

As most of you will be aware, the NSF Astronomy Senior Review is now underway. The Committee membership, charge and schedule are published on the website (http://www.nsf.gov/mps/ast/ast_senior_review.jsp). Town meetings have been held at Boston, Minneapolis, Clemson, Washington and Boulder and future ones will take place in Berkeley (15 Dec) and Washington AAS (10 Jan).

The first meeting of the committee held last week was dominated by dialogues with the managements of NOAO, NSO, Gemini, NRAO and NAIC. These were all very constructive. There is a widespread acknowledgment of the challenge faced by the Astronomy Division of the NSF and the Committee was left in no doubt about the high quality of the research conducted at each of these facilities. However, the cost of prosecuting forefront science is high and hard choices will be necessary. Consequently, the challenge to the Senior Review, and the community at large, is considerable.

The input from the Town meetings, as well as emails and conversations with committee members have been extremely helpful and we hope community comment will continue. If you have not done so already, we encourage you to attend one of the town hall meetings and to submit comments/concerns/suggestions to us directly. The email address established for the Senior Review is <mailto:astsenior-review@nsf.gov>. However, to be most effective, the input should occur prior to our second meeting starting on Thursday 12 Jan.

Thank you,

Roger Blandford (on behalf of the Senior Review Committee).

(Mailed to US members from aas.org 27 October 2005)