



OFFICE OF THE
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
FOR MATHEMATICAL AND
PHYSICAL SCIENCES

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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Dear Members of the MPS Advisory Committee:

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the meeting of the MPS Advisory Committee (MPSAC) meeting that will take place April 7-9 here at NSF. An agenda for this meeting has been developed in consultation with the MPSAC Chair, Dr. Jim Berger. In this letter I'd like to review this agenda and what I hope we will accomplish at this meeting.

This has been a rather unsettling time for all Federal agencies with respect to the FY 2011 budget. As I write, NSF and the other parts of the Federal government are currently funded under a continuing resolution that expires on April 8th. I will be reporting to you on the impact of the FY 2010 budget, the impact of the current situation and the MPS budget request for FY 2012.

We will have reports by the Chairs of the Committee of Visitors (COV) for the Division of Astronomical Sciences and the Division of Materials Research. These reports cover meetings that took place in February. These COV reports and the MPS response to these reports are on the MPS web site and I recommend you review these prior to our meeting.

In FY 2010 NSF established the Science, Engineering, and Education for Sustainability (SEES) investment area in order to address challenges in climate and energy research and education using a systems-based approach to understanding, predicting, and reacting to change in the linked natural, social, and built environment. SEES is expected to be a multi-year effort, and includes sustainable energy research in science and engineering, and its socioeconomic and environmental implications. In response to this initiative, MPS created a working group on energy. A recommendation of the MPSAC was that this activity should be expanded to include input from the Directorate for Engineering (ENG) leading to a joint working group made up of a representative from each of the Divisions from the two Directorates. This group meets on a weekly basis. Dr. Esther Takeuchi and Dr. Ilesanmi Adesida, a member of the ENG Advisory Committee are invited to participate in these meetings via teleconference. At our meeting Esther will report on a workshop on the topic of clean sustainable energy that was organized by this working group and at which she and Dr. Adesida were participants. This report will be followed by a report from Dr. Fred Roberts on the recent meeting of NSF's Environmental Research and Education (ERE) Advisory Committee that took place recently. Fred is the MPSAC representative to this committee.

We will have our traditional breakout sessions on Thursday afternoon where members of the MPS Divisions will meet with MPSAC members. While in November we decided not to have reports from the breakout sessions, we will be returning to the previous format of having reports of these breakout sessions presented when we reconvene in plenary session later in the afternoon.

Our meeting on Thursday will conclude with preparations for our meeting the following day with Dr. Subra Suresh, the NSF Director, and with Dr. Cora Marrett.

On Friday we will be looking to the future. I will be discussing the FY 2011/FY 2012 implementation plans that you have been working together with us on scientific and educational areas that MPS might develop in future budget requests starting in FY 2013. We will be looking to you and the recommendations you have made in your white papers to lead in these discussions.

Your white papers have had impact within MPS and NSF. There have been requests for access to these papers by other interested parties. Because of this, I asked all of the working groups to prepare the documents for release to the public.

While there has been input from staff within MPS in the development of these white papers, these papers represent the views and recommendations to MPS from the MPSAC working groups. After a short discussion of each of the white papers by the MPSAC chairs, we will be asking you to authorize their release to the public as the views and recommendations of the MPSAC. The white papers are available in the "MPSAC Members Only" area of the MPSAC web site. Morris Aizenman has already sent to information needed to access these documents on the MPSAC web site

For some time I have felt that MPS requires a document that will inform the public of the directions that MPS will be taking in the next few years. I believe that these white papers should form the backbone of a vision document for MPS to be developed by the MPSAC. Similar documents have been produced by the Advisory Committee for the Geosciences Directorate and the Environmental Research and Education Advisory Committee. I have asked Morris to begin development of concepts for the document and he will be discussing this with you.

Finally, we will be meeting with Dr. Suresh and Dr. Marrett at noon on Friday. We will be taking a somewhat different approach to this meeting than we have in the past. After an introduction from Jim on the impact of the MPSAC's work with MPS, we will be asking each of the working group Chairs to give a short (no more than 5 minute) briefing to Drs. Suresh and Marrett on their white paper and recommendations. We will also present both of them with copies of all of the white papers.

In conclusion, I want to express my deep thanks to all of you for your efforts on behalf of MPS and NSF. I believe that we have established a close and significant working relationship between MPS and the Advisory Committee that I hope will continue to be productive!

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting and working with you in the future.

With best wishes,

Edward Seidel
Assistant Director