

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



March 24, 2016

General Law Practice Group

Reply to Attn of:

TO: Distribution

FROM: Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Official

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA Employees at a Conference and Reception hosted by Explore Mars, Inc., and the Space Policy Institute of George Washington University (GWU) on May 17-19, 2016

On May 17-19, 2016, Explore Mars, Inc. and the Space Policy Institute of George Washington University's (GWU), both not-for-profit organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, will host the Humans to Mars Summit 2016 conference. Sponsors that support the event, which is administered and controlled by the Explore Mars, Inc., include Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Aerojet Rocketdyne, Dell, Orbital ATK, Paragon, Honeywell, SpaceX, Busek, and National Institute of Aerospace. This event will take place at George Washington University in the Lisner Auditorium and Betts Auditorium. The conference is from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., May 17 and 18, and 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on May 19. There will also be a reception at 7:00 p.m. on May 17 in the Lisner Auditorium. The sponsors for the reception are the same as those for the conference.

The purpose of this event is to bring experts together from around the world to facilitate discussions about the technical, scientific, and policy challenges of sending humans to Mars in the upcoming decades. Approximately, 1,000 people are expected to the event. Attendees will include representatives from academia; organizations focused on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education; industry, the media; students; congressional members and staff; and interested members of the general public. The estimated cost of the conference is \$250, which includes food and beverages estimated to be \$170 per person. For personnel attending the Evening reception on May 17 only, the cost of the food and beverages is \$50. Explore Mars, Inc. is organizing the events and controls the guest lists and invitations.

Additionally, there will be a lunch on May 18 at 12:15 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Lisner Auditorium, and a reception on May 18 at 6:30 p.m. at The Rooftop, 1730 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC, that are in addition to the registration cost. The cost of the food and beverages for these two events is \$50 each. Approximately 120 people from the conference will attend the lunch and approximately 100 people from the conference will attend the evening reception. The sponsors for the additional lunch and reception are the same as those for the conference.

I find that the Humans to Mars Summit 2015 and the evening receptions meet the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g)(2). I further determine

that there is an Agency interest in having NASA personnel attend the events because they will further Agency programs or operations. Attendance at the events will allow NASA attendees to exchange information on NASA's aerospace and exploration programs with interested representatives of significant communities. Accordingly, NASA employees whose duties do not substantially affect the sponsor, including NASA employees in non-career positions who are required to sign the ethics pledge under Executive Order 13490, may accept an invitation for themselves and an invited guest for free attendance to the Humans to Mars 2016 Summit and reception. However, NASA employees whose duties may substantially affect the event hosts, such as by way of procurement duties, should seek an individual determination pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g)(3)(i) regarding participation in this event from their local ethics counselor.

Attendees are reminded of the \$20 gift exception at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(a), which provides that employees may accept gifts valued at no more than \$20 per occasion (and no more than \$50 from one source in a calendar year).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam F. Greenstone', written in a cursive style.

Adam F. Greenstone