NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
4201 WILSON BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230

18 October 2013

Dear Colleague,

As you know, the U. S. Antarctic Program was adversely impacted by the recent 16-day partial government shutdown. The National Science Foundation (NSF) was required to suspend certain activities in Antarctica just as we had begun our active austral summer season. However, with funding under a continuing resolution in place, staff members at both NSF and the Antarctic Support Contractor are working hard to restore as much of the planned activities as safely possible. This includes restarting suspended science projects to the maximum extent practicable.

NSF decisions about priorities for restart are conditioned by factors such as continuity of long-term data sets, time-criticality of observations or studies, impacts on young or early career investigators, and international or interagency partnerships. Our deliberations have been, and will continue to be, informed by input provided by the potentially affected Principal Investigators. Program Directors are balancing these many factors in making their recommendations to me as Head of Antarctic Sciences for final determination. Unfortunately, because we plan activities to take full advantage of the limited austral summer season, the 16-day interruption has already resulted in deferral of some projects and additional projects will be impacted. We are committed to a rational process to restore as much of our original science plan as safely possible.

With most Program Directors just returning to work after this hiatus, they will need to assimilate a lot of information in a short time in order to make timely and informed recommendations. I anticipate that they will be reaching out to you within the next few days and would appreciate your responsiveness when they do. Of course, if you have information you feel is critical for your Program Director to have in the near term, please do communicate that information via e-mail. I expect that we will be able to resume normal communications by the middle of next week.

Some of you will have also been impacted by the NSF shutdown with respect to proposal and award processing, participation in panels and meetings and other things. Please refer to the NSF web-site for guidance on these issues (see: http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2013/in134/in134.pdf).

Thank you for your patience and understanding in our efforts to support the important science that comprises the USAP.

Sincerely,

Scott Borg
Head, Antarctic Sciences Section