

**VISITING COMMITTEE ON ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY (VCAT)
MINUTES OF THE March 16, 2017 WEBINAR/VIRTUAL MEETING
GAITHERSBURG, MD**

ATTENDANCE:

**Visiting Committee
Members Attending**

Adler, Allen*
Brooks, Rodney*
Colwell, Rita*
Folena-Wasserman, Gail*
Garvey, Michael*
Holt, William*
Kerr, Karen*
Prafullchandra, Hemma*
Sizer, Theodore*
Vasko, Dave*
Wilson, David*

Designated Federal Officer
Stephanie Shaw

NIST Leadership Board
Boehm, Jason
Locascio, Laurie
Rochford, Kent

NIST Staff and Associates
Martinez, Serena
Miner, Laurel
Termin, Aaron

Others
Allegretti, Julie – Stoney
 Brook University Center
 for Biotechnology
Law, Colleen – SIE
 Consulting Group
Riojas, Amanda – Brewer
 Science

*Participated Remotely

Call to Order - Dr. Rita Colwell, VCAT Chair

Dr. Colwell called the virtual meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. Roll call was conducted and the meeting was turned over to Dr. Kent Rochford for a NIST update.

OVERVIEW AND SAFETY UPDATE

NIST Update – Dr. Kent Rochford, Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and Acting NIST Director

Dr. Rochford began his update by informing the VCAT that Wilbur Ross had been confirmed as the Secretary of Commerce as of the end of February. Secretary Ross is interested in NIST's role and how measurement and standards help meet Department of Commerce (DOC) objectives. Secretary Ross is supportive of NIST's nonregulatory measurement focus and general voluntary role. Secretary Ross requested NIST's success stories and descriptions of its impact to increase awareness within Congress.

Dr. Rochford briefed the VCAT on the release of the President's "skinny" budget, which shows the top-line priorities for the administration. DOC has an overall 16% reduction. While full NIST budget details were not yet provided in the "skinny" budget it was released that the administration intends to end federal funding for the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP). The full budget with more details will be released in mid-May.

Dr. Rochford updated the VCAT on a number of other items pertaining to NIST. The House Science Committee released its plan for FY18 on March 10, 2017 signed by Chair Lamar Smith. This plan calls for increased funding for NIST laboratories and construction, offset by reductions within MEP and Manufacturing USA. There has also been a Presidential Executive Order on re-organization requiring each agency to submit to the Director of Proposed Plan of Reorganization within 180 days, so the relevance of NIST programs will undergo increased scrutiny. Several months ago, NIST started its periodic program evaluation exercises to understand what is most important, what is working well, and what NIST can change to ensure our top-line priorities are healthy.

Dr. Rochford also informed the VCAT that in a week or two there will be a coherent plan for the 30-day sprint that was tasked to Dr. Rich Kayser, NIST's Chief Safety Officer, to conduct to prioritize NIST's security issues, concerns, and threats and what our countermeasures should be.

Last, Dr. Rochford asked the VCAT to be ready and willing to react quickly to assist and provide counsel to NIST as NIST gains a better understanding of the priorities and direction of the new administration.

Several VCAT members expressed their concerns about the possible elimination of the MEP program.

VCAT Focus for 2017 – Dr. Rita Colwell, VCAT Chair

Dr. Colwell, the VCAT Chair, led a discussion and asked for suggestions on what VCAT should focus on in the coming year. The VCAT members were supplied with some [background on their responsibilities and items of committee focus](#). Two areas that continue to be in focus are cybersecurity and forensic science. The VCAT also emphasized the importance of NIST providing guidance on its core values. The VCAT expressed desire to proactively form working groups on areas such as advanced manufacturing, privacy, cybersecurity, and other areas of interest.

Dr. Colwell suggested the creation of smaller working groups to collect data to address the following topics: trade, innovation, and communications.

In the topic area of trade, Dr. Colwell suggested Dr. Allen Adler to lead that working group with VCAT members, Mr. Dave Vasko and Dr. Waguih Ishak. The trade group could focus on how NIST would stay

positioned to strengthen trade priorities in the areas of measurement research, services, and data to remove barriers, regulations, and restrictions on trade, key opportunities for NIST's engagement in standards efforts to continue to support US exports, and evaluate new capabilities that will be critical for the NIST Director to fulfill his/her authority to serve as the President's principal advisor of standards policy.

In the topic area of innovation and competitiveness through fundamental measurement research and development, Dr. Colwell, suggested Dr. Rodney Brooks to lead with VCAT members, Dr. Tod Sizer, Ms. Hemma Prafullchandra, and Dr. Gail Wasserman. This group could focus on NIST's biggest impacts from investment in fundamental measurement science research that enables new technologies, new markets, and new industries. This group should examine how NIST can prioritize its measurement science research and development efforts to maximize current impact and ensure continued impact in the years to come, examine the most important measurement science capabilities for NIST to retain or build to meet the current needs of US industry and the Administration's priorities, and the capabilities to retain or build to meet the future needs of US industry.

In the topic area of communications to be led by Dr. Colwell with Mr. Mike Garvey, Dr. David Wilson, and Mr. William Holt to focus on how to capture and describe the importance of the NIST mission to US industry and national priorities. This group could evaluate current and new efforts that capture the impacts of NIST and communicate the impact of NIST's research, including new stories and performance metrics to the public, evaluate current and suggest new mechanisms for stakeholder outreach to increase awareness and engagement in NIST's mission to increase its impact, and support NIST's documentation of the positive benefits of research on the competitiveness of industry, including manufacturing. The VCAT and NIST leadership discussed these groups and agreed to utilize this work stream.

Administrative Business

Dr. Colwell recommended a public conference call in a month to discuss the progress of the working groups.

There were no public comments offered.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:36 PM.

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, the forgoing minutes are accurate and complete.

Stephanie Shaw, Designated Federal Officer, NIST Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology

Dr. Rita Colwell, Chair, NIST Visiting Committee on Advanced Technology