
Astronomy & Astrophysics Advisory Committee

Welcome, Charge, FACA,
& Conflicts of Interest



Thanks for Serving!

- Advisory committees play an important role in shaping the programs and policies of the federal government.
- Your deliberations and feedback, both collectively and as individuals, help our three federal agencies decide how to best use taxpayer dollars for their astrophysics investment.
- We hope you find the experience interesting and fulfilling!



Introductions

- NSF Personnel
 - Ralph Gaume, AST Division Director
 - James Neff, AST Deputy Division Director (Acting) & Designated Federal Official for the AAAC
 - Chris Davis, Program Director & AAAC Liaison at NSF
 - Liz Pentecost, Project Administrator
 - Renee Adonteng, Logistics & Travel Support
 - Allison Farrow, Program Analyst, Program Support
- NASA & DOE Representatives
 - Paul Hertz, Director, NASA Astrophysics Division
 - Kathy Turner, DOE Program Manager for Cosmic Frontier
- Committee Members – Introductions...



Current AAAC Membership

Terms Expiring in 2020:

Eliza Kempton (Maryland), John O'Meara (Keck),
Constance Rockosi (UCSC)

Terms Expiring in 2021:

Andrew Connolly (Washington), Ian Dell'Antonio (Brown),
Scott Dodelson (CMU), Mansi Kasliwal (Caltech),
Piet Martens (GSU)

Terms Expiring in 2022:

Nancy Chanover (New Mexico State), Kyle Dawson (Utah),
Stephan Meyer (Chicago), Priyamvada Natarajan (Yale),
Diedre Shoemaker (Georgia Tech)



AAAC Charter

*The Astronomy and Astrophysics Advisory Committee (AAAC) advises the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) on **selected issues** within the fields of astronomy and astrophysics **that are of mutual interest and concern to the agencies****.

*As established in SEC. 23 of P.L. 107-368 (the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002) and amended by SEC. 5 of P.L. 108-423 (the Department of Energy High-End Computing Revitalization Act of 2004).



AAAC Charter

- Assess, and make recommendations regarding, the **coordination** of astronomy and astrophysics programs of NSF, NASA and DOE;
- Assess, and make recommendations regarding, the **status of the activities** of NSF, NASA and DOE as they relate to the recommendations contained in the National Research Council's 2001 report ... and the recommendations contained in subsequent NRC reports of a similar nature;
- Not later than March 15, **transmit a report** to the [NSF] Director, the Administrator of NASA, the Secretary of Energy, the Committee on Science of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate on the Advisory Committee's findings and recommendations



AAAC Charter

- AAAC consists of 13 members, none of whom shall be a Federal employee
 - 4 selected by NSF Director
 - 4 selected by NASA Administrator
 - 3 selected by Secretary of Energy
 - 2 selected by Director of OSTP
- Advisory Committee shall select a chairperson
- Advisory Committee shall convene at least 4 times a year



This is a FACA Committee!

- Through enactment of *the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) of 1972 (Public Law 92-463)*, the U.S. Congress formally recognized the merits of seeking the advice and assistance of our nation's citizens to the executive branch of government.
- FACA was enacted to ensure that advice given to federal government agencies by groups of individuals that include non-federal employees is relevant, objective, and accessible to the public.



FACA Procedures for AAAC

- NSF sponsors and provides a *Designated Federal Official*
- Meetings are open to the public and announced in the Federal Register and on the AAAC website:
<https://www.nsf.gov/mps/ast/aaac.jsp>
- This website includes charter, membership, subcommittees, and annual reports.
- Agenda, Minutes & Presentations are also posted here
- Meeting attendance is recorded



Conflicts of Interest

- Committee Members have a conflict of interest and should recuse themselves from offering advice if they...
 - are employed at an institution that would be affected by such advice;
 - serve on the Board of Directors of an organization that has an interest in the advice;
 - have a financial interest in any company/contractor that would be impacted by such advice;
 - feel that they cannot be fully objective and unbiased, or that a reasonable person could question their objectivity.



Conflicts of Interest (Examples)

- AAAC Member serves on the Board of Directors of an awardee managing an Observatory; must recuse themselves from giving any advice with financial consequences.
 - Example: if you serve on the AUI Board, you should not be commenting on NRAO or ALMA.
- AAAC Member has a financial stake in a major contractor involved in the construction of an observatory.
 - Example: if you have shares in Northrop-Grumman, you should not be commenting on JWST construction activities



Other Ethics Considerations

- Do not disclose non-public, government information
- Do not use your public position for private gain in any way
- Do not solicit or accept **gifts** and favors from anyone who:
 - Seeks official action from, or conducts activities regulated by NSF;
 - Does, or seeks to do, business with NSF;
 - Has interests that may be substantially affected by this panel



Requirements for AAAC Members

- Committee members must not discuss the business of the committee outside of the meeting.
- If you do identify a conflict of interest for a given topic, please announce it and refrain from participating in the discussion or in the writing of the relevant section of the annual report.
- We appreciate your time and your advice!

