

Chair Bulletin #4
Tuesday February 17th, 2009

Colleagues:

Things are moving fast on ASTRO 2010. Over 320 Science White Papers have been received and we will start reading them all this week. Once they have been organized and compiled we will be posting them on the Astro2010 web site for all to read. There has been a tremendously impressive response to this call for input and the survey will benefit enormously from the collective knowledge of the community the papers represent. It is particularly gratifying to see papers submitted by the most junior to the most senior members of our community from all regions and spanning many scientific interests.

The science frontiers panels begin their work with their first meetings starting on February 27th. The membership slates for the five panels and their meeting dates will be announced as their appointments are confirmed by the NRC. Consult the web page for frequent updates.

There are also calls for State of the Profession Position Papers and Technology Development White Papers, as well as a Request for Information (PPP-RFI) to be considered by the Program Prioritization Panels and the Subcommittee on Programs that will follow soon, most likely later this week. You should take a look at the Frequently Asked Questions on the web site for answers to many queries we know are out there in the community on the program prioritization process. Point your browser to <<http://www7.nationalacademies.org/bpa/Astro2010_Request_for_Input.html>> for more information on these calls and links to the FAQs.

We have had several inquiries as to where cross-cutting endeavors like computing, laboratory astrophysics, and theory fit into this general structure. The first point to make is that I expect these areas will all be discussed prominently in our reports and we urgently need your best and most creative ideas to consider.

Because of the importance of these areas to the whole Astronomy and Astrophysics enterprise, we have designed the survey process to ensure they are considered in each track of the survey. We have already received many science white papers on specific research projects involving these cross-cutting endeavors and the science frontiers panels and the Subcommittee on Science will be considering those ideas while formulating our reports' conclusions on where the forefronts of our field lie. If you think that the overall way that any of these cross-cutting endeavors is supported or managed needs attention then send in a Position Paper to the State of the Profession. The study groups have been charged to assess these issues carefully and the State of the Profession Subcommittee will be formulating recommendations in these areas for the whole Survey Committee to consider adopting later in the survey process. If you want to propose a large facility like a dedicated national institute or laboratory then such an enterprise would be an "activity" in the survey and should be proposed through the PPP-RFI process that is about to be launched. Cross-cutting activities in theory, laboratory astrophysics, computing and the like that span the areas being considered by the program prioritization panels will be assessed by the Subcommittee on Programs and the Survey Committee as a whole.

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to send an email to astro2010@nas.edu.

Roger Blandford
Astro2010 Chair