

**American Mathematical Society
Committee on Science Policy Meeting
April 25-27, 2006
Washington, DC**

Summary Report

The 2006 Committee on Science Policy meeting was designed to allow attendees to meet with Members of Congress and their staff to discuss increased funding for the National Science Foundation in the FY 2007 federal budget. The meeting began with a reception and dinner on Tuesday evening, after which there was an orientation session on the FY 2007 Administration Budget Request, on how to conduct meetings with congressional offices, and on the message that was to be delivered to Congress. All day Wednesday was devoted to meetings with Members of Congress and their staffs and Thursday morning was dedicated to discussing the meetings held the previous day and to appropriate follow-up strategies.

Highlights from orientation presentations:

***James Turner, Chief Counsel, Minority
House Science Committee***

Jim Turner began his presentation by discussing the political climate on Capitol Hill and the ongoing pressures on the federal budget. He discussed the fact that there are few people with a science background in Congress or on staff and how the importance of science is often overlooked when funding the budget. However, the Administration's FY 2007 Budget Request includes an allocation for the American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI). This initiative commits to doubling the investment in the key federal agencies that support basic research in the physical sciences and engineering over the next 10 years. Turner clarified, however, that Congress must approve the allocation for the ACI in the upcoming appropriations process. On Wednesday, CSP participants should focus on asking their Members of Congress to support the increases for research outlined in the ACI in the appropriation bills.

***David Weinreich
AMS Congressional Fellow***

David Weinreich spoke to attendees about the critical role lobbying plays in the legislative process. His role as a Congressional staffer has given him some insight into how to approach the meeting process with Members' offices. He gave attendees some practical advice about the desired length of the meetings, about conveying the message so that it will be heard and about simple courtesies such as being on time and saying "thank you." Weinreich also encouraged attendees to be sure to offer future guidance to the Members' office on issues in their area of expertise, to follow up once they leave the office and to try to meet with the Member again when they're at home in the district, perhaps during the August recess.

***Sam Rankin
AMS Associate Executive Director***

Sam Rankin began his presentation by discussing the message that attendees will convey in the meetings with Congressional offices. He detailed a one-page handout written in collaboration with SIAM that discusses the necessity of investing in mathematics in order to achieve competitiveness for the United States in today's global marketplace. This handout also succinctly requests that Members of Congress do two things: 1) support the Administration's FY 2007 Budget Request of \$6.2 billion for the National Science Foundation (a 7.9% increase); and 2) support adequate funding for mathematics in future budgets.

Rankin also provided some meeting guidelines to attendees. He discussed the importance of explaining how funding for NSF and the mathematical sciences impacts the state/district of the Member of Congress and how using anecdotes is important to conveying this message effectively. He also talked about the amount of influence a Congressional staff has with a Member and how important it is not only to leave them with a clear understanding of the importance of increased funding for the NSF, but with a good impression of the meeting itself.

Capitol Hill Visits and Follow-Up Discussion

The thirty-seven CSP committee members and department chairs attending were divided into ten teams for the Capitol Hill visits. Each team had two to six members. Sixty-nine meetings were scheduled by the AMS Washington Office from 8:30am to 4:30pm on Wednesday. Each team had from six to nine meetings.

On Thursday morning, the CSP meeting continued with a discussion of the Wednesday Capitol Hill meetings. Each meeting group relayed their experiences to the larger group and gave their impressions of how receptive the congressional representatives were to the requests made for increased funding for the NSF in FY 2007.

The consensus of the group was that the meetings went very well and were useful to the process of relationship building with Members of Congress. Many attendees invited their representatives to visit their institutions and made themselves available as potential resources to the Member and staff. Attendees felt that it was important for the mathematical community to continue to participate in this kind of activity and that a long term commitment must be made to setting up interactions with policy makers and groups of mathematicians. Some suggestions were made for future meetings of this kind, including targeting Members who are integral to the appropriations process, providing more anecdotal information on the state level for attendees use, and encouraging mathematicians from influential states to participate.

CSP Activities at the Joint Mathematics Meetings, New Orleans 2007

After some discussion on suggested topics for CSP activities at the Joint Meetings in New Orleans in January 2007, the committee decided it would host a program centered around the Division of Mathematical Sciences at the National Science Foundation and its new Director, Peter March.

In addition, the committee discussed the AMS-MAA government speaker that CSP usually invites to give a talk at the Joint Meetings. Some ideas for speakers were discussed, but nothing was decided at this time. The committee will follow up with discussions on whom to invite via email.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the AMS Committee on Science Policy was scheduled for Tuesday-Wednesday, April 17-18, 2007 in Washington, DC. The meeting will begin at mid-day on Tuesday with presentations and an orientation session and will continue Wednesday with meetings with Members of Congress and their staff.