

APPENDIX A

CHARGE TO THE COMMITTEE

CHARGE
NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING POLICY ISSUES

NSB -99-56
3/23/99

The NSB Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Science and Engineering Policy Issues is hereby reconstituted to lead a study of methodologies for coordination and priority setting in the development of the Federal budget for science and engineering research.

In its Working Paper on *Government Funding of Scientific Research* (NSB-97-186), the National Science Board identified a national interest in “some form of ‘comprehensive’ and ‘coherent’ coordination of Federally-financed research,” which would first require the development of “guidelines to provide clear direction on setting priorities within the Federal research budget.” The recently adopted Strategic Plan of the National Science Board states that: “...the development of an intellectually well founded and broadly accepted methodology for setting priorities across fields of science and engineering is a prerequisite for a coherent and comprehensive Federal allocation process for research.”

Since publication of that paper at the end of 1997, stakeholders in both the Administration and the Congress have urged better coordination for the Federal budget for research, and the development of a methodology for priority setting across fields of science and agencies to further that objective. Specifically, in its report accompanying the NSF Appropriations Act for FY 1999, the House Committee on Appropriations stated its strong agreement with the NSB report and urged the Board to “...develop the guidelines for such a study and provide for the committee at the earliest possible date a proposed plan...to accomplish this task and institute such a study.”

The committee will:

- Review, in light of changing circumstances, the goals for Federal investment in scientific research as stated in the Administration report, Science in the National Interest;

- Examine existing structures and processes for coordination and priority setting for Federally-funded research across the Federal government and the role played by individual agencies in this process;
- Conduct a state of the art assessment of methodologies that inform priority setting for research;
- Conduct a study of budget coordination and priority setting for research as it is practiced in other countries to understand their particular advantages or disadvantages; and
- Convene appropriate stakeholders to consider the findings of these studies and reviews, to develop recommendations for improved methodologies for coordination and priority setting in the Federal research budget and for building the support of the science and engineering communities and of the general public in these methodologies.

The committee may employ a variety of mechanisms to accomplish these objectives, including consultants and independent studies, briefings, workshops, conferences, and forums. The committee may consider recommending to the National Science Board the establishment of an NSB Commission for the development of final recommendations on methodologies for coordination and priority setting. An interim report on findings on the current state of the art and next steps to be submitted to the Board in March 2000, and the final report and recommendations no later than December 2000.

Eamon M. Kelly
Chairman
National Science Board