

MEMORANDUM TO MEMBERS AND CONSULTANTS OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: Summary Report of the September 22, 2008 Meeting

The following are the major actions and approvals of the National Science Board (Board, NSB) and a summary of the proceedings at the Board's September 2008 meeting held in Fairbanks, Alaska. The minutes of the Plenary Open Session for the September 2008 meeting will be posted on the Board's public Web site (<http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/>), following Board approval at the December 2008 meeting.

1. Major Actions of the Board (not in priority order):

- a. The Board approved the minutes of the Plenary Open Session (NSB-08-79) for the August 2008 meeting (<http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/meetings/2008/0812/minutes.pdf>). Minutes for the Plenary Closed Session for the August 2008 meeting of the Board were also approved.
- b. The Board approved a resolution to close portions of the upcoming December 9-10, 2008 Board meeting dealing with staff appointments; future budgets; grants and contracts; specific Office of the Inspector General investigations and enforcement actions; and National Science Foundation (NSF) participation in a civil or administrative action, proceeding, or arbitration (<http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/meetings/2008/0922/closing.pdf>).
- c. The Board authorized the NSF Deputy Director, at her discretion, to extend the Cooperative Agreement *Management and Operations of the National Optical Astronomy Observatory and the National Solar Observatory* for a period not to exceed 6 months and to make two renewal awards to the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy, Inc., for a total duration not to exceed 54 months, contingent upon review by NSB of the Deputy Director's assessment that the response of the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy satisfactorily addressed concerns regarding several management and action plans in its proposal. (Attachment)
- d. The Board Chairman announced the Board Members nominated by the President to the NSB Class of 2014: Dr. France Córdova, President, Purdue University; Dr. Esin Gulari, Dean of Engineering and Science, Clemson University; Dr. Bud Peterson, Chancellor, University of Colorado, Boulder; and Dr. Diane L. Souvaine, Professor and Chair, Department of Computer Science, Tufts University. The following Board Members were re-nominated to serve a second term: Dr. Barry Barish, Professor of Physics Emeritus and Director, LIGO Laboratory, California Institute of Technology; Dr. Ray Bowen, President Emeritus, Texas A&M University; and Dr. Douglas Randall, Professor and Thomas Jefferson Fellow, University of Missouri, Columbia.

- e. The Board Chairman announced that Dr. John Bruer and Mr. Arthur Reilly will be members of the *ad hoc* Committee for the Vannevar Bush Award, chaired by Dr. Kathryn Sullivan.
- f. The Board Chairman also announced that a former Board Member, Dr. Jo Anne Vasquez, will serve as chairman of the Public Service Award Advisory Committee.

2. Board Chairman's Introduction and Report

Dr. Steven Beering, Board Chairman, introduced Dr. Matthew Wilson, who joined the Board Office staff as an American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Fellow. Dr. Wilson received his Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Medicine in 2004.

Dr. Beering announced the nominations by the President to the NSB Class of 2014 (See 1.d.), and made committee announcements (See 1.e. – 1.f.).

3. NSF Director's Report and Presentation

Dr. Arden Bement, NSF Director, announced that Dr. Thomas W. Peterson was selected as the Assistant Director, Directorate for Engineering. Dr. Peterson has served as Dean of the Engineering College, University of Arizona since 1998, and will start at NSF in January 2009.

For a congressional update, Dr. Bement reported that Congress was expected to pass a Continuing Resolution for the FY 2009 budget to be funded at the FY 2008 levels possibly until late March. He indicated that Congress was in recess for the month of August and early September.

Dr. Bement made a presentation to the Board on "NSF Management Response to NSB Recommendations 2005-2008." He provided a brief summary of the actions NSF has taken relative to the totality of Board recommendations made during the 3-year period. He commented on 10 sets of recommendations relating to the following: *NSB 2020 Vision for the National Science Foundation*; transformative research; major research equipment and facilities; long-lived digital data collections; STEM education; improving engineering education; international science and engineering partnerships; average award size and durations, and proposal success; cost sharing practices; and hurricane research.

4. Board Committee Reports*

Committee on Programs and Plans (CPP)

In CPP Open Session, the committee heard an information report on a future action item: the renewal for the award of a Cooperative Agreement for the National Nanotechnology Infrastructure Network (NNIN). The committee also heard a continuation of the presentation by Dr. Kathie Olsen, NSF Deputy Director, begun at the August 2008 Board meeting, which was a review of

* Only the Committee on Programs and Plans and its Task Force on Sustainable Energy held meetings in September 2008.

NSF's major research facilities. Additionally, the committee continued the discussion on NSF's Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC) process.

Dr. Olsen provided an overview of projects under consideration for possible future construction, and raised a few policy issues relevant to large facilities for discussion. The committee asked Dr. Olsen to provide some pros and cons regarding the integration of research and education into the MREFC construction process to present to the committee at its December 2008 meeting for review.

Dr. Mark Abbott continued the discussion of CPP's progress in developing a proposal for a revision to the MREFC process. He presented the evolving proposal for changes to the MREFC process, and the committee asked NSF to provide a plan for implementing the proposal at the meeting in December 2008.

In CPP Closed Session, the committee approved the one action item: NSB Support for the Management and Operations of the National Optical Astronomy Observatory (NOAO) and the National Solar Observatory (NSO). *[The full Board subsequently approved the resolution.]* (See 1.c. and Attachment) The committee also heard an information item on the National Astronomy and Ionosphere Center (NAIC).

CPP Task Force on Sustainable Energy (SE)

SE reviewed the task force roundtable discussion held on September 4, 2008 at the University of California, Berkeley. The task force also discussed a draft list of major findings and recommendations, and will revise and develop a consensus position on findings and recommendations that will provide the basis of a more comprehensive draft report.

[signed]

Craig R. Robinson
Acting Executive Officer

Attachment: NSB-08-83

RESOLUTION

NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD
SUPPORT FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS OF
THE NATIONAL OPTICAL ASTRONOMY OBSERVATORY AND
THE NATIONAL SOLAR OBSERVATORY

WHEREAS the National Science Foundation conducted a Review in 2008 of a proposal from the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy for management and operation of the National Optical Astronomy Observatory and the National Solar Observatory, which review recommended renewal of the Cooperative Agreement with the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy; and

WHEREAS the National Science Board takes note that the Review Panel and the National Science Foundation recommended that the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy further address concerns regarding several management and action plans in its proposal; and

WHEREAS the National Science Board recognizes that the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy is taking some action in the very near future to address the concerns raised by the Review Panel and shared in by the National Science Board, and that the National Science Board will be informed of the disposition of these concerns at a future meeting;

NOW, therefore, be it RESOLVED, that the National Science Board authorizes the Deputy Director, at her discretion, to extend the Cooperative Agreement *Management and Operations of the National Optical Astronomy Observatory and the National Solar Observatory* for a total amount not to exceed \$29,681,000 and for a total duration not to exceed 6 months;

AND, be it further RESOLVED, that the National Science Board authorizes the Deputy Director, at her discretion, to make two renewal awards to the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy, Inc., contingent upon review by the National Science Board of the Deputy Director's assessment that the response of the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy satisfactorily addressed these concerns, for a total duration not to exceed 54 months, for *Operation and Management of the National Optical Astronomy Observatory*, in an amount not to exceed \$196,686,000, and for *Operation and Management of the National Solar Observatory*, in an amount not to exceed \$69,911,000.

AND, be it further RESOLVED, that if the response by AURA is unsatisfactory to either the Deputy Director or the National Science Board, the Deputy Director will recommend to the National Science Board specific action to be taken with respect to alternative management of these facilities.

[signed]
Patricia D. Galloway
Vice Chairman