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Commissioning and operation of the new Karl G. Jansky Very Large Array

The Expanded VLA Construction Project was a decade-long project to transform the capabilities of the VLA, culminating in its re-dedication in 2012 as the Jansky VLA. The need to keep a vibrant and engaged user community throughout the entire construction project translated into operational requirements (one of which was allowing the minimum down-time possible), and the need for a mechanism to provide the community with early access to the new capabilities alongside on-going construction and commissioning, using a staged approach. This access was enabled during the EVLA Construction Project by defining an Open Shared Risk Observing (OSRO) program for the general community, and a Resident Shared Risk Observing (RSRO) program for those requesting capabilities not fully commissioned in exchange for a period of residency to help commission and test those capabilities with the assistance of NRAO staff. The OSRO program has become the General Observing (GO) program in full operations, and the RSRO program has continued as a means of maintaining, and adding to, an active pool of users with innovative ideas for new capabilities, driven by their science. Besides the new technical capabilities, the start of full operations of the Jansky VLA also introduced full dynamic scheduling, including the ability for fast (less than 24 hour) response to triggers and targets of opportunity, and the delivery of pipeline-calibrated visibility data for continuum projects. I will discuss some of the challenges resulting from the new capabilities and operational model for the VLA.