



OFFICE OF THE
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
FOR MATHEMATICAL AND
PHYSICAL SCIENCES

**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
4201 WILSON BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230**

February 24, 2014

Advisory Committee
Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to welcome you to our annual in-person meeting of the Mathematical and Physical Sciences Directorate Advisory Committee (MPSAC), scheduled for Thursday and Friday, April 3 and 4. The agenda is on the [MPSAC website](#), and a copy accompanies this letter.

Our formal meeting begins with a joint session with the Advisory Committee for Cyberinfrastructure (ACCI), an excellent opportunity to explore and develop synergies between our two communities. Once again, the agenda focuses on discussion of materials posted for your pre-meeting review, reinforcing our plans for the AC to provide the Directorate with advice from the community. I look forward to these discussions, some of which I preview here.

NSF/MPS Budget: The FY 2014 operating plan should be public soon, and the President's Budget Request to Congress is scheduled for release in the next few weeks. I plan to describe the elements relevant to MPS.

Staffing: For the first time in more than a year, we have a full complement of senior staff with no acting members, having welcomed Michael Vogelius as the Division Director for the Division of Mathematical Sciences (DMS) in January.

Merit Review Discussion: We will have the discussion of merit review originally scheduled for our cancelled November meeting. The goal is to examine the status and effectiveness of merit review. As background and context, we will hear from a Foundation-wide Merit Review Working Group and learn about several pilot projects to deal with increased proposal load in a time of reduced resources and increase restrictions. With that information in hand, we will discuss your thoughts and possible paths forward.

Briefings: In addition to our joint session with ACCI, we will receive briefings from two other NSF-wide advisory committees: the Committee on Equal Opportunity in Science and Engineering (CEOSE) and the Advisory Committee on International Science and Engineering (AC-ISE). The CEOSE briefing will describe their recent recommendation to Congress that NSF launch a major initiative on Broadening Participation, and the AC-ISE briefing will describe efforts to develop a Strategic Framework to guide the Foundation's decisions on international engagement over the next several years. We will also hear about the status of NSF's response to the OSTP "Public Access" memorandum, and I will describe NSF's new Strategic Plan.

Updates: We will hear updates from several of our subcommittees in which they describe their progress and solicit your comments in this public forum. We will post material from the subcommittees on the web site to aid in your preparation, and I hope you are able to read them prior to the discussion.

The StatsNSF Subcommittee is gathering responses to their draft report from other participating Directorates. The latest draft report, which is on the Members Only web site, is still open for your comments. We hope that the completed report will come to the Advisory Committee, which needs to consider it for acceptance, at our July meeting. I urge you to revisit the draft and provide written comments directly to the co-Chairs (Iain Johnstone and Fred Roberts), to MPS Liaison Jim Berger, or to Kelsey Cook.

Kelsey is the liaison between the MPSAC and the MPS Directorate. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact him at 703-292-7490 or at kcook@nsf.gov. Kelsey and Science Assistant Caleb Autrey have sent you information concerning the logistics for participating in the meeting, including registration (which you must complete for each day in order to receive payment). You may reach Caleb at 703-292-5137 or at cautrey@nsf.gov. Please see the logistics message for more detailed instructions, including those for remote participation. You may contact Keith Bennett (kebennet@nsf.gov; 703-292-8802) if you need technical assistance.

I look forward to seeing you in April and to our having a productive meeting.

Best regards,



F. Fleming Crim
Assistant Director for Mathematical and Physical Sciences