



UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
M E M O R A N D U M

DIRECTORATE FOR MATHEMATICAL AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Date: October 31, 2011
From: Assistant Director, MPS
Subject: **MPS Advisory Committee Meeting November 3-4, 2011**
To: MPSAC Members

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the upcoming meeting of the Mathematical and Physical Sciences Directorate Advisory Committee (MPSAC), to be held on Thursday and Friday, November 3 – 4, at the National Science Foundation (NSF) in Arlington, Virginia. I look forward to our discussions, and I would like to preview some of the topics in this letter.

Membership: I have renewed the terms of some members of the Committee, which will allow MPS and NSF to benefit from the experience these members acquired during their first term. In particular, I am very pleased to announce that Dr. Jim Berger (Duke) has agreed to continue on as the Chair of the MPSAC. I also want to welcome the following new members to the MPSAC: Dr. Emery Brown (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Dr. Francis DiSalvo, Jr. (Cornell), Dr. Bruce Elmegreen (IBM Watson Research Center), and Dr. Elizabeth Lada (University of Florida). We look forward to working with all of you.

I also want to thank those members who recently completed their terms for all of their efforts on behalf of MPS over the last three years: Dr. Suzanne Hawley (University of Washington), Dr. Ramesh Narayan (Harvard University and the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics), Dr. John Peoples, Jr. (Fermilab), and Dr. Sharon Neal (University of Delaware). Sharon, however, is now serving MPS as a program director in the Division of Chemistry through an intergovernmental personnel assignment.

Staffing: I am very pleased to inform you that Dr. Celeste Rohlifing has been appointed as Deputy Assistant Director for MPS. Her years of experience as a program director in the Division of Chemistry, as the Head of the Office of Multidisciplinary Research, and as an Associate Director at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy will greatly benefit MPS. With respect to other senior staff positions, we are in the process of filling the positions of Deputy Division Director in the Division of Mathematics and in the Division of Chemistry.

Budget: The FY 2012 budget is still pending, and so NSF is currently operating under a continuing resolution that expires on November 18. The Division Directors will discuss the impact of the current continuing resolution on our Divisions during breakout sessions Thursday afternoon.

Agenda: There are several agenda items that I would like to highlight.

- *Joint meeting with the Education and Human Resources Advisory Committee:* Last November, we had a joint meeting of the MPSAC and the Education and Human Resources (EHR) Advisory Committee, when we discussed the MPSAC white paper on Broadening Participation. We will meet with the EHR AC again to discuss areas of collaboration for EHR and MPS.

- *Merit review, workload, and integration of research and education:* There is increasing attention to how NSF conducts its review of proposals, and the impact of the review process on workload. On Thursday morning, we will hear a brief presentation about these issues, which will be followed by discussion.
- *Breakout Sessions:* You will hear from the Divisions about their particular issues, concerns, and plans. I urge to you be forthright in these meetings, and I look forward to hearing the outcome of these sessions.
- *Reports:* On Friday morning, we will hear reports from MPSAC members who serve on other NSF advisory committees. In addition, our interdisciplinary working group (under the leadership of Naomi Halas) has been examining the ways in which NSF deals with interdisciplinary proposals, and will discuss recommendations to improve the process. If you are interested in joining this group, please let Naomi and me know.
- *European Science Foundation:* I am very pleased that Dr. Mats Gyllenberg (University of Helsinki), Chair of the European Science Foundation's (ESF) Standing Committee for Physical and Engineering Sciences (PESC), will be at our meeting. We have asked him to update us on the recently created "Science Europe" activity and the future of the ESF. Professor Gyllenberg works in applied mathematics and leads Helsinki's biomathematics team.
- *Science for 2014:* We are already planning for FY 2014 and seek your ideas for science and education drivers for MPS. We will have another chance to discuss this in April, but we would like to begin thinking about this now. I have asked members of our senior staff to present a few ideas areas that will open this conversation.
- *Meeting with the Director and Deputy Director:* We will have a lunch meeting with the Director and Deputy Director of NSF on Friday. The Director has introduced some new initiatives for NSF, which he will discuss with you. We have set aside time to prepare for this meeting.

Dr. Morris Aizenman, the Senior Science Associate in MPS, serves as a liaison between the MPSAC and the MPS Directorate. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact him at 703-292-8807 or at maizenma@nsf.gov. Ms. Nichol  Johnson has sent you information concerning travel and hotel arrangements. You may reach her at 703-292-8806 or at njohnson@nsf.gov.

I look forward to a productive meeting and to seeing you this week.

Sincerely yours,

Edward Seidel
Assistant Director
Directorate for Mathematical and
Physical Sciences