

Wisconsin Space Grant Consortium  
2023 Summer Advisory Council Meeting  
Director's Report  
August 10, 2023

#### HQ Update

Fairly good news here: Despite a very challenging legislative climate, both the House and the Senate have released preliminary FY24 Appropriations budgets that maintain funding for the Space Grant program at FY23 levels (or provide for slight increases). It's hard to overstate how surprising this is given the drastic debt-ceiling cuts required at the top levels for the bill that funds NASA. Our advocacy on the Hill continues to be effective, despite growing resistance on the Hill (in certain camps) to education funding of any kind. While this is a good indication of Congressional sentiment regarding our program, the reality is that there is almost no chance of Appropriations Bills getting passed before the end of the fiscal year (October 1), so we are bracing for (1) a year-long Continuing Resolution that would fund us at current levels for FY24 (best case scenario), (2) a series of short-term CRs that keep us guessing and writing shutdown plans throughout the year, and (3) an extended government shutdown, which, if lengthy enough, will jeopardize our ability to fund our programs (worst case scenario).

Also on tap for the coming year is a NASA Reauthorization Bill that will include language regarding the Space Grant program. Specifically, we anticipate the Reauthorization to include explicit language that reduces the Cost-share requirement for SGCs. We currently raise \$600,000 in cost-share funds to meet the existing requirement. It is possible that the new language may certify an interpretation of the SGC authorization that reduces the cost-share component to half its current value. Such a change would dramatically expand our reach and allow more engagement with smaller institutions where cost-share and reporting requirements are a profound burden.

Finally (and again), the National Space Grant meeting will be held in Hawaii this year at the Alohilani Resort (Waikiki Beach). The dates are 9/27-9/29/2023. If you would like to attend, reach out to our office for additional details. It's late but may still be possible.

#### Site Visit

We completed our Site Visit with an all-day presentation to the NASA O-STEM on July 20, 2023. The Site Visit documentation covered Year-3 (6/23/22-6/22/23) of our current cycle grant, as well as a review of activities completed during the 2020-2025 period. The visit went well, and assuming these things are similar to accreditation team visits, we anticipate a clean bill of health and a reprieve from additional visits for a while. Thank you to all who participated in the visit. If you'd like to review our submitted material, please let me know and I can provide you with all 300+ pages of our evidence package.

#### Year-5 Extension Proposal

Our current four-year cycle proposal has been granted a fifth year, which will serve as a transition to the new multi-year cycle that will start in June of 2025. This fifth-year extension is an opportunity to begin to familiarize our Independent Evaluator with our program, as IE activities are required starting in 2025. We also can tweak a few programs in preparation for the ability to make more substantive changes to programs in the multi-year solicitation. Thank you to all who have reviewed the draft proposal and provided their concurrences. It is required that we obtain the concurrence of all Affiliate Liaisons, so I appreciate the responses.

Kevin