

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Mary W. Jackson Building NASA Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



July 11, 2023

Reply to Attn of: General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution

FROM: Agency Counsel for Ethics

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA employees at the Brooke Owens Fellowship Reception/Dinner on July 13, 2023

On July 13, 2023, Brooke Owens Fellowship, a nonprofit organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, will host a dinner at the Marriott - Crystal City and Reagan National Airport, Washington, DC, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. The event is to honor the 2023 Class of Brooke Owens and Patti Grace Smith Fellows (collegiate aerospace students who have been selected for summer internship program).

Approximately 180 people have been invited to attend the dinner reception. Attendees will have a diversity of views or interests and will include representatives of the legislative branch, personnel from academia, industry representatives, employees of Federal agencies, members of the public, and media. The estimated value of the event, including all food is \$68 per person (with additional \$25 for wine/beer). Brooke Owens Fellowship is in control of the all the organizing, planning and invitations for the event.

Attendance at this event will allow NASA attendees to exchange information regarding various NASA programs. There is also an Agency interest in having NASA personnel attend these events because it will provide an opportunity for the invited persons to exchange ideas and views pertaining to NASA's policies, programs, and operations. I find that the event meets the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g).

Accordingly, NASA employees who do not have a significant role in a matter affecting the interests of the NAA—including NASA employees in non-career positions who are required to sign the ethics pledge under Executive Order 13989—may accept an invitation from the NAA for free attendance for themselves and a guest to this event. In those circumstances, I find that the Agency's interest in attendance outweighs any concern that the individual may be, or may appear to be, improperly influenced in the performance of their duties.

However, NASA employees who have a significant role in any pending matter affecting the interests of the Brooke Owens Fellowship, such as procurement duties, program management, or negotiating or administering a Space Act Agreement, or who receive an invitation from a party other than the event host, NAA, should seek a separate determination from their local NASA ethics office as to whether they may accept the invitation.

Attendees are reminded to exercise any COVID-19 precautions appropriate to their individual situation.

Adam F. Greenstone