

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

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



May 2, 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 Space Policy Institute, George Washington University Dinner on May 9, 2023.

On May 9, 2023, the Space Policy Institute (SPI), George Washington University (GWU), a nonprofit organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, will host a dinner at the DACOR Bacon House, 1801 F Street NW, Washington, DC, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The guest speaker is Valda Vikmanis-Keller, giving a presentation on strategic communications framework for space by the U.S. Department of State.

Approximately 100 people have been invited to attend. Attendees will have a diversity of views or interests and will include representatives from the legislative branch, representatives from industry, employees of Federal agencies, academia, and international space agency DC representatives. The estimated cost of the event, including all food and beverages, is \$98 per person. SPI is in control of the organizing, planning and invitations for this event. Attendance at this event will allow NASA attendees to exchange information regarding various NASA programs. I find that the event meets 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 event because it will provide an opportunity for the invited persons to exchange ideas and views pertaining to NASA’s policies, programs, and operations. NASA employees, including NASA employees in non-career positions who are required to sign the ethics pledge under Executive Order 13989, who do not have a significant role in a matter affecting the interests of the sponsor may accept an invitation for free attendance to the 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 SPI/GWU, such as procurement duties, program management, or negotiating or administering a Space Act Agreement, should seek a separate determination from their local ethics counselor 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