

MEMORANDUM TO MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: Summary Report of the February 10, 2006 Meeting

The major actions of the National Science Board (NSB, the Board) at its 390th meeting on February 10, 2006 and a preliminary summary of the proceedings are provided. 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 2006 meeting.

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

1. The Board approved the minutes of the Plenary Open Session (NSB-05-166) for the November-December 2005 meeting (http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/meetings/2005/1130/open_minutes.pdf). Minutes for the Plenary Executive Closed and Closed Sessions for the November-December 2005 meeting of the NSB were also approved.
2. The Board approved a resolution to close portions of the upcoming March 29-30, 2006 NSB meeting dealing with staff appointments; candidates for honorary or achievement awards; future budgets; pending proposals/awards for specific grants, contracts, or other arrangements; those portions dealing with specific Office of the Inspector General investigations and enforcement actions, or agency audit guidelines; and NSF participation in a civil or administrative action, proceeding, or arbitration (NSB-06-08) (<http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/meetings/2006/0329/closing.pdf>).
3. The Board elected Dr. Steven Beering as a member of the Executive Committee to complete the term of Dr. Delores Etter, who resigned from the Board in November 2005. The NSB Chairman discharged the *ad hoc* Committee on Nominating for NSB Elections, for Executive Committee membership and thanked Dr. Douglas Randall, chairman, and Drs. Alan Leshner and Jo Anne Vasquez.
4. The NSB Chairman initiated the process for electing Members to the *ad hoc* Committee on Nominating for NSB Elections for Chair, Vice Chair, and two Executive Committee positions. The election of Members to this committee would take place at the March meeting. He invited Board Members to contact Dr. Michael Crosby concerning interest in serving on this committee.

5. The NSB Chairman announced the establishment of the Vannevar Bush 2006 Award Committee and noted that he would appoint committee members soon.
6. The Board approved a letter from the NSB Chairman in response to a request from Congressman Bart Gordon for the Board to review and provide recommendations on his recently introduced bill, “10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds – Science and Math Scholarship Act.”
7. The Board concurred with the NSB Chairman’s proposal to proceed to develop a response to Senator John McCain’s request for the Board to examine existing policies of Federal science agencies concerning the suppression and distortion of research findings, and provide recommendations for strengthening such policies, if warranted.

2. NSB Chairman’s Report

Dr. Warren Washington, NSB Chairman, announced that the Board elected Dr. Beering to the Executive Committee to complete a term ending May 2007. The vacancy on the Executive Committee was created by the resignation of Dr. Etter. The Chairman discharged the *ad hoc* Committee on Nominating for NSB Elections for the Executive Committee membership and thanked Dr. Randall, chair, and Drs. Leshner and Vasquez.

The Chairman initiated the process for electing Members to the *ad hoc* Committee on Nominating for NSB Elections for Chair, Vice Chair, and two Executive Committee positions. The election of Members to this committee will take place at the March meeting. Dr. Washington invited Members to contact Dr. Crosby concerning interest in serving on this committee.

Dr. Washington established the Vannevar Bush 2006 Award Committee to review the nominations received for this prestigious award. The committee will meet in March and recommend a recipient to the full Board at the March meeting.

The Board approved a letter from Dr. Washington in response to Congressman Gordon’s request for the Board to review and provide recommendations on his recently introduced bill, “10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds – Science and Math Scholarship Act.”

The Board also concurred with Dr. Washington’s proposal to proceed to develop a response to Senator McCain for the Board to examine existing policies of Federal science agencies concerning the suppression and distortion of research findings, and the impact on quality and credibility of all future Government-sponsored scientific research results. The Board was further requested to develop specific conclusions and recommendations as a result of this examination. The full Board will discuss progress towards development of the draft response at the March meeting, with final approval of the Board response at the May meeting.

To develop a response to Senator McCain, Dr. Washington will first send a formal reply to Senator McCain stating that the request was discussed at the February Board meeting and that the Board will provide him with the results of the examination and recommendations, as requested. The Board will then conduct a review of the organic legislation, executive orders, and public policies for any directions related to the issue of science openness, ensuring the credibility of research results, and insulating research results from suppression or distortion of data from the following agencies: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, and Health and Human Services. Dr. Washington will also discuss with the chief scientist of each of these agencies their procedures for preventing suppression or distortion of data and ensuring science openness and credibility of research results to the public.

Dr. Washington acknowledged the accomplishment of Dr. Vasquez, who was awarded the National Science Teachers Association's highest honor: the 2006 Robert H. Carleton Award, which recognizes one individual who has made outstanding contributions to, and provided leadership in, science education at the national level and to their association in particular.

3. NSF Director's Report

Dr. Arden Bement, NSF Director, presented an overview of the NSF budget request for FY 2007. On February 6, 2006, the President released NSF's budget request for FY 2007. As part of the President's American Competitiveness Initiative, NSF's funding would increase by nearly 8 percent from last year. The Administration made a firm commitment to double the NSF budget during the next 10 years. Extracts from the NSF budget book, which included tables and charts, were provided to Board Members.

Dr. Kathie Olsen, NSF Deputy Director, presented an update on the development of the NSF Strategic Plan, which is required by NSF every 3 years and due to Congress by September 30, 2006. She discussed the basic requirements on the time period covered by the plan, NSF's integration of the *NSB 2020 Vision for the NSF*, the required content, external community involvement, draft outline, and schedule for completion.

The NSF Director reported that on November 22, 2005, the President signed into law the Science, State, Justice, Commerce, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, which contains NSF's 2006 appropriation. The conference report, agreed upon by both chambers, provides NSF with a total of \$5.65 billion, a 3.3 percent increase from last year, minus an across-the-board cut of 0.28 percent for all agencies under the Subcommittee's jurisdiction. Subsequently, Congress enacted a 1% across-the-board cut to the fiscal 2006 appropriations. This resulted in a final overall NSF budget of \$5.581 billion. The final total represents a 1.8% increase over the fiscal 2005 budget.

Hearings scheduled for February and early March are the following: February 15, 2006, the House Science Committee will hold its annual hearing on the Federal research and development budget, where Dr. Bement will testify on behalf of NSF; also on February 15, 2006, the Senate Commerce Committee will hold a hearing on nanotechnology; and the House Science, State,

Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee scheduled a hearing on NSF's budget request for March 2, 2006. Dr. Bement noted that there were numerous pending bills relating to science and engineering legislation; however, in the interest of time, he did not report on legislation issues.

Dr. Kathie Olsen, NSF Deputy Director, accompanied a congressional delegation consisting of three Senators, ten Representatives, and the Undersecretary of the Air Force to inspect the United States Antarctic Program during the first week of January 2006.

Lastly, Dr. Bement announced the new Director, Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE), Dr. Thomas Weber; the new Acting Division Director for Materials Research, Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS), Dr. W. Lance Haworth; and the new Director, Office of Cyberinfrastructure (OCI), Dr. Daniel Atkins. The Director also reported on the search and interview progress for various other senior positions at NSF.

4. NSB Committee Reports

a. Committee on Education and Human Resources (EHR)

Dr. Elizabeth Hoffman, EHR chair, reported that the committee heard a briefing on the National Science Digital Library (NSDL), which was established by NSF in 2000, by Dr. Kaye Howe, Director of the NSDL. Dr. Don Thompson, Acting Assistant Director of the EHR Directorate at NSF, also provided a brief discussion on the evaluation of EHR programs.

Additionally, the committee discussed areas and topics to take up as future activities. Members focused on the need to take advantage of the historical opportunity presented by the President's State of the Union Address and the bills in both houses of Congress to advance science and mathematics education. Members discussed how to ensure that NSF is a prominent partner in these national efforts.

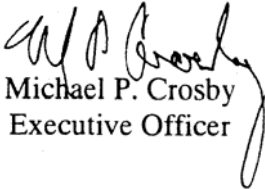
Following the last Commission hearing, scheduled for March 9, 2006 at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, a teleconference of the EHR committee will be necessary to develop a proposal on the charge to the Commission.

b. Committee on Programs and Plans (CPP)

Dr. Daniel Simberloff, CPP chairman, reported that the committee heard a status report from the Hurricane Science and Engineering Task Force. Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier reported on two workshops that have been held since the last NSB meeting. The third workshop of the task force will be held in Pensacola, Florida on April 18, 2006.

The committee also heard reports on two information items: plans for the transition from the pre-operations phase to the operations phase for the Large Hadron Collider, and a plan to conduct a renewal review of the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory.

Finally, Dr. Bement provided CPP with an update NSF's cyberinfrastructure (CI) activities. He reported that Dr. Atkins agreed to serve as the Director for the Office of Cyberinfrastructure, and that strategic planning activities continue with the current version of the CI Vision document posted on the NSF Web site for public comment. NSF plans to provide Chapters 4 and 5 of the document to CPP in draft form at the March meeting.



Michael P. Crosby
Executive Officer