

THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES POLAR RESEARCH BOARD

The Legacies and Lessons of International Polar Year 2007-2008

Statement of Task

International Polar Year (IPY) 2007-2008 was an intense, international campaign of polar observations, research, and analysis designed to further understanding of the polar regions. With the completion of the main, fieldwork phase of IPY, an *ad hoc* committee will produce a report that:

- highlights the outcomes (new scientific discoveries, observations, and findings, including infrastructure and education and outreach contributions) of the multi-faceted IPY campaign from a U.S. perspective,
- integrates the lessons from different activities, including lessons learned about the benefits gained and challenges posed by international and multidisciplinary collaborations and by data access and management issues, and
- records U.S. IPY efforts so they are available to a broad audience including researchers, decision makers, and stakeholders.

This study will be based heavily on information generated at a large community workshop. It will look across disciplines and at both poles. The workshop will serve as a forum to facilitate community participation in a comprehensive synthesis of U.S. IPY efforts and accomplishments. The workshop will be organized to address four themes (introduced below and developed in detail by the appointed planning committee), including one specifically highlighting education and outreach activities. The workshop will feature invited presentations, discussions, and breakout group synthesis.

The committee will identify the major cross-cutting lessons of this IPY and discuss why these lessons are important today in planning for the future. It will explore “next steps” – how to keep the momentum gained in polar science during IPY to continue, especially given the increased relevance of the polar regions, and their importance to our understanding of climate change and adaptation strategies. It will consider whether the concept of holding large “international years” still holds value in times when international coordination is no longer a rare way to do research. In total, the workshop and study report will illustrate how the many pieces of IPY combine to move polar understanding forward in significant and sometimes unexpected ways.

COMMITTEE ON THE LEGACIES AND LESSONS OF IPY 2007-2008

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