

Committee **Full Government Affairs Committee (GAC)**

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Date/Time **Tuesday, 26 January 2021 / 3:00 pm eastern**

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**Participants** Loucas Tsakalacos, Damon Dozier, Daniel Becerra, Josh Caldwell, Jen DiStefano, Boris Dyatkin, Jennifer Nekuda Malik, Suyog Padgaokar, Chris Shuck, Steven Smith, Cathy Tway, Jeremy Ward, Kris Uher

<b>Next call</b>	February 23, 2021 @ 3pm ET	
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Due</b>

Loucas Tsakalacos began the meeting by welcoming everyone to the committee and giving his background information. Loucas has been a MRS member since he was in graduate school. He has held many volunteer positions at MRS including member of the Board of Directors, Symposium Organizer, and Meetings Committee member. Loucas welcomed the opportunity to learn more about everyone on GAC.

**Housekeeping Items**

All agreed to hold GAC monthly meetings on the last Tuesday of each month at 3 pm. Kris Uher will send calendar invites. Subcommittee chairs should coordinate with Damon to set up call schedules for 2021.

**Washington DC Update**

Damon reported that the US Senate is changing organization structure with the Democrats now as the majority party. Once assignments are finalized, Damon will distribute rosters. The House of Representatives has already made some initial assignments and Damon will distribute those as well.

President Biden is concentrating on three main areas: COVID-19, racial equity and infrastructure.

- COVID: Work is being done on a COVID bill with an ask for increases in the DOS and NSF.
- Racial Equity: Former President Trump had issued an Executive Order that banned race-based training. The order was struck down prior to President Biden taking office. President Biden signed an Executive Order on [Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government](#) Last year there were discussions with Sara Barber, staff member on the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and Subcommittee on Research and Technology and MRS will be meeting with her again at CVD.
- Infrastructure: President Biden infrastructure plan will focus specifically on the manufacturing industry and the clean energy sector
- Damon met with the Biden transition team doing research and that they were frank about interest in 6.4 funding. While we don't anticipate big cuts there will be some cuts in basic account.  
*(Background) Dept. of Defense Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) conducts research, development, testing and evaluation in support of its mission requirements. In its annual congressional budget requests, the Department of Defense (DOD) presents its RDT&E requests by organization. The DOD has established seven categories identified by a budget activity code (numbers 6.1 – 6.8). Budget activity code 6.1 is*

*for basic research; 6.2 is for applied research; 6.3 is for advanced technology development; 6.4 is for advanced component development and prototypes; 6.5 is for systems development and demonstration; 6.6 is for RDT&E management support; 6.7 is for operational system development; and 6.8 is for software and digital technology pilot programs.*

- Some notable appointments were made. MRS has previous relationships with all of them and welcome letters will be sent:
  - Kei Koizumi was named the OSTP chief of staff
  - Eric Lander will lead the OSTP and also serve as President Biden's science adviser
  - Tanya Das was named Chief of Staff for the DOE Office of Science
  - Alicia Brown was named associate administrator for legislative and intergovernmental affairs at NASA

Damon reported that the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology seeks to fill Professional Staff Member position on the Committee. Duties include oversight of the Department of Energy (DOE) and other agencies within the Committee's jurisdiction, outreach to stakeholder groups, researching and drafting legislation, staffing hearings, and preparing memoranda, statements, and speeches for Majority Members. Applicants should have experience in at least one or both of the following subject matter areas: 1) science and energy research and technology development activities carried out by DOE, 2) energy and related environmental policy. All applicants should possess strong writing, organizational, and communication skills; the capacity to articulate technical and policy issues clearly and concisely; and the ability to meet tight deadlines. The ideal candidate will have significant Capitol Hill or relevant government or industry experience. An advanced degree or technical background is a plus, but not required.

This office is an equal opportunity employer; we do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, age, religion, disability, national origin, uniformed status, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. In addition, we are committed to and benefit from a diverse staff and candidates of all backgrounds. This position will close on February 2, 2021.

Please send a cover letter and resume to [SciResumes@mail.house.gov](mailto:SciResumes@mail.house.gov). This not an entry-level position.

#### **CVD Subcommittee Update**

Josh Caldwell reported that invitations have been sent to participate in the virtual CVD in the beginning of February. Let Josh know if you are interested in viewing the PPT that has been prepared. Damon noted that the goal was to get 20 participants; 40 invitation were sent and 10 responses have been received so far.

It is unlikely that an in-person Spring CVD will take place so no planning is being done. A Fall in-person CVD will depend on vaccine rollout and cultural comfort with travel.

The Materials Success stories are noted in the presentation for CVD, however, due to time limitations the information will be available as supplemental material if anyone is interested in learning more.

#### **Advocacy Engagement Subcommittee Update**

Jennifer Nekuda Malik would like to set up a call to discuss 2021 goals and work of the subcommittee. In December, former MRS Congressional Fellows organized a MRS Virtual Congressional Fellows Happy Hour. It was a great way to meet newest Fellows and catch up with others. This is something that Jen would like to see continued going forward.

#### **Government Agency Subcommittee Update**

Jeremy Ward reported that the Research Funding Opportunities series had 50-60 participants for each session. One individual expressed interest in joining the committee (Alex Chortos). Damon was aware of this and added Alex to the roster. Damon will send a welcome letter soon. Jeremy noted that the subcommittee's 2021 program priorities are to commit to both spring and fall RFO, build interest and look for new programming opportunities.

### **Grassroots Subcommittee**

Boris Dyatkin reported that there has not been any subcommittee activity since December. The subcommittee will schedule a call and develop next steps for 2021.

### **Adjournment**

Loucas thanked everyone for their work in 2020 and is looking forward to a busy year of committee work. A reminder to reach out to Loucas for discussion or an opportunity to introduce yourself.