

## **MEMORANDUM TO MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD**

**SUBJECT:** Summary Report of February 8, 2005 Meeting

The major actions of the National Science Board (NSB, the Board) at its 384th meeting on February 8, 2005 and a preliminary summary of the proceedings are provided below. This memorandum will be publicly available for any interested parties to review. A more comprehensive set of NSB meeting minutes will be posted on the Board's public Web site (<http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/>) following Board approval at the March 2005 meeting.

### **1. Major Actions of the Board**

- a. The Board approved the minutes, as amended, of the Plenary Open Session (NSB-04-195) for the December 2004 meeting of the NSB (<http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/meetings/2004>). Minutes for the Plenary Executive Closed and Closed Sessions for the December 2004 meeting of the NSB were also approved.
- b. The Board approved a resolution to close portions of the upcoming March 29-30, 2005 NSB meeting on staff appointments, future budgets, pending proposals/ awards for specific grants, contracts, or other arrangements, and those portions dealing with specific Office of the Inspector General investigations and enforcement actions, or agency audit guidelines (NSB-05-9, attached).

### **2. NSB Chairman's Report**

Dr. Diana Natalicio reported on behalf of Dr. Warren Washington, Chairman.

Dr. Washington established the Vannevar Bush 2005 Award Committee to review the nominations for this prestigious award and recommend a recipient to the full Board meeting in March. Dr. Kenneth Ford is the chairman of the committee and Drs. Beering, Bowen, Clough, Hastings, and Sullivan are committee members.

Dr. Washington appointed two persons to the NSB Public Service Award Committee to select individual and group awardees: Drs. Shirley Malcom and Maxine Savitz, who are both former Members of the Board. Additionally, Dr. Washington appointed new Members to NSB committees, subcommittees, and task force.

At the March meeting, the Chairman will establish the NSB Election Committee. Two vacancies will occur on the Executive Committee in May as the terms for Drs. Barry Barish and Delores Etter will end. The committee will prepare a slate of candidates for consideration and election at the May 2005 meeting.

Lastly, Dr. Natalicio announced that the Board would release its report, *Broadening Participation in Science and Engineering Faculty* (NSB-04-41), at the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting on February 19 in Washington, D.C.

### **3. NSF Director's Report**

Dr. Arden Bement, NSF Director, reported on several congressional items.

First, the Director reported on appropriations: On January 24, NSF delivered a current plan letter to the appropriators and subsequently both House and Senate Appropriations staff were briefed on the plan. Additionally, the House Appropriations Committee proposed a reorganization that would eliminate the VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee. Under that plan, NSF and NASA would be moved to the Energy and Commerce Appropriations Subcommittee. Various Senators have objected to this proposal and it is still under discussion on both sides of the Capitol.

The Director stated that he testified before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee at a hearing on the Tsunami Preparedness Act of 2005 on February 2. Other government agencies testifying at the hearing were the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Geological Service.

Upcoming hearings include the House Science Committee on the President's FY 2006 budget request for agencies under its jurisdiction on February 16. In addition to NSF, witnesses from OSTP, NASA, and the Department of Energy were invited to testify. The NSF continued to plan for the Senate VA, HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee hearing on the NSF 2006 Budget request on February 17, pending further notification on the reorganization of the Appropriations Committees.

The Director also stated that congressional staff from appropriations and authorizing committees was briefed by Michael Turner, Assistant Director for Mathematical and Physical Sciences, on the status of the Rare Symmetry Violating Processes (RSVP) project.

Finally, he noted that several bills have been introduced in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress that mention NSF: H.R. 22, the High Performance Computing Revitalization Act of 2005; H.R. 144, the Rural America Digital Accessibility Act; H.R. 222, a bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds to conduct or support research on human cloning; H.R. 250, the Manufacturing Technology Competitiveness Act of 2005; and H.R. 242 and H.R. 243 to authorize funding for Surface Transportation Research and Development Act of 2005.

## 4. NSB Committee Reports

### a. Committee on Programs and Plans (CPP)

#### CPP Open Session

The committee considered the draft report *Long-Lived Data Collections: Enabling Digital Research and Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (NSB/CPP-04-21) from the Long-Lived Data Collections Working Group. CPP decided to change the report's title to *Long-Lived Digital Data Collections: Enabling Research and Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. NSF provided comments on the report only a few days prior to the NSB meeting. CPP members felt that there had not been sufficient time to adequately digest and comment on the NSF views. Therefore, CPP decided that Members would have 2 more weeks to review and comment on NSF input. The comments from NSF were seen by CPP to be generally in agreement with and supportive of the report. However, the comments from NSF diverged from the report in three specific elements: 1) the need to consider collections of physical specimens as long-lived data collections; 2) peer review being the optimum process to determine balance between investments in data and other support; and 3) implication of data quality act raised by the Office of General Counsel, NSF. CPP members felt that the first of these issues was outside the scope of the report. The comments by the NSF on the second issue were in agreement with the report; although the report takes the issue a step further to suggest the need for plans for broader strategy and policy for management. The third item - implications of the data quality act - although not directly relevant to extra-agency data managers and users, was considered helpful to agency representatives and policy makers. A summary of the data quality act issues set forth in the NSF comments will be included in the revised report. The Board Office will revise the report based on CPP Member input and, at the discretion of the CPP chair, will schedule a CPP teleconference to determine if the revised draft report is ready for release for public review and comment.

CPP also reviewed a draft *National Science Foundation Facility Plan*. Following extensive discussion, it was decided that the report will be re-drafted by NSF with special attention focused on the introduction and the first chapter. Members also felt that an executive summary should be developed and that Chapter 2, section IV (extended descriptions of "Projects under Exploration") should be shortened with a consistent format. A new NSF draft is to be provided to the Board Office at least 2 weeks in advance of the March Board meeting. CPP will consider it for further action and discussion at that time. A suggestion was made to involve a science writer to direct the reports presentation toward the intended audience of policy-makers. The CPP chairman asked that NSF actively engage the NSB Office in the rewriting process.

#### CPP Closed Session

CPP considered the NSF Information Item on the Inter-American Institute for Global Change (NSB-05-2). Dr. Margaret Leinin, Assistant Director, Directorate for Geosciences was the NSF discussant.

## **b. Committee on Strategy and Budget (CSB)**

### CSB Open Session

Dr. Ray Bowen, CSB chairman, called on Dr. Arden Bement to provide an update on the President's FY 2006 NSF budget request to Congress released on February 7, 2005. Dr. Bement stated that the President's FY 2006 NSF budget request is for \$5.605 billion; a 2.4 percent increase over the FY 2005 current plan. He went on to discuss the budget submission by focusing on NSF's four funding priorities that address current national challenges as well as strengthen the core portfolios of NSF's research and education investments. These four funding priorities include the following.

- **Strengthen core disciplinary research:** The White House has asked NSF to serve as the lead agency for U.S. participation the International Polar Year (IPY), scheduled to take place in 2007. The NSF Office of Polar Programs is in the early stages of planning U.S. activities for IPY.
- **Provide broadly accessible cyberinfrastructure and world-class research facilities:** Dr. Bement stressed the importance of infrastructure investments for maintaining and operating facilities and major instrumentation to enable scientific research.
- **Broaden participation in the science and engineering workforce:** For the most part, NSF's efforts to broaden participation have been focused in the Education and Human Resources (EHR) Directorate. NSF will expand efforts and accelerate the involvement of the research directorates in this important emphasis area. Dr. Bement noted that NSF programs are required to address K-12 education, and he cited numerous other NSF programs that include the goal of broadening participation.
- **Sustaining organizational excellence in NSF management practices:** Dr. Bement reported that NSF has earned three "green lights" on the President's Management Agenda (PMA) scorecard; two previously for financial management and e-government activities, and adding one this year for integrating budget with performance. Although NSF still has a red light for workforce outsourcing, Dr. Bement noted that NSF had implemented extensive outsourcing activities prior to the PMA scorecard system, thereby limiting the extent that additional improvements can be achieved.

In recent years, only 15 percent of over 600 Federal programs that were evaluated using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) were given the highest rating. All eight of the NSF programs evaluated under PART were given the highest rating.

### CSB Closed Session

Future budget impacts on NSF programs were discussed.

## **c. Executive Committee (EC)**

### EC Open Session

In response to a request from Dr. Washington during the December 2004 meeting, Dr. Bement, EC chairman, provided information on NSF's policies on the prevention of sexual harassment

and equal employment opportunity. The information included a number of NSF brochures on these subjects as well as an historical summary of activity within the Federal government on this issue and NSF's response, including its policy statements, EEO complaint procedures, and training activities. During the last decade, three complaints alleging sexual harassment were filed at NSF; two were dismissed and one was settled. There has not been a single finding of sexual harassment against NSF in the last 10 years.

In response to a request from the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) President, the committee recommended to Dr. Washington that he ask Dr. John White, chairman of the NSB task force that produced the Board's recent report *Science and Engineering Infrastructure for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Role of the National Science Foundation* (NSB-02-190), to represent the NSB at an upcoming academy event on instrumentation.

#### EC Closed Session

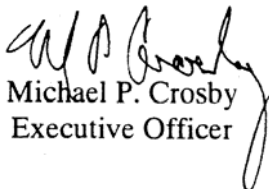
Dr. Bement informed committee members on the status of several executive staff searches and aspects of the FY 2006 budget. Dr. Washington informed committee Members about complaints he has received on how NSF is dealing with an ongoing allegation of harassment in the workplace at NSF.

#### **d. Committee on Education and Human Resources (EHR)**

Drs. Hastings, Lanzerotti and Clough agreed to participate in an *ad hoc* task group, chaired by Dr. Hastings, to draft a proposal for review at the March meeting for an activity for EHR in engineering education, following on the recent release by the 2004 NAS report on *The Engineer of 2020: Visions of Engineering in the New Century*.

Dr. Sullivan agreed to chair an *ad hoc* task group with Drs. Vasquez and Arvizu to develop a proposal for the March meeting for the NSB to address what the Nation should aspire to over the long-term in science and engineering.

The Committee agreed to ask NSF staff for a series of briefings from the NSF directorates on the concept of integrating research and education with the purpose to evaluate what is working. The Committee also agreed that it would be timely to receive an update from both State Department and Homeland Security staff on progress toward eliminating problems identified earlier and asked the Board Office to arrange for a briefing from the appropriate spokespersons.

  
Michael P. Crosby  
Executive Officer

Attachment: NSB-05-9

**MEMORANDUM TO MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD**

**Subject:** Closed Session Agenda Items for March 29-30, 2005 Meeting

The Government in the Sunshine Act requires formal action on closing portions of each Board meeting. The following are the closed session agenda items anticipated for the March 29-30, 2005 meeting.

1. Staff appointments
2. Future budgets
3. Grants and contracts
4. Specific Office of Inspector General investigations and enforcement actions

A proposed resolution and the General Counsel's certification for closing these portions of the meetings are attached for your consideration.

/signed/  
Michael P. Crosby  
Executive Officer

Attachments

PROPOSED  
RESOLUTION  
TO CLOSE PORTIONS OF  
385th MEETING  
NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD

RESOLVED: That the following portions of the meeting of the National Science Board (NSB) scheduled for March 29-30, 2005 shall be closed to the public.

1. Those portions having to do with discussions regarding nominees for appointments as National Science Board members and National Science Foundation (NSF) staff appointments, or with specific staffing or personnel issues involving identifiable individuals. An open meeting on these subjects would be likely to constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.
2. Those portions having to do with future budgets not yet submitted by the President to the Congress.
3. Those portions having to do with proposals and awards for specific grants, contracts, or other arrangements. An open meeting on those portions would be likely to disclose personal information and constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy. It would also be likely to disclose research plans and other related information that are trade secrets, and commercial or financial information obtained from a person that are privileged or confidential. An open meeting would also prematurely disclose the position of the NSF on the proposals in question before final negotiations and any determination by the Director to make the awards and so would be likely to frustrate significantly the implementation of the proposed Foundation action.
4. Those portions having to do with specific Office of the Inspector General investigations and enforcement actions, or agency audit guidelines.

The Board finds that any public interest in an open discussion of these items is outweighed by protection of the interests asserted for closing the items.

## CERTIFICATE

It is my opinion that portions of the meeting of the National Science Board (NSB) or its subdivisions scheduled for March 29-30, 2005 having to do with nominees for appointments as NSB members and National Science Foundation (NSF) staff, or with specific staffing or personnel issues or actions, may properly be closed to the public under 5 U.S.C. § 552b(c) (2) and (6); those portions having to do with future budgets may properly be closed to the public under 5 U.S.C. § 552b(c) (3) and 42 U.S.C. 1863(k); those portions having to do with proposals and awards for specific grants, contracts, or other arrangements may properly be closed to the public under 5 U.S.C. § 552b(c) (4), (6), and (9) (B); those portions disclosure of which would risk the circumvention of a statute or agency regulation under 5 U.S.C. § 552b(c) (2); and those portions having to do with specific Office of the Inspector General investigations and enforcement actions may properly be closed to the public under 5 U.S.C. § 552b(c) (5), (7) and (10).

/signed/

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Lawrence Rudolph  
General Counsel  
National Science Foundation