National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001

February 26, 2014

Dr. Steven W. Squyres
Chairman
NASA Advisory Council
Washington, DC 20546

Dear ~~Dr. Squyres~~ Steve:

Enclosed is a NASA response to a recommendation from the NASA Advisory Council meeting held on December 11-12, 2013, at Kennedy Space Center, Florida. Please do not hesitate to contact me if the Council would like further background on this response. I appreciate the Council's thoughtful consideration leading to the recommendations and welcome its continued findings, recommendations, and advice concerning the U.S. civil space program.

I look forward to working closely with you and members of the Council in the future.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Bolden, Jr.
Administrator

Enclosure:
2013-03-02 (SC-02) Education and Public Outreach Funding for NASA Science Mission Directorate

NASA Advisory Council Recommendation

Education and Public Outreach Funding
for NASA Science Mission Directorate
2013-03-02 (SC-02)

Recommendation: The Council recommends that NASA restore the original Education and Public Outreach funding to all NASA Science Mission Directorate (SMD) programs.

Major Reasons for Proposing the Recommendation: SMD's Education and Public Outreach (EPO) efforts have been critical to the national interest and have proved to be effective in communicating science and inspiring and educating the public. The EPO funding situation remains ambiguous. Budgetary authority was removed from all of the NASA EPO programs, but because of the Continuing Resolution, SMD was able to authorize a small fraction of its EPO programs to continue. Restoration by NASA across all SMD EPO programs is needed to fulfill NASA's vibrant and highly effective mission of education and public outreach.

Consequences of No Action on the Proposed Recommendation: The nation is already losing a critical and inspirational opportunity for involving our citizens in science. NASA has previously trained a capable EPO workforce directly involved in NASA's missions that is already being lost. This incredible capability, developed over more than a decade, will disappear in a much shorter amount of time.

NASA Response:
NASA partially concurs with the recommendation. As previously noted in response to prior NAC recommendations (2013-02-08 (EPOC-02) and 2013-02-09 (EPOC-03)), NASA recognizes the value of education and outreach activities conducted by the Science Mission Directorate (SMD) and other Agency offices and Mission Directorates.

On September 5, 2013, the NASA Executive Council issued direction EC-2013-09-001, directing Mission Directorates, Centers, and offices to continue executing education and public outreach activities as approved by the Communications and Education process under the FY 2013 appropriations structure. The Agency is still adjusting its education portfolio in alignment with the White House National Science and Technology Council's Committee on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education (CoSTEM) strategic plan. On the same day, further guidance was released by the Associate Administrators for Education and Communication describing the process to review and approve activities during a continuing resolution. Authority for approval of SMD education activities during this period was delegated to the SMD Education Lead.

Consistent with the Administration and CoSTEM efforts to coordinate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) efforts across the U.S. Government, the Associate Administrator for Education utilizes the NASA Education Coordinating Council (ECC) to review the Agency's investments in STEM education and to prioritize the education portfolio. The Science, Human Exploration and Operations, Aeronautics Research, and Space

Technology Mission Directorates each has identified a Headquarters Education Lead, who is responsible for the coordination of all education activities funded by their directorates. These efforts are brought into the Agency-wide education portfolio through the ECC.

Education activities occurring after January 15, 2014, are subject to guidance provided to the Agency through the FY 2014 Omnibus Appropriation. The ECC is reviewing the guidance and will provide recommendations to the Associate Administrator for Education on modifications and implementation strategies for the portfolio.