

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

Date/Time **Tuesday, 2 March 2021 / 3:00 pm eastern**

Loucas Tsakalacos, Damon Dozier, Dan Becerra, Babu Chalamala, Alex Chortos, Jyoti Malhotra, Jen Nekuda Malik, Juan Nino, Linda Olafsen, Suyog Padgaonkar, Erin Ratcliff, Chris Shuck, Steve Smith, David Steurman, Clarissa Towle, Ashley White  
Kris Uher (recording secretary)

<b>Participants</b>		
<b>Next call</b>	March 23, 2021 @ 3pm ET via Zoom video call	
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Due</b>
<b>Kris</b>	Schedule next call as a Zoom video call	3/3/2021
<b>Damon</b>	Work with subcommittees to schedule calls	

### **Washington DC Update**

- Damon reported that Congress has been busy with the COVID-relief Bill. The House passed its version of the bill and next it will go to the Senate. Hopefully, it will be passed into law by mid-March due to the expiration of other type of benefits.
- The Science Committee research funding package includes \$600M for NSF and \$150M for NIST. The NSF and NIST funds were apportioned by the House Science Committee and Science Committee Chair Eddie Johnson noted that this is a fraction of what is needed and she will continue to press for more funding.
- The Science Committee has introduced some changes to their subcommittee structure. The number of subcommittees remains the same as before but the rosters have changed. Eddie Bernice Johnson is Chairwoman and Frank Lucas is Ranking Member. Senate House Committee majority new members include Raphael Warnock, Richard Blumenthal, and Gary Peters and minority new members are Ted Cruz, Mike Lee, Deb Fischer, and Rick Scott.
- As part of CVD, there were discussions with Chuck Schumer about a legislative package aimed at bolstering US competitiveness with China in key technology sectors. The Endless Frontiers Act which proposes to reconfigure the NSF is a major part of the package. He noted that the package could include emergency funding for a new semiconductor chip manufacturing initiative (CHIPS for America Act). The CHIPS Act did not have much steam last year but is getting more attention.
- President Biden's appropriation budget will not be ready until April at which time we will have a better idea of the funding priorities.

### **Brief Review of CVD**

Loucas thanked those who organized and participated in the recent Congressional Visit Days (virtual). Damon reported that 40-50 meeting invitations were sent and the response rate was about 50%. There were a total of 18 meetings with the Senate and House Science Committees (with Democratic and Republican staff) and with selected offices of both House and Senate leadership. Members of GAC advocated for funding for key federal agencies/offices (DOD, DOE-Office of Science, NIST, NSF, and NIH-National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering). Information was shared via

a series of postcards that addressed material science contributions and how government funding led to advancements in four key areas. Also, GAC shared its views of the importance of basic science research funding.

Feedback received from the meetings was positive and several staffers asked for either follow-up information or to be connected to experts on specific topic areas. This information was provided after each meeting, along with thank you notes and reference materials.

Traditional face-to-face meetings will resume post-pandemic, but judicious use of the virtual format will enable increased interactions for volunteers with policy makers, staffers and agency personnel.

### **GAC Restructuring**

Damon provided an explanation of the recent MRS governance restructure that was outlined in documentation sent to the committee prior to the call. As a result of the Operational and Oversight Committee's review of programs and operating committees, it was determined that overlap between committee and volunteer work made the Board and Operating Committees less efficient. An outside consultant was used to find ways to streamline HQ staff and volunteer work. As a result, the GAC and its subcommittees are responsible for advancing strategy for external information delivery and interface and will be supported by four subcommittees, functioning as two working groups, to further examine and provide both input and specific recommendations for goals.

The primary difference is that while in the old model, the subcommittees had more self-direction to create items for dissemination, the new model adds a layer of more organized review, making the work products and the relationship to the advocacy subcommittee advisory in nature, i.e. the workgroups make recommendations that the subcommittee would approve.

Damon will be working with subcommittees to send out polls to determine dates/times for monthly meetings.

### **Research Funding**

Damon noted that Jeremy was unable to join the call but that he is working with Josh to ensure that we have research funding opportunity sessions at the 2020 Spring Meeting (virtual).

### **Adjournment**

The call ended at 3:43 pm ET.