

ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES FOR RESEARCH IN ASTRONOMY, INC.



February 5, 2012

Suite 450
1212 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20005
TEL: 202-483-2101
FAX: 202-483-2106

OPERATING FOR THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Gemini Observatory
La Serena, Chile & Hilo, Hawaii

National Optical Astronomy Observatory
Tucson, Arizona & La Serena, Chile

National Solar Observatory
Sunspot, New Mexico & Tucson, Arizona

OPERATING FOR THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

Space Telescope Science Institute
Baltimore, Maryland

MEMBERS/SINCE:

Boston University 1993
California Institute of Technology 1972
Carnegie Institution of Washington 1997
Fisk University 2010
Georgia State University 2008
Harvard University 1957
Indiana University 1957
Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias 2005
Iowa State University 1992
Johns Hopkins University 1982
Kiepenheuer-Institut für Sonnenphysik 2005
Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1981
Michigan State University 1997
Montana State University 2005
New Jersey Institute of Technology 2010
New Mexico State University 1999
Ohio State University 1957
Pennsylvania State University 1990
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile 1997
Princeton University 1959
Rutgers University 1999
Stony Brook University 1986
Swinburne University 2008
Tohoku University 2010
Universidad de Chile 1992
University of Arizona 1972
University of California Berkeley 2007
University of California Santa Cruz 1957
University of Chicago 1957
University of Colorado 1977
University of Florida 2002
University of Hawaii 1978
University of Illinois 1980
University of Maryland 1986
University of Michigan 1957
University of Minnesota 1995
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 1995
University of Texas at Austin 1972
University of Toronto 2004
University of Virginia 2003
University of Washington 1986
University of Wisconsin 1957
Vanderbilt University 2010
Yale University 1958

Dear colleague,

The year 2011 was pivotal for the James Webb Space Telescope. Faced with the prospect of potential cancellation in mid-June, JWST ended 2011 as NASA's highest priority science program, and was called out explicitly as one of NASA's three agency-wide priorities. This rebound was in no small part due to the strong support shown for the mission by you and many of your colleagues in the broader community, and we thank you for this.

NASA is executing a management plan for JWST that addresses the main issues raised in the report of the Independent Comprehensive Review Panel chaired by John Casani in 2010. The project's management at Goddard Space Flight Center has been changed. JWST is now a separate program office within the Science Mission Directorate, reporting directly to the Associate Administrator at NASA Headquarters. Technical progress is excellent: all of the primary mirror segments are fully polished; MIRI has completed its thermal vacuum testing in Europe and is being readied for shipment to Goddard; and all other instruments will begin testing in the coming year.

The project has been re-baselined for a 2018 launch. JWST Program Director Rick Howard presented the funding profile to support this launch date at a hearing held by the House Science, Space and Technology Committee on 6 December 2011. The profile requires an allocation of ~\$630 million in NASA's FY13 budget (see, for example, his presentation to the NASA Advisory Council's Science Committee on 1 November 2011 at <http://bit.ly/wsexfp>, pages 14 and 16). The FY13 allocation is consistent with the \$8 billion cap set by Congress on JWST for construction, integration and testing for launch in 2018, and the overall profile carries contingency funding at the 80% confidence level as recommended by the Independent Comprehensive Review Panel.

The President's FY13 budget request should be released on 13 February 2012. That budget will give details on how NASA will allocate funding for the Science Mission Directorate and the rest of the agency in FY13 (for FY12, additional funds for JWST were contributed equally by the Science Mission Directorate and the rest of NASA).

We at AURA greatly appreciate the support shown by you for JWST and JWST's science, and we look forward to JWST making substantial progress through 2012. We will continue to update the community on developments through the JWST AURA Resource Center (<http://www.aura-astronomy.org/news/jwst.asp>). At this site, you can subscribe for e-mail updates on JWST. Please sign up, and feel free to pass this information on to interested colleagues.

Sincerely,

Dr. Heidi B. Hammel
Executive Vice President