

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Astronomy and Astrophysics Advisory Committee**

**28 February 2014  
National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA, via teleconference**

<b>Members attending:</b>	Andreas Albrecht (Chair) Stefi Baum James Buckley William Cochran Priscilla Cushman Craig Hogan Geoffrey Marcy	Mordacai-Mark Mac Low (Vice-Chair) Richard Matzner Angela Olinto Angela Speck Suzanne Staggs Paula Szkody
<b>Agency personnel:</b>	James Ulvestad, NSF-AST Maria Womack, NSF-AST Elizabeth Pentecost, NSF-AST Nigel Sharp, NSF-AST Ilana Harrus, NSF-PHY	Vladimir Papatashvili, NSF-OPP Paul Hertz, NASA Rita Sambruna, NASA Kathleen Turner, DOE
<b>Others:</b>	Steve Unwin, JPL James Murday, USC	David Lang, JPL Peter Lawson, NRC

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**MEETING CONVENED 12:00 PM EST, 28 FEBRUARY 2014**

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order.

James Ulvestad gave a brief update on AST activities. NSF has submitted its FY2014 operating plan to Congress and Congress has 30 days to approve the plan, meaning the plan should be approved in late March. The top-level budget release of the FY 2015 President's Budget Request (PBR) is scheduled for Tuesday, March 4 and what is included in the top-level varies by agency. The formal NSF budget release is scheduled for Monday, March 10. After March 10, it should be public if the AAAC decides to mention the budget in its report. What will appear in the FY2015 PBR will be the 2014 Estimate which might be close to or identical to what was presented to Congress.

Over the past few months, AST has been going through the process of moving LSST through the NSF approval process for a construction start this FY. Even if LSST is in the request and even if it is in the appropriation, it still cannot start until an award is made and it has to be approved by the National Science Board. The information item went well with the NSB and there is a significant probability that an award would be made if it is brought to the NSB in May. There is one more internal step of a Director's Review Board assessment of whether it is ready for a construction start.

Paul Szkody asked if there was any news on the appointment of Dr. France Cordova as NSF Director. Ulvestad replied that Cordova was reported out of Committee favorably but he has no more information. Dr. Cordova is still a NSB member and attended the NSB meeting last week.

Kathy Turner gave a brief update on DOE activities. There will be a Critical Decision 3 (CD3) review of the LSST camera in May. This review would be a project review to see if everything is ready to start fabrication; this would be for the long-lead items such as the CCDs. There is approval to spend the money but DOE needs to get the project ready to spend the money; no problems are expected. A CD2 review of the entire project is scheduled for November. The project is baselined at that time; the DOE sets the scope, budget, and schedule with contingency included. The project will be tracked against this baseline.

The two projects that the DOE tried to get into the FY 2014 budget were the Dark Energy Spectroscopic Instrument (DESI) and the Dark Matter Gen2 experiment, but they were not approved. DOE hopes to see these included in the FY 2015 PBR. DOE is working with NSF PHY on the Dark Matter Gen2 project with some input from P5 (report presented at HEPAP meeting in late May).

DOE's HEP budget will have some level of detail. There should be enough information in the budget that the AAAC can comment on in their report. There can be some movement within the budget once it is approved and executed. Significant changes need approval within DOE and by OMB.

Paul Hertz gave a brief update on NASA activities. The Senior Review of NASA's operating missions is underway; there are 11 missions. The three panels are hard at work (Hubble, Chandra, other missions). Decisions on whether the missions will be extended or have some other direction will be made in May. The ride-out of the FY 2014 budget will not be adequate for extending all of the missions. Now that there is a FY 2014 appropriation, supplemental selections in the research program have been made; this will resolve the "maybe" letters that were sent out when the exact numbers were not known yet. ROSES 14 was released in mid-February. The Theory program was not included in the call because the Division is waiting to see what is in the FY 2015 budget to see if there is adequate funding.

In the release of the FY 2015 budget next week, the Astrophysics budget will be seen as one number, at the Division level. The detailed release will be on March 10.

Paula Szkody asked why there are three panels for the Senior Review and why Hubble and Chandra are separated out. Hertz replied that in 2012 Hubble was in the Senior Review for the first time in a long time. The Division did a lessons learned and found that it was not a valuable exercise. First, putting together the appropriate panel across the breadth of the science, it was found that the panel was not well-constituted to look at Hubble, which is qualitatively different than a smaller mission, and give back comments on Hubble. Hertz decided that when the Senior Review happened this year, a panel would be specifically constituted to give feedback on Hubble operations, the right size budget for the mission, the science output. The same thing would be done for Chandra. All three reports (Hubble, Chandra, and other missions) would be provided to the Division as input during the budget process, but the panels were not being asked to rank Hubble and Chandra against the other missions.

Geoff Marcy asked whether SOFIA is part of the Senior Review. Hertz replied that SOFIA will be part of a Senior Review once it has been operating for several years to accumulate enough science experience to make a good evaluation of its science productivity.

The remainder of the meeting was dedicated to discussion of the Committee's draft annual report due 15 March 2014. The report will contain a set of findings and recommendations.

Ms. Pentecost provided the Chair with the names and addresses of report recipients a few weeks ago.

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT 1:30 PM EST, 28 FEBRUARY 2014**