

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Astronomy and Astrophysics Advisory Committee**

4 March 2010

National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA, via teleconference

Members attending:	Wendy Freedman (Chair) Sarah Church Kim Griest Jacqueline Hewitt Rocky Kolb	David Koo Gregory Laughlin John Wefel Brian Winer Charles "Chick" Woodward
Agency personnel:	Craig Foltz, NSF-AST Philip Puxley, NSF-AST Elizabeth Pentecost, NSF-AST James Ulvestad, NSF-AST Nigel Sharp, NSF-AST	Donald Terndrup, NSF-AST James Whitmore, NSF-PHY Jon Morse, NASA HQ Michael Salamon, NASA HQ Kathy Turner, DOE-HEP
Others:	Steve Traver, U.S. House of Rep.	Bill McGovern, Spaceport America

MEETING CONVENED 12:00 PM EST, 4 MARCH 2010

The Chair called the meeting to order, and all participants identified themselves.

The Chair and Vice Chair visited several congressional offices on 2 March to brief staff on the annual report. This was as a result of discussions in October with congressional staff about a face-to-face meeting prior to release of the AAAC report. The Chair indicated the briefings went well. The congressional staff seemed generally interested in hearing what the community was doing and viewed the decadal survey as positive. There was a walk-through of the report recommendations. They are willing to help implement some of these recommendations and make this decadal survey meaningful. Having an implementation plan that would go to OMB early in the decade would be useful.

Sarah Church indicated that Roger Blandford is planning to spend 3-4 months explaining the survey report.

Roger Blandford has been asked to review the report for the Committee along with several other persons. The Chair will collate the additions and changes and create a final draft for Committee approval.

Jon Morse indicated that NASA has received requests to make sure that money is available beyond the original performance period. The decadal survey report is nominally due out in June 2010, but the NRC has indicated that there may be a slip in the release of the report from mid Fall to end of the calendar year. The agencies are quite concerned about this. All of the agencies have partnerships and a budget process. NASA has spent a fair amount of time talking about the need for input from the survey before the budget request goes to OMB. All three agencies

sponsoring the decadal survey are considering sending the NRC a letter about the possible impacts about a delayed schedule. If the 2012 budget cycle or partnership opportunities are missed there could be long term effects. The Planetary Science community is conducting a decadal survey to be delivered in 2011 and they would be in the following budget cycle. The astronomy and astrophysics community would be in conflict with that if this window was missed. The agencies may not be able to move forward until the report is released.

Wefel asked Morse if a delivery of August or September of the report would be sufficient for planning. Morse replied that ideally it would be in the spring, but the August/September timeframe could be sufficient for the agencies to provide a proactive response to OMB. The agencies do not want a delay to the public release of the survey. Any action such as an announcement of opportunity, solicitation, or a milestone review that depends on the decadal survey also depends on the public release. September really is the drop-dead date in this budget cycle.

The Chair asked Morse if the agencies have said anything about their concerns to the decadal survey. Morse replied that Blandford is well aware of the schedule pressure that may help the impact of the decadal survey. The agencies are looking at co-signing a letter in the near term about expediting the release. NSF and DOE stand behind NASA in this.

The remaining discussion was dedicated to the annual report due 15 March 2010. The Chair requested comments on the draft, and members discussed the report's structure and recommendations. The report will contain a set of findings and recommendations.

Ms. Pentecost will provide the Chair with the names and addresses of report recipients.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 1:15 PM EST, 4 MARCH 2010