Consortium approach for the Upper Atmospheric Facilities

The NSF's Upper Atmospheric Facilities, principally the incoherent scatter radars and SuperDARN, have consistently made very valuable and significant contributions to upper atmosphere, ionosphere, and magnetosphere research for nearly five decades. Often these facilities have cooperated to make joint observations, for example in latitudinal chain experiments and most recently in connection with the International Polar Year, but generally the facilities have pursued their own research and technical development agendas in relative isolation.

Several recent reviews have called for a more closely coupled environment to support operations, technical development, research, and data provision and have pointed out the substantial benefits which are to be expected.

The first steps are being taken to create the basic minimal infrastructure to support this new initiative and this presentation will describe the underlying goals, the planned structures, and the expected timeline for this process. The research being conducted at the separate UAF facilities addresses many processes and aspects of the coupled geospace system. In conjunction with this activity, an integrated science plan will be developed, closely coupled to research community interests and incorporating the individual facility's capabilities.