

Committee: Government Affairs
January 10, 2024, 2:30 pm Eastern

Participating: Linda Olafsen, Josh Caldwell, Jen Nekuda Malik, Dan Becerra, Michael Bozlar, Babu Chalamala, Nishit Mohan Murari, Juan Claudio Nino, Colleen Scott, Chris Shuck, Steve Smith, Mine Ucak-Astarlioglu, Joshua Young, Todd Osman, Danielle Boston, Glenn Ruskin
Excused: Thomas Beechem, Tom Vandervelde

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introduction of New GAC Members- Linda
2. Washington, DC Update - Glenn
3. 2024 GAC Activities - Linda, Danielle, Glenn & All
 - a. Federal Agency Webinars
 - b. MRS Congressional Fellow Update
 - c. Planning for Congressional Visits Day/Federal Agency Summit (combine?)
 - d. Ideas for Future Capitol Hill briefings
 - e. Ideas for Materials Success Stories
4. Adjournment - Next Meeting Date?

Government Affairs Committee Chairperson Linda Olafsen opened the meeting by introducing new GAC members Nishit Mohan Murari, Mine Ucak-Astarlioglu, and Joshua Young, who participated in the January 8 New Member Orientation meeting. New members Thomas Beechem and Tom Vandervelde also participated in the orientation session, but scheduling conflicts prevented them from participating in today's GAC meeting.

Washington Update

MRS Government Affairs Principal Glenn Ruskin delivered an overview of the current situation in Congress and the looming obstacles to FY24 appropriations funding. He also noted the passing of former House Science, Space and Technology Committee Chair, Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson. Glenn sent condolences from MRS to Rep. Johnson's staff.

F24 Appropriations Review

The current Continuing Resolutions expire on January 19 and February 2.

A possible breakthrough on the F24 appropriations bills has been reached by Senate Majority Leader Schumer and House Speaker Johnson as they agreed to a top-line federal funding level of \$1.66 trillion.

Challenges include:

- Time constraints
- Spreading the money across 12 appropriations bills
- Historically high authorized funding levels of the CHIPS and Science Act have not been matched by corresponding appropriations levels.
- Dissension within the House Republican Party

Glenn expects a third CR due to the time constraints. Passage will require Democratic support, which is a sticking point for the 50-member House GOP Freedom Caucus.

Further complications include the upcoming 2024 presidential election; House impeachment inquiries; funding for wars in Ukraine and Israel; US Southern border security; Trump prosecutions; and the Hunter Biden investigation.

National Issues of MRS interest:

- National Quantum Initiative Reauthorization
- Regulation and private sector-usage of Artificial Intelligence
--The Washington Post reported that a team of scientists used AI to examine 32.6 million possible battery materials in 80 hours, identifying a new material that uses less lithium.
- FY2025 Budget
Coalitions supporting NSF and Basic Energy Sciences submitted letters to the Office of Management and Budget urging R&D funding at the maximum levels.
- Supply chain and critical materials

2024 GAC ACTIVITIES

2024 Webinar Schedule

Glenn reported that the 2024 list of webinars, now posted at [MRS Presents Webinar Series | Free monthly materials science webinars](#), is almost double the number presented in 2023.

January 23–Air Force Office of Scientific Research

January 24–National Science Foundation/Technology, Innovation & Partnerships Directorate

January 25–Department of Defense Basic Research

February 6–National Science Foundation/Division of Materials Research

February 7–Department of Energy/Basic Energy Research

February 8–NIH National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering; Office of Naval Research

CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWS UPDATE

Congressional Fellowship Group Lead Jen Nekuda Malik reported that the deadline to submit applications closed January 5. The selection committee, consisting of Jen and two former Congressional Fellows along with three members from Optica, will rank the applicants.

The interviewees will be asked to write a memo on a particular topical area as if they were working in a congressional office. Interviewing will take place March 2-3 in Washington DC. Jen hopes to return to the pre-COVID practice of having a happy hour with the other Fellows before the interviewing begin. **Action Item: Jen will report back to GAC at the March meeting.**

CONGRESSIONAL VISITS DAY AND FEDERAL AGENCY SUMMIT

GAC is considering scheduling the CVD and the Federal Agency Summit during the same week. With MRS playing a catalytic role in bringing them together, GAC leverages being in town for both activities with expected positive impact and budgetary results.

Scheduling

By this time, FY24 delays will be resolved.

May 7-9 not open due to the virtual MRS Spring Meeting that week.

May 21-24; both chambers are in session on May 24, but due to the Memorial Day weekend, May 24 may not be a good day for visits.

June 3-6 is also an option.

Scheduling Considerations

- Should the Federal Agency Summit come first so that we learn about priorities before meeting with Congressional staff for CVD?
- The May 2023 visit was seen as late by some Congressional staff members.
- Finding a block of hotel rooms too early would be difficult.

Glenn recommends staying in the late May-early June timeframe.

Action Item: Paula will email GAC members to ask which dates work best for their participation in CVD.

Focus of CVD 2024

- FY 2025 budget
- Full funding of CHIPS & Science Act at authorized levels
- Status of Quantum Initiative
- Status of AI regulation

2024 CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS

Target dates are for Spring and Fall.

Ideas for Briefing Topics:

CHIPS; manufacturing technology and innovation
 Quantum
 Critical materials
 Machine learning

GAC needs to highlight what MRS members are doing in the above areas as this will help with impactful interactions with their elected officials.

MATERIALS SUCCESS STORY IDEAS

Current Materials Success stories: Power Electronics; 2D Materials; LED Lighting; Diamond-like Carbon.

Other ideas?

Babu Chalamala pointed out that materials science work is more on bandgap materials than just electronics and lighting.

What are materials scientists doing with CHIPS, AI?

Jen noted that materials science contributions to COVID are still a relevant topic as science considers the prospect of a second pandemic within a decade.

Steve noted that 2D materials and lighting can be packaged together as a topic because they're at the stage that LED and lighting were 20 years ago. The advances are all a result of federal funding.

Mine pointed out that graphene and advanced materials are taking off; 2D and 3D and advanced materials can be an umbrella for the topic.

Good news stories can package the past with a victory speech showing how well it worked and highlighting what's being worked on now. Linda confirmed that the success stories provided by GAC can help the elected members tout their own successes.

Action Item: Todd will ask MRS Chief Editor for Technical Content Gopal Rao what topics offer the most fertile ground to tackle in the short term. These could serve as important talking points as well as CVD

leave-behind materials with Congressional offices demonstrating the direct importance of federal research funding. A second list of topics for briefings and Materials Success Stories can be compiled by fall.

Christopher Shuck recommended identifying materials advances that have come out of the individual states. These would be bullet points that would offer the members of Congress a chance to salute scientific and economic progress made in their home states.

Action Item: GAC members are asked to do some research to identify projects, especially any done with federal funding, that were done in their own labs. What local examples can you give from your institutions to augment the bigger picture?

GAC members are also asked to notify the committee if there are any particular legislators in their districts to target for a CVD visit.

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 pm Eastern.