



To: Kevin Marvel (Executive Officer, AAS)
Cc: Debbie Elmegreen, (AAS President)
Cc: Jack Burns (Chair, CAPP)
Cc: Jim Klimchuk (SPD CAPP rep.)
Cc: Bethany Johns (AAS John Bahcall Public Policy Fellow)
Cc: SPD Committee

Dear Kevin,

As you are well aware there is much concern about the recently announced budget over-run of the JWST, its projected final cost and schedule, the overall management of the program, and NASA's plans for sharing the burden across the Agency. As SPD Chair I must share the specific concerns of the solar physics community, as articulated by the SPD committee, with the AAS leadership and with our representatives on the NASA Advisory Council.

The SPD fully supports the science goals of the JWST and the priorities of our colleagues in astronomy and astrophysics; however, it is extremely worrisome that the proposed solution to the problem will further reduce the ability of the other divisions within the NASA Science Mission Directorate to accomplish their own nationally sanctioned scientific programs. In difficult economic times, these proposed new constraints come on top of a number of recent fairly stringent budget cuts to Heliophysics programs, which supports the majority of SPD science. NASA's plans to make JWST an Agency-wide priority demonstrate an encouraging level of commitment to JWST at the highest levels. While this may reduce somewhat the burden on the other SMD Divisions, it will still have a significant negative impact on their budgets and, consequently, on their ability to meet the scientific priorities outlined in strategic visions. In the specific case of Heliophysics, this puts the implementation of the impending decadal survey deep in the hole, even before the recommendations have been released. In addition, other directorates, most crucially Human Explorations and Operations, will vigorously fight this decision, and so it is imperative that the solar community is not seen to be passively complicit.

The AAS should continue to be a strong advocate of the JWST, while being mindful of the concerns of all its divisions. I know from your activities in support of the various decadal surveys that all of the divisions are well represented by the society. However, the cost of the JWST threatens to swamp us all and the AAS should be careful, as a multi-disciplinary organization, to balance the various concerns of each of its constituents and to work towards a solution that does not promote one division's interests at the expense of another's. The SPD is anxious to work together with all of our AAS colleagues to find an effective and equitable way forward.

I suspect this will be one of the major issues for discussion at the Fall Leadership meeting in October and look forward to participating.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. David Alexander
Chair, AAS Solar Physics Division
Professor, Dept. of Physics and Astronomy
Rice University