

structures that support and prioritize its mission activities. Any recommendations made pursuant to the assessment should be predicated on the assumption that NASA's outyear budget profile will be constrained due to continuing deficit reduction efforts. Such recommendations should also take into account the need for a common, unifying vision for NASA's strategic direction that encompasses NASA's varied missions. A report summarizing the conclusions of the assessment and any relevant recommendations shall be provided to the Congress and the President no later than 120 days after the enactment of this Act.

To conduct this assessment, the Inspector General shall choose an organization that will convene individuals with recognized relevant expertise and whose collective credentials sufficiently cover the entire range of NASA's mission activities, including space and Earth science; aeronautics; advanced technology development; space exploration; spaceflight operations and support; STEM education; and/or management of any of these activities. In order to promote objectivity, the Inspector General shall define and implement any conflict of interest protocols deemed necessary, but, at a minimum, the selected individuals shall not be currently employed or retained by NASA or any outside entity that competes for or receives NASA funding.

Working Capital Fund (WCF).—NASA's WCF was initially authorized in fiscal year 2003. In fiscal year 2012, NASA has expanded its use of the WCF to cover activities such as major agency-wide information technology services. The conferees are concerned that such an expansion of the uses of the WCF without adequate advance notification through the normal budget process undermines the oversight role of the Committees on Appropriations. Accordingly, the conferees direct that NASA, as part of its annual congressional budget justification, detail any expected WCF activity for the coming fiscal year, including the source and amount of expected WCF transfers, all expected uses of the Fund, and any balances on hand or expected to remain at the end of the fiscal year. NASA shall also provide quarterly to the Committees an accounting of that quarter's expenditures along with the amount of any unobligated balances in the Fund.

CONSTRUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND RESTORATION

The conference agreement includes \$390,000,000 for Construction and Environmental Compliance and Restoration (CECR).

Integrated facilities master planning.—The conference agreement adopts, by reference, language from the House report directing the submission of an integrated facilities master plan.

Hangar 1, Moffett Field.—The conference agreement adopts, by reference, language from the House report regarding Hangar 1 at Moffett Field.

Mission-related construction.—NASA continues to request funds for construction of facilities within both the Space Operations and the Exploration accounts. This is an inefficient practice which requires significant post-enactment transfers of funds between accounts. The conference agreement permits such transfers in specified amounts from Space Operations and Exploration in fiscal year 2012, but NASA is directed to ensure that all construction funds in future years are requested solely within the CECR account.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

The conference agreement includes \$37,300,000 for the Office of Inspector General.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

The conference agreement includes the following administrative provisions for NASA:

The agreement includes a provision that makes funds for announced prizes available without fiscal year limitation until the prize is claimed or the offer is withdrawn.

The agreement includes a provision that establishes terms and conditions for the transfer of funds.

The agreement includes a provision that allows the transfer of balances under previous appropriations account structures to the new appropriations account structure.

The agreement includes a provision related to the expenditure of interest earned from balances in the Endeavor Teacher Fellowship Trust Fund.

The agreement includes a provision permitting NASA to accept in-kind consideration as part of the Enhanced Use Lease program under specified circumstances. NASA is directed to include in its annual budget justification a description of any in-kind consideration accepted and an estimate of the market value of that consideration.

The agreement includes a provision that subjects the NASA spending plan and specified changes to that spending plan to reprogramming procedures under section 505 of this Act.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION RESEARCH AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

The conference agreement includes \$5,719,000,000 for Research and Related Activities (R&RA).

Research priorities.—The conferees appreciate NSF's commitment to reviewing its portfolio of programs and proposing reductions or terminations where appropriate. Such proposals provide a more fiscally sustainable way to support new or expanded programs. Accordingly, the conference agreement incorporates all of NSF's R&RA termination and reduction proposals except for the requested reduction to the radio astronomy program.

By accepting NSF's proposal to eliminate funding for the Deep Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory (DUSEL), the conference agreement completes a multi-year phase-out of NSF involvement in this project. NSF is directed to report to the Committees on Appropriations about future efforts or commitments, if any, to collaborate with the Department of Energy on a deep underground lab.

Advanced manufacturing.—The conference agreement adopts, by reference, language in the House report regarding advanced manufacturing.

Neuroscience.—NSF is uniquely positioned to advance the non-medical aspects of cognitive sciences and neurosciences, particularly through interdisciplinary science, computational models, visualization techniques, innovative technologies, and the underlying data and data infrastructure needed to transform our understanding of these areas, and the conferees encourage NSF to sustain and expand its investments in these areas. In addition, to better focus the agency's efforts and guide future budget submissions, NSF is encouraged to establish a cognitive sciences and neurosciences crosscutting theme. The conferees note that language is included under the OSTP heading encouraging OSTP to establish a NSTC working group to coordinate Federal investments in neuroscience research.

Giant Segmented Mirror Telescope (GSMT).—The direction in this section is provided in lieu of any language in the Senate report relating to the GSMT program. NSF has decided to proceed with the selection of a viable GSMT project, consistent with the National Research Council's (NRC) 2010 astron-

omy and astrophysics decadal survey recommendations. The conferees expect that this selection will be made expeditiously and utilize a fully competitive process, with a solicitation issued no later than the end of calendar year 2011 and a result announced no later than July 31, 2012.

Cybersecurity research.—The conference agreement adopts, by reference, language from the Senate report regarding cybersecurity research.

MAJOR RESEARCH EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION

The conference agreement includes \$167,055,000 for Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC).

Project priorities.—With the MREFC funding provided either directly or via potential transfer from the R&RA account, NSF will be able to achieve significant progress on its current portfolio of construction projects, but some prioritization of funds will still be necessary. The conferees expect that NSF will dedicate funds first to the completion of projects that are already in the final stages of construction, with remaining funds allocated to projects in earlier phases of development.

Project funding profiles.—NSF should promptly review its current portfolio of MREFC projects and their outyear funding profiles to ensure they are consistent with fiscal year 2011 and 2012 appropriations. If adjustments to the portfolio in either of those fiscal years will necessitate a revision of the outyear funding profiles for any current or planned project, NSF is directed to immediately report the revised profiles to the Committees on Appropriations and to include the new profiles in the fiscal year 2013 budget request.

Construction funding management.—The conferees remain concerned about how NSF and its grantees are defining, estimating and managing construction funding, particularly contingency funds. Stronger management and oversight of these funds could result in improved project efficiencies and, ultimately, cost savings. NSF is directed to report to the Committees on Appropriations on the steps it is taking to impose tighter controls on the drawdown and use of contingencies, as well as steps intended to incentivize grantees to complete construction under budget, for projects managed through the MREFC appropriation and for other large facility projects. This report should be submitted no later than 90 days after the enactment of this Act.

EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES

The conference agreement includes \$829,000,000 for Education and Human Resources (EHR).

Program changes.—In parallel with terminations and reductions proposed in the R&RA account, NSF has proposed a number of program reductions or terminations within EHR. For the most part, these cuts were proposed not due to any dissatisfaction with the programs in question but rather because NSF would prefer to implement new initiatives. The conferees have no objection to this approach, with the exception of the proposed reductions to the Robert Noyce Scholarship Program and the Math and Science Partnership program. The conferees do not believe that those cuts are warranted solely to make room for new activities.

Broadening Participation at the Core.—The conference agreement adopts, by reference, language from the House report regarding funding levels for the existing Broadening Participation at the Core programs.

Best practices in K-12 STEM education.—NSF is encouraged to find more effective mechanisms for disseminating the results of its education research to the K-12 STEM