

National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration  
**Office of the Administrator**  
Washington, DC 20546-0001



June 21, 2017


General Lester L. Lyles, USAF (Ret.)  
Chair  
NASA Advisory Council  
Washington, DC 20546

Dear General Lyles:

Enclosed is NASA's response to a recommendation from the NASA Advisory Council meeting held on March 30-31, 2017, at NASA Headquarters. Please do not hesitate to contact me if the Council would like further background on the response. I appreciate the Council's thoughtful consideration leading to the recommendations and welcome its continued findings, recommendations, and advice concerning the U.S. civil space program.

I look forward to working closely with you and members of the Council in the future.

Sincerely,

  
Robert M. Lightfoot, Jr.  
Administrator (Acting)

Enclosure:  
2017-01-01 (STEM TF-01) NASA Education Budget Alignment

## NASA Advisory Council Recommendation

### NASA Education Budget Alignment 2017-01-01 (STEM TF-01)

#### **Recommendation:**

The budget for NASA's education efforts should be aligned with the goals articulated in the NASA Education Implementation Plan (NEIP). Budget stability is critical to long range planning by NASA and grantees. Budgets across funding offices should be aligned with the NEIP and coordinated with the Office of Education.

#### **Major Reasons for the Recommendation:**

- NASA education has many demands in a tight fiscal environment.
- The NEIP is simply a visionary document unless resources are allocated to its implementation.
- Uncertain and fluctuating budgets for NASA education lead to difficulty with planning NASA programs.
- Uncertainty also causes difficulties for undergraduate and graduate students, universities (including minority serving universities), and other grantees who rely on stable funding environments. The lack of stable funding is particularly disruptive for low-income and minority students.

#### **Consequences of No Action on the Recommendation:**

- The gap between stakeholder expectations for NASA's role in education and what NASA is able to do will remain.
- There will be continued fragmentation between activities conducted by multiple NASA offices.
- STEM training for undergraduate and graduate students will be impacted. Minorities, women, and students with disabilities will be disproportionately impacted.

#### **NASA Response:**

NASA concurs with the recommendation of the NAC regarding NASA education budget alignment in general. The NEIP 2015-2017 was written to help provide guidance for educational activities across NASA, with the Office of Education being the organization providing primary leadership and coordination for the effort from 2015-2017. If a decision is made to change the organization structure for the education efforts in the Agency, the current NEIP may not be as applicable as it is with the current structure. Within NASA, a Business Service Assessment (BSA) was recently conducted for NASA's education and outreach, and decisions regarding that assessment were made at the Mission Support Council. The implementation of those decisions may result in a change in the organization structure related to education. A BSA Implementation Team has been formed, and they held their first meeting in May 2017. The implementation team will be formulating an education implementation plan that will provide specific details on how to implement the BSA findings. This implementation plan will supersede the 2015-2017 NEIP.

The NAC recommendation on education budget alignment and this response will be provided to the BSA Implementation Team, and the team will consider it as they formulate the implementation plan. These BSA inputs will be due to the Mission Support Council by early August, and implementation will occur throughout the next fiscal year. We will also be taking into account budget reductions in the 2018 President's Budget Request, which eliminates the Office of Education in NASA but supports internships, fellowships, and outreach outside of the Office of Education. The results of all of the actions in work will address the intent of the recommendation of the NAC on education alignment across NASA.