

PSS October 27 2011 Teleconference

Introductions

Dr. Jonathan Rall, Executive Secretary of the Planetary Science Subcommittee (PSS), opened the meeting with a roll call of the PSS membership. Dr. Ronald Greeley, PSS Chair, was not available for the meeting.

Status of Fiscal Year 2012 Budget and Impacts

Dr. Jim Green, Director of the Planetary Science Division (PSD), began his update by noting that funding for the Division is not following the expectations of the Decadal Survey (DS). Congress is working on Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12) budget while NASA operates on a Continuing Resolution (CR) that expires on November 18. Even if Congress grants the President's budget request of \$1.54 billion, the budget line drops precipitously in succeeding years, to a net decrease of almost 25 percent by FY16. PSD has to plan for that beforehand. This will have a major impact on the upcoming Senior Review, which is a peer review committee that looks as science per dollar on extended missions.

In that context, Dr. Green gave an update on the Senior Review process. The Review occurs every two years and provides input for strategic decisions related to funding of missions that have moved into an extended mode. PSD may find itself unable to fund some extended missions, or may have to fund them at a lower cost by reducing some of the science. All PSD programs are vying for a portion of the same limited budget. That has to be very clear. It means that these programs have to be viewed aggregately across the entire division. Draft guidelines were issued for the Senior Review, comments were received, and the guidelines are being updated, to be issued in early November at the latest. Proposals will be due around January 31, 2012, the Review will take place in March, and Dr. Green will have the results in time to work on the FY13 and FY14 budgets. The projected budgets take a huge drop from FY12 to FY13, and again from FY13 to FY14.

Specific missions invited to the Senior Review include Cassini, Deep Impact, Gravity Recovery and Interior Laboratory (GRAIL), Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO), Mars Odyssey, Mars Opportunity, Mars Express, and Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. Dollar amounts are in the guidelines. Dr. Green expects the Senior Review to propose funding at both a specific level and an optimum level. He will be providing the Review the amounts currently being spent, and what the whole program will be vying for in FY13 and FY14.

Dr. John Grant, from the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, asked whether the budget decrease is a straight 23 percent across the board or if there is another formula. Dr. Green said that he has proposed having certain programs held at a different level instead of cutting across the board. The DS set a top priority to increase Research and Application

(R&A), for example, which is not realistic under the current scenario. He asked the community for feedback on a proposal to create stable funding for R&A. This will allow PSD to invest in the community at a specific level. This does mean that other parts of the program will have to rebalance around that.

Dr. Green was asked if the Venus Express was up for review; it is, as it has an instrument that should be on the list. Dr. William McKinnon noted that in such situations, one has to balance ongoing missions with the phasing in of future missions. There are ways to move things around. Dr. Green agreed. His team worked hard to select the New Frontiers missions and to down-select on the Discovery program, from 26 to 3, for a Phase A study. In the future, the Division will need to plan funding to balance the longer-term ebbs and flows of mission development. They will also need to account for the launch vehicles, which are expensive and have to go into the budget. What is left goes to the rest of the program.

Update on R&A

Dr. Rall noted that PSD hopes to avoid any negative impact on R&A. He then presented a comprehensive list of the various programs currently funded, which fall into five categories: Planetary R&A; Mars R&A; Discovery Research; Outer Planet Research; and Lunar Science Research. He explained that the lunar wedge is separate due to the need to complete a set of programs that fell outside the usual budget process a few years ago. These categories cover the core of planetary science research, with a budget of \$220 million in FY11 and \$205 million in FY10.

Status of the Potential Joint Program Missions with the European Space Agency (ESA)

Dr. Green and Dr. Greeley were scheduled to appear at the upcoming NASA Advisory Council (NAC) Science Committee meeting, where, among other things, they were to discuss NASA and ESA collaboration regarding Mars. The plan was to review what has happened with the relationship and the Mars 2016-2018 missions. ESA representatives have spoken to the press about the NASA/ESA interactions in this mission. The financial situation in the United States is one of austerity, with one result being that the political system is much slower than optimal in taking up international agreements.

Dr. Julie Castillo said that in August, her group released an assessment of the NASA science mission activity to the outer planets and is looking for the recommendations from the PSD. They plan to go through and follow up some of these recommendations in order to produce a response to the National Research Council (NRC). Dr. Green said that PSS had begun looking at those and was reviewing the R&A budget. The report was finalized in August and posted, and there were plans to respond.

Dr. Green reported that there had been an article written about the supposed death of the planetary science program by someone whose perception is Mars-centric. The program is not being killed. The author's opinion is based on what is coming from Europe. Dr. Green planned to address this rumor at the NAC Science Committee meeting. There is visible angst in the community relative to the political process and the budget interactions that occur during austere times. Things said in individual meetings are sometimes misreported. The planetary program is not as healthy as it has been, but it is still the best in the world. These are interesting times, and he would like to see the planetary community get through them. His team is doing what they can to ensure that occurs.

The meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

Webex attendees

Bill	Adkins	Adkins Strategies
James	Bell	ASU
Julie	Castillo	JPL
Tom	Cravens	University of Kansas
David	Desmarais	NASA ARC
Lamont	DiBiasi	Southwest Research Institute
Rich	Dissly	Ball Aerospace
Teresa	Fryberger	NASA HQ Office of the Chief Scientist
Lori	Glaze	NASA GSFC
John	Grant	Smithsonian
Tommy	Grav	Planetary Science Institute
Jeffrey	Grossman	NASA HQ
Will	Grundy	Lowell Observatory
Gloria	Hernandez	NASA
Zhentwei	Hu	Xmano
Terry	Hurford	NASA GSFC
Bethany	Johns	AAS
Jeff	Johnson	JHU/APL
Tibor	Kremic	NASA GRC
Rob	Landis	NASA WFF
Greg	Lee	Northrop Grumman
Dan	Leone	Space News
Sanjay	Limaye	University of Wisconsin
Amy	Lo	Northrop Gurmman
Steve	Mackwell	Lunar & Planetary Institute
William	McKinnon	Washington University
Frank	Morring	Aviation Week
Keith	Murray	NASA LaRC
Curt	Niebur	NASA HQ
Marian	Norris	NASA HQ
Robert	Pappalardo	JPL
Louise	Prockter	JHU/APL
Miriam	Quintal	Caltech
Jonathan	Rall	NASA HQ
Mike	Reddy	NASA HQ
Kim	Reh	JPL
Mitchell	Schulte	NASA HQ

Amy	Scott	AAU
Teresa	Segura	Northrop Grumman
Charles	Shearer	University of New Mexico
Elizabeth	Sheley	Zantech
Kristen	Shipiro	Northrup Grumman
James	Slavin	University of Michigan
Marcia	Smith	Space Policy Online.com
Paul	Steffes	Georgia Tech
Jessica	Sunshine	University of Maryland
Mark	Sykes	Planetary Science Institute
Greg	Vane	JPL
Richard	Vondrak	NASA GSFC
Meenakshi	Wadhwa	Arizona State University
Cathy	Weitz	Planetary Science Institute