

National Science Foundation

Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences

MEMORANDUM

Date: 5 January 2024

To: Office of Integrative Activities

From: Dr. Denise Caldwell, Acting Assistant Director, Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences

Subject: Diversity and Conflict of Interest Report for the Division of Astronomical Sciences FY 2023
Committee of Visitors

The Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS) Division of Astronomical Sciences (AST) charged a Committee of Visitors (COV) to review the quality and integrity of the merit review process, program operations, and program-level matters over the four-year period of FY 2019 through FY 2022. The COV met virtually for an organizational meeting on 11 July 2023. The full COV met in-person at NSF on 10-11 August 2023. In between, subgroups met in Zoom sessions and worked asynchronously. The MPS Advisory Committee accepted the COV's report on 8 November 2023.

The COV consisted of 18 members of the research community, representing the various sub-disciplines/techniques supported through the Division's programs. These individuals were chosen for their breadth of expertise and experience in fields within the purview of AST. Collectively, the COV membership represented diverse perspectives and was balanced across the various sub-disciplines. Diversity and inclusiveness in the COV membership is illustrated by the committee's institutional, geographics, and demographic diversity, as shown in Table 1 below.

Conflict of interest and confidentiality rules were discussed with the COV members prior to the start of the formal COV meetings. All COV members were required to complete NSF Conflict of Interest Form 1230P and to notify the division of their individual conflicts of interest. All identified conflicts were managed through the Electronic Jacket CoV module, which prevented COV members from electronically accessing any proposal with which they were conflicted. COV members were also instructed to leave the room during discussions of any actions with which they had conflicts of interest. The AST Conflict of Interest official was always available during the COV process to answer questions and resolve issues.

The Division of Astronomical Sciences believes that the efforts of the COV and the COV Chair, Dr. Alyssa Goodman from Harvard University was outstanding in all respects. The Division staff detected no situations in which conflicts of interest were not handled properly. The Division was pleased with the quality, professionalism, and thoroughness of the COV report and its findings.

Table 1: Institutional, geographical, and demographic characteristics of COV members

Category	Subcategory	Number of COV Members
Members of the MPS Advisory Committee	-	1
No NSF Support in Five Years	-	5
Organization Type	Ph.D. Granting Institution	6
Organization Type	Primarily Undergraduate Institution	4
Organization Type	Federal Agency	4
Organization Type	Non-Profit/Private Foundation	4
Geographic Location	East North Central	2
Geographic Location	Middle Atlantic	2
Geographic Location	South Atlantic	5
Geographic Location	East South Central	1
Geographic Location	West South Central	1
Geographic Location	Mountain	2
Geographic Location	Pacific	3
Gender	Male	8
Gender	Female	6
Gender	Unspecified	2
Race	White	13
Race	Asian	1
Race	Black or African American	1
Race	Multi Racial	0
Race	Did Not Provide	1
Ethnicity	Hispanic	1
Ethnicity	Not Hispanic	14