

SPACE GRANT ALLIANCE – GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING – MARCH 2, 2005
CRYSTAL CITY

Chairman Brent Bowen opened the meeting at 3:20PM. His slides, described briefly in the minutes, are available on the Alliance website.

Majid Jaraiedi gave the treasurer's report. ~20 of the states have paid 2005 dues. He asked that the remaining states pay as soon as possible so that obligations to VSA/TIG can be fulfilled.

David Bartlett gave the secretaries report on the 3/2/05 Alliance Board meeting, held earlier in the day. Two business-related items were discussed and acted on.

1. The Alliance incurred a \$1,320 federal tax penalty for late filing in 2004. The penalty has been abated, but may result in increased scrutiny of Alliance returns in the future. There are similar issues with the District of Columbia return, although no penalty has been incurred. To ensure compliance and favorable review, Brent suggested an audit of the Alliance books. The Board approved. An audit will be conducted this year.
2. The Directors/Officers of the Alliance are not currently insured against lawsuits or judgments against the Alliance. Insurance against these unlikely events is standard in such organizations – the Space Grant Foundation Board has such insurance. An investigation identified plans with annual premiums in the \$1500-2000 range. The Board authorized the Director to select an appropriate insurance plan.

Brent summarized the current situation with regard to Alliance issues and initiatives:

- The '05 \$28.5M Space Grant line item was approved by congress but not yet implemented by NASA.
- The "Extension" concept formerly used to justify increases to Consortia base budgets was not embraced by congressional staff, and has been replaced in the 5-year plan by "network enhancements" – which can mean enlargement of consortia networks (i.e. addition of affiliates) or other enhancements.
- The 5-year plan places "Workforce Development" support in the base Consortia budgets, as a core function of the consortia. No more annual competitions.
- The 5-year goal is a total budget of \$52M by FY 2010.
- The FY'06 request to congress will be \$29.55M.

VSA/TIG distributed briefing packets for use in congressional visits. Carolyn Fuller summarized the current environment in the DC complex:

- There is no permanent NASA Administrator in place.
- House and Senate subcommittees are being reorganized. The House has completed reorganization with a reduction in the number of committees and consolidation of science programs, including NASA, in a new "Science, State, Commerce, and Related Agencies" subcommittee. The Senate is debating its reorganization, but seems likely to adopt the same structure. The Chair is likely to be Sen. Shelby from Alabama.

Carolyn identified the first priority for congressional visits as presenting the case for the FY'06 request and urging members to write appropriate "Dear Colleague" letters addressing the Space Grant appropriation. The second priority was to urge NASA to release the remainder of the FY'05 appropriation, but only if the member and/or staff are well-enough informed on these details to embrace the request. VSA is working with key members and staff on the FY'05 issues, and will be meeting with new staff shortly to educate them on Space Grant issues.

Joe Danek further addressed the DC environment. NASA is understaffed and needs help to get approved allocations out to research. He has requested a meeting with Acting Administrator Gregory to address the '05 issues.

Carrie Booth described the contents and suggested use of the briefing packets. Among other things they contained copies of the "Dear Colleague" letters which members are being asked to sign.

It was noted from the floor, and Joe confirmed, that a new "Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math" (STEM) education bill has recently been formed in Congress. This indicates a higher level of concern/interest and is a group the Alliance and VSA/TIG have a relationship with.

A comment from the floor urged emphasis on the large (18.5%) Full Cost Accounting (FCA) tax on the '05 Space Grant base when meeting with members. Brent and VSA/TIG personnel cautioned that this level of detail might be lost on some members and that Congress has embraced FCA as a general concept. However, for those members and staff who are fully engaged in Space Grant budgets, consortia should feel free to raise these issues. Another comment from the floor urged that, when possible and a sense of urgency regarding the '05 budget issues be conveyed to members and staff.

Brent reiterated how important it will be to continue to have congress insert language specifying the Space Grant budget into the appropriation. Otherwise NASA will not be bound to any level of funding, or at least not to the increases which are being sought. He reminded the consortia that prompt payment of membership dues was extremely important.

The meeting was adjourned at ~5 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
David S. Bartlett
Alliance Secretary