

# Summary of 2015 Annual Report

The 2015 Report has followed the outline of recent years.

This has been proven to be an efficient format and keeps the report size manageable.

The 2015 AAAC Report was 27 pages with 9 pages of appendices.

## Report Structure

Executive Summary with Findings and Recommendations culled from the body

Present the big picture in Astrophysics: excitement, current questions, and progress.

- \* Introduction followed by 6 bullet points presenting the highlights of the last year
- \* Highlights expanded in the Appendix with pretty pictures and enough detail and references for an intelligent non-expert understand the bullet points.

Body of the report:

Assess and make recommendations regarding the coordination of the agencies' astronomy programs, especially as they relate to the NRC astronomy and astrophysics decadal surveys. *Varies from year to year, depending on current issues.*

Choosing one issue to highlight each year provides additional relevance to the report

2014: Principles for Access

2015: Proposal Pressures and falling success rates

2016: ?

## Organization of body of Report in 2015

### Interagency Coordination and Cooperation

*Increase in large cooperative projects → highlight improved coordination, explain overlapping advisory processes*

### Status and Implementation of Decadal Surveys

- Overview
- Major Programs currently under construction or commissioning  
*Thorough run through of non-NWNH projects (they impact budget available)*
- NWNH Priorities and Recommendations  
*Specifically mentioned (not just referenced) called out.  
Organized by space-based and ground-based*
- P5 priorities and coordination with NWNH  
*Compare and contrast P5 with NWNH*
- Implementation of the Planning Recommendations  
*Biggest Section: Go through every project and compare to NWNH recommendations  
Go through priority projects from P5 as they coordinate*
- Status of the Portfolio Review
- Preparation for Mid-Decadal Review

### Budget Summary and Impact

*Evaluate the effect of budgets below NWNH scenarios*

## Proposal Pressures and falling success rates

The 2015 Report was pared down to contain

- A statement of the problem
  - The fact that a study group was formed under AAAC auspices
  - Some conclusions that were clearly supported by data (NSF, NASA only)
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- The number of proposers is going up, not just the number of proposals.  
Multiple proposals from the same PI is mostly not a driver
  - The rise in the number of proposers is not coming disproportionately from new assistant professors or research scientists or from non-traditional institutions
  - They do not represent a shift in gender or race
  - The merit category that is being depleted has a rating of VG  
Very Good proposals are not being funded
  - Unsuccessful proposals are being resubmitted at a higher rate

# AAAC Proposal Pressures Study Group

Established Summer 2014

Gather relevant proposal and demographic data from both the agencies and the community in order to understand how the funding environment over the last 10 years has affected researchers and projects. We will compare funding models across agencies and determine appropriate metrics for evaluating success. This will allow us to provide data-driven projections of the impact of such trends in the future, as well as that of any proposed solutions.

## Members

Priscilla Cushman (AAAC Chair ) Minnesota.  
Jim Buckley (AAAC) Washington U.  
Angela Olinto (AAAC) U. of Chicago  
Todd Hoeksema (AAS CAPP) Stanford  
James Lowenthal (AAS CAPP) Smith College  
Chryssa Kouveliotou (APS) GWU  
Keivan Stassun. Vanderbilt University  
Ted Von Hippel. Embry-Riddle Aeron. U.

## Agency Contact Persons

NSF/AST: Jim Ulvestad, Jim Neff  
NSF/PHY PA: Jim Whitmore, Jean Cottam  
NASA/APD: Paul Hertz, Hashima Hasan,  
Linda Sparke, Daniel Evans  
DOE/HEP Cosmic Frontier: Michael Cooke,  
Kathy Turner  
NASA/HPD: Arik Posner  
NASA /PSD: Jonathan Rall  
AAS: Joel Parriott  
NRC (NAC): David Lang, James Lancaster

# Plans for this summer

## Agency Data

Drill down and fill in the gaps on Agency Statistics

We are better prepared now to ask very directed data query questions

Include more data on DOE Cosmic (Michael Cooke to help)

## Survey of community

Draft a set of questions in conjunction with AAS (Todd Hoeksema, James Lowenthal)

Put in a Proposal to AAS for preparing a Survey

If accepted, AAS provides funding to AIP to professionally develop and administer it

## **Recent Paper**

*To Apply or Not to Apply: A Survey Analysis of Grant Writing Costs and Benefits*

by Ted Von Hippel <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0118494>

Ted is now part of the group. **Decision:** Still need a new survey: larger sample and different questions. But it takes a year to collect and analyze

**Prepare a short paper by Fall**      *(In time to provide input to the mid-decadal process)*

Use Ted's data and mine it further

Write up what we know (more than what was in the 2015 report) augmented by a subset of the statistics we will be collecting from the agencies.

**Pursue longer report with more agency data and including the new survey (Spring 2016)**

## Discussion Points

Outside feedback on the 2015 AAAC Report  
any comments? Hearsay? Criticism?

General appreciation that we are dealing with Population Pressure

Continued interest in the Principles of Access

International Astronomical Union meeting is devoted to related topics

*e.g. FM11: Global coordination of ground and space astrophysics and heliophysics*

Andreas Albrecht is on an international panel to discuss principles of access and has been able to use the document. He has been careful to point out the definition of the word “Principles” which means they are a starting point for international discussions, rather than something we dictate.

The European Commission is drafting their own document about access which will also be part of the IAU discussions.