



UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
M E M O R A N D U M

DIRECTORATE FOR MATHEMATICAL AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Date: October 25, 2006
From: Assistant Director, MPS
Subject: **MPS Advisory Committee Meeting November 1-3, 2006**
To: MPSAC Members

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the upcoming meeting of the MPS Advisory Committee (MPSAC) to be held November 1-3 at the offices of the National Science Foundation in Arlington, Virginia.

The meeting will begin with a special orientation session of the MPSAC the afternoon of Wednesday, November 1, where new members will be briefed on activities of NSF, MPS, and Divisions within MPS. Continuing members are also welcome to attend these briefings.

I want to welcome new members to the MPSAC: Iain Johnstone (Stanford University), William Jorgensen (Yale University), David Keyes (Columbia University), Theresa Maldonado (Texas A&M University), Dusa McDuff (Suny-Stony Brook), Ian Robertson (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), Winston Soboyejo (Princeton University), and Robert Williams (Space Telescope Science Institute).

I also want to thank the members of the MPSAC who have just rotated off for all of their efforts on behalf of MPS over the last three years: Janet Conrad (Columbia University), Luis Echegoyen (Clemson University and now Division Director of MPS' Chemistry Division), Mostafa El-Sayed (Georgia Institute of Technology), Frances Hellman (University of California, Berkeley), John Huchra (Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics and Harvard University), Lucy Fortson (Adler Planetarium and University of Chicago), Raymond Johnson (University of Maryland), Jon Kettenring (Drew University), and Venkatesh Narayanamurti (Harvard University).

W. Carl Lineberger (University of Colorado) has also rotated off the Advisory Committee, and I want to thank him for his leadership of the MPSAC as Chair of the Committee for the past two years. His service has been invaluable to MPS and to NSF.

I am very pleased to announce that Michael Witherell has agreed to be the Chair of the MPSAC. The staff of MPS and I are looking forward, as I am sure you are, to working with him on MPSAC matters.

I have given some thought to the structure of the MPSAC and I will be interested in your suggestions on how the interaction between the MPSAC and MPS can be increased in the period between our two meetings. A possibility is the creation of subcommittees for various areas of interest, with representation from the MPSAC, staff from my office, and staff from the MPS Divisions. These subcommittees might be chaired by an MPSAC member and conduct meetings via telecons or video conference calls on a regular basis, reporting to the MPSAC at the November and April meetings. I would be very interested in hearing of other suggestions.

In this vein, I consider the breakout sessions a very important aspect of MPSAC meetings, and would welcome your suggestions as to how these sessions might be enhanced. For example, should there be regular communication between the Divisions and the MPSAC members assigned to that Division for the breakout sessions? I would welcome your comments and suggestions.

At the April 2005 meeting the MPSAC had a very successful discussion concerning women in the mathematical and physical sciences and their career paths within the academic community. For this meeting, on Thursday morning, in the breakout sessions that afternoon, and in our plenary discussions following the breakout sessions, we will be discussing another aspect of broadening participation, that of underrepresented minorities in our disciplines. Luis Echegoyen will be introducing this session and this will be followed by a presentation by Larry Dalton. The University of Michigan's Center for Research in Learning and Teaching Theater Group will join us and present a sketch related to the question of underrepresented minorities at our meeting. I understand that this Group made a very successful presentation at the Division of Chemistry's Gender Equity Workshop last January.

NSF is currently operating under a continuing resolution. The NSF FY 2007 budget is still before Congress, and an appropriations bill for NSF has yet to be passed by Congress and signed into law by the President. The NSF FY 2008 budget request will become public in February 2007 when the President presents his budget request for FY 2008 to Congress. MPSAC involvement in planning for the FY 2009 budget request will begin in the breakout sessions on Thursday and continue on Friday when we will discuss with you several activities presently taking place within NSF and MPS.

With respect to support for MPS facilities, we will bring you up to date on the status of facility planning within MPS. In particular, Roger Blandford (Stanford University) will be presenting the report of the Division of Astronomical Sciences Senior Review. This subcommittee of the MPSAC was charged with examining the Division of Astronomical Sciences portfolio of facilities and other selected, discretionary activities with the goal of redistributing roughly \$30M of annual spending, roughly 15 percent of the total budget and 25 percent of the budget currently spent on facilities. The report can be found in the "For MPSAC Members" on the MPSAC web page at <http://www.nsf.gov/mps/advisory.jsp>.

Dr. Morris Aizenman, the Senior Science Associate in MPS, serves as a liaison between the Advisory Committee and the MPS Directorate. Should you have questions or suggestions concerning activities of the Committee, please contact him at 703-292-8807 or by email at maizenma@nsf.gov. Ms. Kamaria Salau, has already sent you information concerning travel and

hotel arrangements. Should you have any questions concerning your travel, you may reach her at 703-292-8800 or by email at ksalau@nsf.gov.

I look forward to seeing you in November.

Sincerely yours,

Tony F. Chan
Assistant Director