

MPS Division of Astronomical Sciences

Briefing for MPS Advisory Committee

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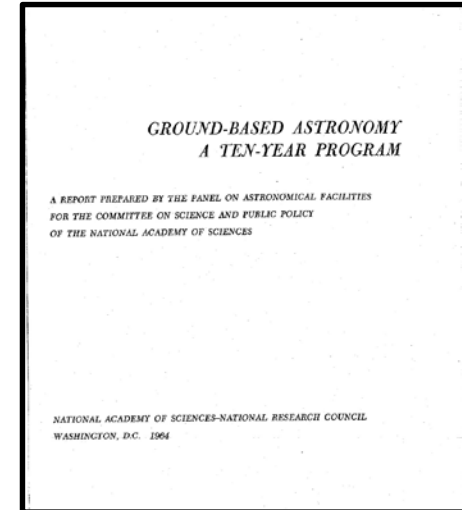
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Community Input in the Division of Astronomical Sciences

The Division of Astronomical Sciences (AST) has a long history of receiving, utilizing, and responding to community input.

1. Community input is highly valued, but not an actual execution plan.
 - Community input must be contextualized by AST budget, administration, congressional, and agency priorities, and community health.
2. AST gathers community input:
 - a) Formal processes: NASEM Decadal Surveys, Committee on Astronomy and Astrophysics (CAA), the Astronomy and Astrophysics Advisory Committee (AAAC) and subcommittees, MPS AC and subcommittees, Visitor Committee, facility transition, panel reviews.
 - b) Informal processes: town halls, professional workshops (e.g. Kavli Futures).
3. The most valuable input is broad-scope comprehensive advice that takes into account overall community health with an ample mix of real-world pragmatism.
 - Formal advice afforded highest weighting, typically necessitates a formal response.



Credit LSST Project/NSF/AURA



AST Example of Community Input

- In 2012 a subcommittee of the MPS AC published *Advancing Astronomy in the Coming Decade: Opportunities and Challenges*, the AST Portfolio Review (PR).
- The PR → transition plans for a number of AST facilities.
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process utilized for three facilities: Arecibo, Sacramento Peak, and Green Bank Observatory.
- NEPA provides significant opportunities for public and community input, oral and written:
 - Input → Arecibo Scoping process: 2 public meetings, 30 day open record.
 - Input → Arecibo Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), 2 public meetings, 45 day open record.
 - Input → Final EIS published, minimum 30 days before Record of Decision.
 - Arecibo NEPA process → hundreds of oral and written comments submitted, analyzed, and incorporated.
- National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106).
 - Arecibo Programmatic Agreement input/signed by ACHP, SHPO, NSF, community stakeholders.
- Arecibo NEPA process resulted in 5 year management award to University of Central Florida (April 2018) to continue Arecibo Observatory operations under gradually reduced NSF funding support.

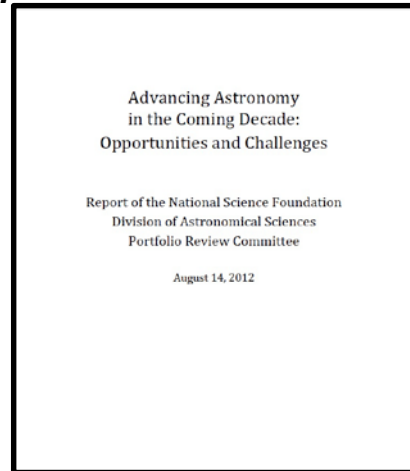


Photo credit: Alfredo Santoni



AST Upcoming Activities

During FY 2019 and FY 2020 AST will:

- Hold AST Committee of Visitors (COV), summer 2019.
- Prepare for the Astronomy and Astrophysics 2020 Decadal Survey.
 - Call for Decadal Survey white papers due in January 2019, committee chair to be named (shortly).
 - Continue supporting community workshops and meetings.
 - Continue supporting preparatory activities with several *known* programs.
- Facility transition process:
 - Final EIS and Record of Decision for Sacramento Peak Observatory and Green Bank Observatory.
- Continued interactions with AAAC and CAA.
- Continued engagement at community science meetings, and community panel input to facility progress reviews and plans and individual investigator programs.



Credit NSO/NSF/AURA

