

# Astronomy & Astrophysics Advisory Committee Charge, FACA, and Conflicts of Interest

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# The AAAC

- Established by NSF Authorization Act (2002)
  - DOE added in 2004
- Congress' stated purpose (RG synopsis):
  - Assess and make recommendations regarding interagency coordination.
  - Assess and make recommendations regarding status of activities associated with Decadal Review.
  - Write report by March 15.
- Also:
  - 13 members:
    - 4 NSF, 4 NASA, 3 DOE, 2 OSTP.
  - 4 meetings per year.
  - Select Chairperson from among members.




## Purpose of this Meeting

- Assess and make recommendations regarding NSF, NASA, DOE coordination and implementation of the Decadal.
- The Committee will hear presentations of current programming by representatives from NSF, NASA, DOE and other agencies relevant to astronomy and astrophysics
  - to discuss current and potential areas of cooperation between the agencies;
  - and to formulate recommendations for continued and new areas of cooperation and mechanisms for achieving them.



This AAAC  
Meeting 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 the meeting 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>
- The website includes
  - Charter
  - Membership
  - Subcommittees
  - Annual reports
  - Agenda
  - Minutes
  - Presentations
- 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



## 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, NASA, or DOE
  - Does, or seeks to do, business with NSF, NASA, or DOE
  - 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!