

MEMORANDUM TO MEMBERS AND CONSULTANTS OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: Major Actions and Approvals at the September 24, 2009 Meeting

This memorandum is made publicly available for any interested parties to review. A more detailed summary of the meeting will be forthcoming and posted on the National Science Board (Board, NSB) public Web site (<http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/>). The minutes of the Plenary Open Session for the September 2009 meeting will also be posted on the Board's public Web site following Board approval at the December 2009 meeting.

Major actions and approvals at the 411th meeting of the Board included the following (not in priority order):

1. The Board authorized the NSF Director, at his discretion, to make an award for additional funding authorization for the Management and Operation of the National Astronomy and Ionosphere Center (NAIC), Cornell University.
2. The Board authorized the NSF Director, at his discretion, to make an award for the Preliminary Design for the Deep Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory (DUSEL), University of California at Berkeley.
3. The Board approved a statement on open Board meetings that reaffirms transparency and openness to help build understanding and interest in Board activities. (Attachment)
4. The Board approved a Board Member proposal review process, which requires a change to the *NSF Proposal and Award Manual* stipulating that the Board review may take place in Plenary Executive Closed Session of Board meetings or by polling Board Members between meetings.
5. The Board Chairman appointed Dr. Ray Bowen as chairman of the *ad hoc* Committee on Honorary Awards to work on the Vannevar Bush Award and the NSB Public Service Award, with Drs. Douglas Randall and Thomas Taylor, members.
6. The Board approved the minutes of the Plenary Open Session (NSB-09-75) for the August 2009 meeting (<http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/meetings/2009/0805/minutes.pdf>). Minutes for the Plenary Executive Closed (NSB-09-73) and Closed (NSB-09-74) Sessions for the August 2009 meeting of the Board were also approved.

7. The Board approved a resolution to close portions of the upcoming December 9-10, 2009 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/2009/1209/closing.pdf>) (NSB-09-76).

[signed]

Craig R. Robinson
Acting Executive Officer

Attachment: NSB-09-85, Statement on Open Board Meetings

STATEMENT ON OPEN BOARD MEETINGS

The National Science Board reaffirms that transparency and openness is important because, among other things, it helps to build understanding, interest and support in the Board activities from stakeholders. These communications also help to inform the Board as it makes policy decisions that apply to the National Science Foundation.

The Board believes that the principles below help to further transparency of Board decisions:

- The National Science Board benefits from input from its constituencies, and public observation of Board activities is an important part of this process.
- National Science Board Meetings are defined by statute and the Board is subject to all provisions of the Government in the Sunshine Act and NSF Regulations, including those related to notice, recorded vote, closure, and public observation.
- The Board remains committed to public observation of committee, subcommittee and task force discussions at Board meetings.
- Board committee, subcommittee, and task force meetings and teleconferences, will be open to the public whenever attendance reaches at least a quorum of the Board, even though committees and Board subunits, other than the Executive Committee, cannot by the terms of the NSF Act, take actions on behalf of the Board. The Board's website will provide advance 'notice' to the public whenever such meetings or teleconferences are expected to include at least a quorum of the Board. All committee, subcommittee and task force advice must still be presented to the full Board for deliberation and action at Board meetings.
- The annual Board retreat is intended to provide an opportunity for Board Members to exchange ideas and to identify and frame issues for possible future Board consideration. These issues and opinions would then be open to full consideration at a Board meeting before any action is taken. Board retreats are structured so as to fall outside the definition of "meeting" defined in the Sunshine Act, since all discussion is informal and preliminary, informational and exploratory or tentative, and focused on identifying, clarifying, or framing issues or options.
- The National Science Board occasionally hosts workshops and other public events to gather input from the science, engineering, and education communities on a variety of topics of interest to the Board. The Board will publicize these events on its 'notice' website, as appropriate, and these workshops will remain open to the public.
- The National Science Board occasionally establishes "special commissions" to advise the Board on a variety of topics. These commissions, which are subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act and the Board, will comply with all applicable public notice, public access, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements.