



OFFICE OF THE
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
FOR MATHEMATICAL AND
PHYSICAL SCIENCES

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
4201 WILSON BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230

March 28, 2005

Dear Colleagues:

The MPSAC meeting will take place Thursday and Friday, April 7-8, 2005. There are a number of topics that will be addressed at this meeting, and I'm looking forward to my discussions with you. In preparing the agenda for this meeting, we've deliberately kept background material and the number of topics to a minimum in order that both you and we can focus our attention on a few specific topics.

I'm sure you're all aware that the NSF now has an FY 2005 appropriation and has submitted the FY 2006 budget request to Congress. The FY 2005 budget for NSF was reduced from that of FY 2004 to a total of \$5.47 billion, \$105 million (or 1.9%) below last year, the first budget cut for NSF in years. *We are likely to be entering a period of significant, government-wide fiscal restraint, and its impact on the FY 2006 budget request and future NSF and MPS budgets will be a subject of discussion both at our divisional breakout meetings and with the full committee.*

Issues related to broadening the participation of women in MPS fields surfaced at the last meeting. As a result of those discussions, a group made up of interested MPSAC members and NSF staff has held a number of discussions organizing what will be a major aspect of the April meeting. The status of women in MPS fields, particularly enhancing their participation as faculty at research universities, is a topic for the divisional breakout sessions, and we will devote all of Friday morning to a discussion of this topic. *In preparation for our discussions, I would be grateful if you would come to our meeting with information about your institution's/ department's efforts at recruiting and retaining women faculty, post-docs, and graduate students.*

In addition, two divisions (Astronomy and Materials Research) have held Committees of Visitors (COVs) during February. The COV reports and the MPS responses to them will be presented to you for your discussion and acceptance on Thursday morning. Also, as an information item, you will be hearing a report on the NSF-wide COV that was held in March on the Information Technology Research initiative at NSF. We will also receive the report of the MPS Theory Workshop.

Briefing materials for this and previous meetings, including the final report of the MPS Cyberscience Workshop (our thanks to Shenda Baker for completing this), are posted on the MPSAC web page at <http://www.nsf.gov/mps/advisory.jsp>. Materials for the meeting are being posted now.

I'm looking forward to seeing you in April.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. S. Turner".

Michael S. Turner
Assistant Director