

**Tracking Number: 2010-02-06 (EPOC-02)**  
**No Budget for NASA Headquarters Public Affairs**

**NASA Advisory Council Recommendation:**

The Council recommends that the NASA Office of Communications (formerly, Office of Public Affairs) and Office of Education be funded at a level proportionate and appropriate to its mission, goals, and objectives in engaging the public.

**Major Reasons for the Recommendation:**

The Public Affairs budget in Washington has been zeroed out for several years forcing the department to operate on non-appropriated money.

**NASA Response:**

As a point of clarification, management notes that NASA Headquarters Public Affairs Office had in recent years been administered without its own budget, other than for personnel, with appropriated funds budgeted for other offices. We assume this is what the Council means to refer to in its reference to “non-appropriated” money. Subject to this clarification, NASA concurs with this recommendation. In recent years, Agency communications activities have remained at a minimal core level as a result of directed reductions. The Office of Communications has implemented and maintained programs of the highest quality to discharge NASA’s statutory mission to disseminate information about NASA programs to the widest degree practical, including NASA Television and NASA’s Web site at <http://www.nasa.gov>, both of which have received the highest recognition by industry peers. However, the lack of a formal communications budget undermines long-term and strategic planning, which is further obscured by the use of Mission Directorate resources to support outreach activities.

The above being said, it is possible that legislative efforts to establish an appropriate central Office of Communications budget in these fiscally austere times may generate perceptual issues. Accordingly, the Associate Administrator for Communications and the Associate Administrator for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs have been tasked to jointly consider these issues and report to the Office of the Administrator with their recommendations.

Enclosure