

Dr. Craig Foltz
NSF
Division of Astronomical Sciences
4201 Wilson Blvd
Arlington, VA 22230
March 4, 2009

Dear Craig,

The Observatory Council met this week and heard about the current needs and projects that are on the brink of possible execution and would be eligible for Stimulus targets. We enthusiastically support the programs listed here:

- ReSTAR implementation (a series of projects that are in keeping with the Senior Review recommendations of providing the US community with access to a balanced suite of telescopes and instruments)
- an increase to the TSIP program which allows valuable instruments to be built in exchange for valuable access to the best existing telescopes,
- badly needed infrastructure maintenance that has been neglected for many years due to lack of funds
- the development of work horse instruments for Gemini that are needed by the US community to make optimum use of the NSF investment in Gemini.

While we know that there will be many possibilities for stimulus funds, the projects that we are advocating benefit both the mission of NOAO and the core ideals of the Stimulus capital, positively affecting hundreds if not thousands of jobs across our nation. ReSTAR and TSIP have a direct impact on University research infrastructure, while maintenance catch-up has an indirect impact on that infrastructure from mountain tenants. NOAO is ready to accomplish these projects in a timely manner.

We thank you for your continued support of astronomy and our observatories.

Regards,

Paula Szkody (University of Washington), Chair

Observatory Council

Joshua Bloom (UC Berkeley), Anita Cochran (McDonald Observatory), Andrea Dupree (Harvard-Smithsonian CfA), Deidre Hunter (Lowell Obs), Hernan Quintana (Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile), William Smith (AURA), Tony Tyson (UC Davis), Fred Walter (Stony Brook), Frank Winkler (Middlebury College)