

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration



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

October 31, 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 November 15, 2023.

On November 15, 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 Lindner Commons Room, Elliott School of International Affairs, 1957 E. Street, NW, Washington, DC, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. A presentation will be made by Charity Weeden, NASA, Associate Administrator for Technology, Policy, and Strategy.

Approximately 110 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 \$125 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