

Wisconsin Space Grant Consortium  
2024 Summer Advisory Council Meeting  
Director's Report  
August 8, 2024

### HQ Update:

In the field of dynamical systems, the concept of an attractor basin serves as a good analogy for systems that consistently return to the same states, regardless of the chaos along the way. A system with a well-defined attractor basin gravitates towards a specific set of states, or attractors, no matter how turbulent or unpredictable its intermediate states may be. Which is to say ... the Congressional appropriations process looks remarkably similar to last year at this time, despite considerable intermediate drama. I'm copying last year's HQ update with the key updates in red.

*Fairly good news here: Despite a very challenging legislative climate, both the House and the Senate have released preliminary ~~FY24~~ **FY25** Appropriations budgets that maintain funding for the Space Grant program at ~~FY23~~ **FY24** 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~~ **FY25** (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).*

One new element for FY25: the NASA Authorization Bill (a distinct legislative product from the Appropriations Bills) is making its way through committees and has a decent chance of becoming law this year. The Authorization is an occasional refresh on the scope and mandate for NASA's operations. The current draft has some positive updates to the Space Grant language, including limiting the overhead that NASA can skim from the program. It is fairly mute on the question of cost-share, but we believe that the SG community has come to some agreement with the NASA Legal team and clarification on cost-share is in the works for the coming cycle.

### Multi-year Proposal

Thank you to everyone for the support in providing letters of commitment and statements of concurrence for the recently submitted four-year base program proposal. The proposal was submitted on time and has made it successfully through the first two compliance reviews and is now with the external evaluator team. We will likely hear in September about revision requests or approvals. As a reminder the proposal provides for an updated WSGC base program, but is scoped at \$800k/year instead of the \$910k/year we are currently operating under. There will be augmentations to bring us to ~\$910k base after the dust settles in D.C.

### Advisory Council Retreat

The planning retreat for the multi-year program resulted in high-level guidance for us in preparing the multi-year proposal. Specifically, we agreed to fund the NIF program in the base budget at a level significantly above the required minimum. A total of \$208,800 in base allocation goes to NIF in Year 1. Augmentations in Y2-Y4 will add \$35k to NIF in our most subscribed programs (Graduate Research, Internships, and Undergraduate Research). We agreed to sunset the Elijah program, as well as the CubeSat program. The Collegiate Rocket Program has seen a slight loss of participation in recent years. The base budget allocates three fewer team to the competition but restores the three through Augmentation. The retreat affirmed commitment to our programming in team-based summer undergraduate challenges, and specifically, to the UAV program that has been hosted by Lawrence U. and will move to Carroll U. for summer 2025.