**Minutes of the Space Grant Alliance General Meeting**

**Portland, OR**

**October 23, 2009**

Chaired by Yervant Terzian (NY)

Attended by ~70 directors and staff

* Chair Terzian called the meeting to order at precisely 5:18 pm.
* Terzian reminded us that this was his last meeting as Chair as his term ends on December 31, 2009.
* Reviewed of slides “State of the Alliance**”.**
* Discussed the FY 2009 Omnibus budget for Space Grant vs. the Actual budget for Space Grant. $40 million was appropriated for 40 states at $815K and 12 states at $615K. In reality 35 states received $785K and 17 states received $590K. There was a Consortium Development competition in which 8 of the 17 eligible states applied and 5 were funded with an additional $195K for one year. After all the states were funded in FY 2009, including the Consortium Development competition, there is still some $1.5 million that was not distributed to the states.
* Discussed the FY 2010 budget. The House calls for $45.6 million wherein 42 states would receive $900K, 10 states would receive $700K and $800K would be left. The Senate recommended funding Space Grant at the President’s budget level of $28.4 million. The budget has not yet passed, and we are in a continuing resolution until October 31, which is expected to be extended for another 1-3 months.
* Joe Danek of VSA-TIG shared information and thoughts with the Alliance.
	+ The delay in passing a budget is due in part to several amendments that were added on, but he expressed optimism that the final number may come in at the $40-$42 million level.
	+ Space Grant should develop a mentor program whereby the experienced directors work with the new directors on interactions with Congress.
	+ Cultivating a champion is key. For example, Alan Mollohan knew little about Space Grant 7 years ago and now through the effort of Majid Jaraieidi (Wv), he pushed through the House budget ($45.6 million).
	+ Seven of the 18 members of the Senate Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies are up for re-election. We need to inform them about the benefits of Space Grant.
	+ Small states count very much in the advocacy arena as it is often easier to get the message in front of the member.
	+ Bring students on Hill visits.
	+ The new administration is all about: 1) Quality education for all; 2) Diversity; 3) Turning the education system around; 4) Reaching all zip codes; and 5) Measurement and evidence based decisions. Space Grant can claim high ground in at least four of these, so we need to communicate this.
	+ In the future there will be fewer individual earmarks, but more plus-ups. Therefore the competition for resources will be great.
	+ As it pushes for an increase in the President’s budget, Space Grant needs to decide on a dollar amount and also decide if it will be satisfied with that for a period or continue to push for more every year. Space Grant needs to think about what it will do with the increased funding, and it should not just be more of the same projects.
	+ Space Grant needs to make itself more meaningful to NASA.
	+ In light of the difficult budget years ahead, he advised Space Grant “not to wait out the storm, but to learn to dance in the rain.”
* The future direction of Alliance activity was discussed. Principally, we need to work to increase the President’s budget request, which has been stagnant at around $28 million since 2005. Approaches include working with NASA HQ, working closer with the Senate Appropriations committee, and finding a “champion” in the Senate for Space Grant.
* Majid Jaraiedi gave the Treasurer’s report. Most states have paid or have good reasons for their delay. An audit was conducted and all was in good order. He also noted that invoices for the 2010 dues will be mailed on November 4, 2009.
* David Bartlett (NH) asked if we would have to propose to the President’s budget request in the upcoming 5 year proposal. Answer – Yes, but if more funds are agreed to in conference, we will need to submit a budget for the difference.
* Chris Koehler (CO) pointed out that among the Space Grant family we have many connections to NASA, and we should advocate for Space Grant to all of them.
* Philippe Geubelle (IL) aked if we could voluntarily share the results of the 20th year PPR with each other. Terzian pointed out that that was an issue for the Executive Council to address.
* Dick Henry (MD) pointed out that Senator Mikulski (MD, Chair of the Senate Subcommittee on CJS), is a real friend of Space Grant
* Elections were held for the Alliance Board. New members include
	+ John Gregory (AL)
	+ Dick Henry (MD)
	+ Majid Jaraiedi (WV)
	+ Jaydeep Mukherjee (FL)
* Mary Sandy (VA) expressed thanks and appreciation to outgoing Chair Terzian for his years of service to the Alliance.
* Meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Chris Brown (NC)