



**National Science Foundation
Division of Astronomical Sciences**

4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

7 November 2011

Letter by e-mail

Dr. Robert Kerr, SRI International
Dr. Ethan Schreier, Associated Universities, Inc
Dr. William Smith, Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy

Dear Drs. Kerr, Schreier, and Smith:

Further to my letter of 26 October 2011, I am writing to invite you to submit input to the AST Portfolio Review. These submissions should address two timeframes – the near term, 5 years; and the longer term, 10-15 years, and be structured as follows.

(A) An up-to-date long range plan for each observatory (AO, NRAO, Gemini, NOAO, NSO), sometimes referred to as the five-year plan. At a minimum, this update should describe the observatory's capabilities, activities and plans for this near-term period and should map these capabilities and activities to the decadal survey science frontiers identified in New Worlds, New Horizons (NWNH) (Astro2010) and Visions and Voyages (VV) (the Planetary Sciences Decadal Survey, 2011). Please organize your mapping according to the science areas and questions listed in Chapter 2 of NWNH and Chapter 3 of VV. For these plans, assume five-year budget guidance you have been given by AST.

(B) On the longer term, to 2020 and 2025, your vision for each observatory with a description of how that vision can address, or evolve to address, the science frontiers in the decadal surveys. The vision statement should not be a detailed budget plan. However, as noted in my previous letter, you should assume constant purchasing power over the period. You should also describe a prioritization of capabilities and activities, considering capabilities not otherwise available to U.S. astronomers, if that funding level cannot be maintained.

We are not setting a page limit on these documents. However, particularly in the case of the facility vision, conciseness and clarity will be most effective. For these submissions to be of most value in the Portfolio Review Committee's deliberations, please send responses via your AST Program Officer no later than 6 January 2012. If you have any questions, please contact your Program Officer.

The Portfolio Review Committee will be generating more specific questions that are not otherwise addressed in the items described above. Those questions should be distributed within the next few weeks.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vernon Pankonin".

Vernon Pankonin
Deputy Director
Division of Astronomical Sciences

Cc: Fred Lo, Director, NRAO
Fred Chaffee, Interim Director, Gemini
David Silva, Director, NOAO
Stephen Keil, Director, NSO