operating agreement, the UK is liable to continue to pay its share of Gemini operating expenses for two years after their early withdrawal, but will lose its access to Gemini immediately. The Board intends to act in a manner to maintain the continuity of operations and the scientific opportunities of the remaining partners.

NOAO and the NGSC are in close communication with Gemini and are discussing a number of ways to move forward into 2008-2009. Input from the US community will certainly be sought - we don't yet know how, but we will be convening our community advisory committee, the US Gemini SAC, in the next few weeks to put together a plan. In our view, the unfortunate loss of the UK as a partner does open up significant opportunities for increased access to the Gemini telescopes for the US user community.

The STFC statement can be found at the following Web site:  
<http://www.scitech.ac.uk/PMC/PReI/STFC/Gemini-Update.aspx>

Feel free to contact either of us if you have comments or questions about this developing situation.

Best wishes,

Todd Boroson (tyb@noao.edu <<mailto:tyb@noao.edu>>), Interim Director, NOAO

Verne V. Smith (vsmith@noao.edu <<mailto:vsmith@noao.edu>>), Director, NOAO Gemini Science Center (NGSC)

----- End of Forwarded Message