



National Space Grant Alliance

Home

SPACE GRANT ALLIANCE BOARD MEETING – MARCH 2, 2005
CRYSTAL CITY

Members

Internal Site

The Alliance Board met jointly during the morning with the Council and Foundation Boards for updates from VSA/TIG.

Board of Directors

Schedule of Events

General Information

Carolyn Fuller summarized the DC environment. Administrator O’Keefe began a change in NASA’s culture towards a more mission-oriented organization, focused on the President’s vision of moon/Mars exploration. Now that he has left the agency, there is a void in leadership until a new Administrator is appointed. In addition, the House and Senate are reorganizing the appropriations subcommittees. In the process, the House has consolidated several committees and NASA is now overseen by a new “Science, Commerce, Justice, State and related agencies” subcommittee. The staff is new. The Senate hasn’t fully embraced the House reorganization, but it seems will create a parallel version of the Science,...” subcommittee. New bills will be slow to move through the changed structure, and many may just start with last year’s language.

Brent noted his concern that the appropriations bills must include specific language as to the Space Grant line, as in this year’s appropriation, or NASA may feel free to zero the program. Carolyn thought the worst case would not be zero, but likely a return to the President’s request for ~\$19M.

With regard to the current (FY’05) appropriation of \$28.2M, which has not been fully released to Consortia, VSA/TIG proposes to meet with key members and staff who can pressure NASA to allocate, perhaps with a modest “tax,” the full amount. If this is unsuccessful, a more aggressive approach through congress, investigating a “misuse” of funds could be initiated. This is not preferred as it could result in hard feelings and backlash from NASA administrators. Assuming success, the remaining amount above what has already been budgeted would come as an “augmentation,” similar to last year.

Materials prepared for handout to the Alliance membership were reviewed. It was suggested by VSA/TIG that consortia focus on the ’06 appropriation language and request signatures by members on the “Dear Colleague” letters already initiated in the House. The Senate version will be finalized when it is known how the subcommittee is structured and who the leadership is.

It was noted that a new congressional caucus on “Science, Technology, Engineering, Math” (STEM) education has formed, and this provides an opportunity to target Space Grant capabilities in this area.

At ~11AM Brent Bowen convened a meeting of the Alliance Board only. Present were: D. Bartlett, B. Bowen, L. Brown, J. Danek (ex officio), S. de Silva, R. Henry, P. Hynes M. Jaraiedi, M. Sandy, J. Teasdale, Y. Terzian, J. Wefel.

- Majid Jaraiedi gave the Alliance Treasurer's report (see handout). 20 states have paid dues for 2005. He noted that several states (Arkansas, Indiana, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Illinois, South Carolina, and Washington) did not pay dues in 2004. Oklahoma and Utah made partial '04 payments. In these cases consortia were unable to find funds for their full dues. 3 states (Tennessee, District of Columbia, Massachusetts) have indicated that they are opposed to paying Alliance dues, regardless of availability of funds. Overall, FY'04 ended with a small surplus, but there is concern about prompt payment of '05 dues, which will be conveyed to the full membership. Shan de Silva moved, and Yervant Terzian seconded a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. The Board unanimously approved the motion.
- Brent updated the Board on recent legal/tax developments. The Alliance incurred a \$1,320 tax penalty for late filing of its 2004 return, but this has been abated. The return was prepared in time but apparently lost in transmittal to VSA/TIG or from them to the IRS. Brent is concerned about scrutiny of Alliance financial affairs, and recommended conducting an independent audit. John Wefel moved and Lisa Brown seconded a motion to authorize Brent to contract for an audit. The motion was approved unanimously. Brent noted that DC taxes for 2004 have not been filed. The Alliance attorney will be working with DC officials to confirm our tax exempt status and any penalty incurred is likely to be small.
- Brent noted that it is common practice for the officers of organizations such as the Alliance to have insurance against suits/judgements against the Alliance. The Space Grant Foundation Board already has such insurance. He quoted 2 rates in the \$1500-2000 range of annual premiums. Mary Sandy moved and Pat Hynes seconded a motion that the Chair be authorized to seek additional quotes if necessary, and purchase coverage based on cost and effectiveness of coverage. During discussion, Yervant asked specifically what was covered by such insurance. The response was the costs of any judgement were covered, but not court costs. The Board unanimously approved the motion.

In closing, Brent noted that the Alliance attorney has recommended that the Alliance engage in as little contact with our contractors VSA/TIG in matters of business and taxes as possible. We will no longer ask VSA/TIG to submit tax returns. Brent then briefly previewed the content of his presentation to the full membership, to take place in the afternoon.

The meeting adjourned at ~12PM.

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