

reductions in funding that were announced for some programs, and preserving the option to restore the program solicitations that were placed under review.

In consultation with the science community, through the NASA Advisory Council (NAC), NASA is studying the R&A and program mix. It is not NASA's intent to preclude any options prior to the receipt of those findings and recommendations. NASA expects to release a decision by early summer.

On or about April 1, 2006, this Amendment No. 7 to the NASA Research Announcement "Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences (ROSES) 2006" (NNH06ZDA001N) will be posted on the NASA research opportunity homepage at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/> (select "Solicitations" then "Open Solicitations" then "NNH06ZDA001N").

Questions about specific ROSES program elements should be addressed to the NASA Program Officer identified in the relevant ROSES appendix. Questions concerning the ROSES NRA or this amendment may be addressed to Dr. Paul Hertz, Chief Scientist, Science Mission Directorate, NASA Headquarters, Washington, DC 20546-0001; Telephone: (202) 358-0986; E-mail: Paul.Hertz@nasa.gov.

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From Heidi Hammel:

In case you missed it, NASAwatch has reported a note from NASA re SMD R&A: go to the NASA research opportunities homepage at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/> Select "Solicitations" then select "Open Solicitations" then select "NNH06ZDA001N ROSES-2006." Under "Other Documents," select "Note from NASA: Funding for the SMD R&A Program, including Astrobiology (April 4, 2006)."

Full text appended below. There is no attribution on or in the note stating its authorship. As far as I know, this "Note to the Community" was not distributed except via NASAwatch. A PDF file buried five layers deep on a website is not a very effective mode of communication. It hasn't (yet) come out via the standard NASA nspires distribution list.

Note to the Community: Funding for the Science Mission Directorate Research and Analysis (R&A) Program, including Astrobiology

April 4, 2006

The proposed NASA budget (NASA's proposed FY06 operating plan and the President's proposed FY07 budget) identifies a reduced level of growth for the Science Mission Directorate, relative to the runout of the President's proposed FY06 budget. In order to plan an executable program within the total funding proposed for SMD, we have had to make decisions on the appropriate mix of flight programs, research and development, and other program components.

The reduction in research funding is directly related to the slowing rate of growth of SMD programs. Because there will be fewer missions within SMD, a larger body of advanced research and development to prepare for future missions is not required.

Astrobiology research funding is reduced in the budget for several reasons. It should also be noted that astrobiology experienced a rapid growth in funding several years ago. Prior to this reduction, the Astrobiology research budget was comparable to the astrophysics research budget and was almost double the heliophysics research budget. This reduction brings it more into balance with the rest of the research program. In addition, the lower flight rate for astrobiology related missions (e.g. fewer Mars missions in the next 5 years, delay for a Europa orbiter mission, delay for a Terrestrial Planet Finder mission etc.), plus the recognition that human exploration missions to Mars are further in the future than previously assumed, have reduced some of the urgency for rapid progress in astrobiology research. Astrobiology remains one of the larger disciplines and an important area of research in support of NASA's program.

Both Mike Griffin and Mary Cleave, in Congressional testimony, Town Meetings with the community and elsewhere have said that we will listen to the science community's advice regarding the program mix and R&A. We tried to get the mix right, but if we can do better, we can propose changes through updates to the operating plan. In consultation with the science community, through the NASA Advisory Council (NAC), we are studying the R&A and program mix. This advice will help NASA set priorities for funding missions and research within a fixed bottom-line budget. Any advice that indicates that a smaller, or perhaps no, reduction in research funding is a high priority for NASA should also indicate which mission budgets are lower priority. Such advice should be within the context of priorities set in the appropriate NAS decadal surveys. This will be a prime topic of discussion with the NAC science subcommittees when they meet later this spring. In our communications with the science community, we have indicated the changes that must be made to support the proposed NASA budget. At the same time, it is not our intent to preclude any options prior to the receipt of findings and recommendations from our advisory committees. We expect to release a decision on R&A funding by early summer.

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The 4th Planetary Probe Workshop (IPPW-4) will be in Pasadena this June (JUNE 27-30, 2006). The workshop will be preceded by a two day short course IN SITU INSTRUMENTS FOR PLANETARY PROBES AND AERIAL PLATFORMS on June 25-26.

The workshop website is at <http://ippw.jpl.nasa.gov/> and the upcoming deadlines are

Abstract submission: April 24
Registration: May 15

A very brief overview of the (tentative) workshop schedule is included below. Note that Andy Dantzler is an invited speaker in Session 1, and Firouz Naderi will provide the workshop welcome.

Session I: Current Outlook for Probe Missions

Chairs: Melissa McGrath, NASA / Jean-Pierre Lebreton, ESA

Session II : Scientific Results from Probe Missions

Chairs: Ralph Lorenz, U. Arizona / Eric Chassefiere, Service d'Aeronomie, Univ. P & M Curie, France

Session III: In Situ Measurements of Earth's Atmosphere

Chairs: Peter Jenniskens, SETI, / Maartin Roos-Serote, U. Lisbon, Portugal / Geroge Durry, Institut Pierre-Simon-Laplace, France

Session IV: Mission Concepts and Studies

Chairs: Sushil Atreya, U. Michigan / Thomas Spilker, JPL / Gerhard Schwehm, ESA

Session V: Sensors, Instruments and Sample Acquisition Systems

Chairs: Paul Mahaffy, GSFC / Brian Jamieson, GSFC / Erik Laan, Dutch Space, Netherlands / Andrew Ball, Open University, UK

Session VI: Thermal Control and Pressure Vessels

Chairs: Bernie Bienstock, Boeing / Denis Lebleu, Alcatel

Session VII: Electronics, Communication, and Batteries

Chairs: Wayne Johnson, Auburn University / Jim Arnold, UCSC / Thierry Blancquaert, ESTEC

Session VIII: Entry, Descent, and Mobility Systems

Chairs: Ed Martinez, NASA Ames

Session IX: Summary, Discussion and Conclusions

Chairs; Jim Cutts, JPL / Jean-Pierre Lebreton, ESA

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The long-awaited announcement (rumors started back in Dec) about the new SSES - now called Planetary Science Subcommittee - has been sent out. None of the committee members is official yet. But I received the following information from Michael New:

" Four panels, representing the four Science Divisions at NASA headquarters, will meet at the

UMD facility, the panels are: Astrophysics, Earth Science, Heliophysics, and Planetary Science. Agenda topics provisionally will include: FY07 budget, science AOs and grants, technology program, NAC and subcommittee status and plans, program mix within themes, and — most important for this meeting — participation in the development of a Congressionally-mandated 2007/8 NASA Science Plan (based on the recent Solar System Exploration Roadmap)."

PSS provides advice to the NASA Advisory Council (NAC), possibly via a science subcommittee (Chair: Dr. Charles F. Kennel, Dr. Wesley T. Huntress, Jr., Dr. Eugene H. Levy, Dr. Mark S. Robinson, Dr. Neil DeGrasse Tyson). A list of the members of the NAC is available at <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/oer/nac/>

The really bumner is that the date of this Science Planning Conference is May 3-4th - yes, that overlaps with the week of VEXAG, Uranus pre-Equinox and OPAG.

More information on PSS and the Science Planning Conference when it becomes official.

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Next OPAG meeting just a month away!!

The next OPAG meeting will be on May 4–5th, 2006 at the Westin in Pasadena (191 North Los Robles, Pasadena, California 91101). A block of 50 rooms set aside under “NASA OPAG.” To make reservations, people can contact the hotel directly at (626) 792-2727 or visit the Web site. There are a limited number of travel grants available to allow early career scientists to attend the OPAG meeting. These travel grants will reimburse lodging, airfare, rental car, and per diem expenses, and are available to any scientist who has received their doctorate in the past seven years. To apply, please send a CV and a brief statement describing how you will contribute to OPAG to Curt Niebur at Curt.Niebur@nasa.gov.

PLEASE contact Curt Niebur curt.niebur@nasa.gov if you plan to attend the meeting.

If you know you will NOT attend the May OPAG meeting, please contact Curt and say why not (e.g. just busy, bad timing, no funding, discouraged by lack of new missions to the outer solar system on the horizon....)

BUT remember - if we do not continue planning or campaigning for new missions they will most certainly not happen. NOW is the time to keep the pressure on target - the Outer Solar System!

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