

NASA Travel Rules that affect the science community

Paul Hertz

Director, Astrophysics Division

Outline

- P. Hertz – some facts about NASA travel rules and regulations
- W. Oegerle – impact on science productivity of civil servant scientists
- B. Wilkes – impact on science productivity of contractor scientists

Source of Regulations

- Reduced travel budgets were directed to all Agencies in 2011 (FY2013 travel down 20% from 2010 level)
- Deputy Administrator approval required to spend more than \$100K on a single conference, and Administrator approval required spend more than \$500K on a single conference (statutorily required)
- Limit of 50 NASA employees at any foreign conference is set by law (P.L. 112-55)
- Increased scrutiny of certain types of activities including conference and travel expenditures was directed to all Agencies in 2013 in light of sequestration
 - In light of the FY 2014/FY 2015 budget agreement,
 - NASA relaxed the conference attendance and travel guidance in 2014
- All agencies are required to report on conference spending for
 - Agency sponsored conferences exceeding \$20K (by law since 2008) and
 - All conferences exceeding \$100K (by law since 2014)
- NASA implementation is summarized in NID 9700.1

Current Status

- Conference spending limits remain in place (OMB memo)
 - Conference spending over \$100K must be approved (OMB memo)
 - Conference spending over \$500K is prohibited unless approved by the NASA Administrator (OMB memo)
- Conference spending reporting requirements remain in place
 - NASA rules define any large offsite meeting as a conference for reporting purposes
 - Requires extra work (NCTS, accounting codes) to enable internal controls and reporting
- Foreign conference attendance limit of 50 remains in place (Law)
 - Currently includes civil servants and contractors in count (NASA opt)
- Reduced travel spending budgets remain in place (OMB memo)
- Domestic conference attendance justification significantly relaxed in 2014
 - Foreign conference attendance must be essential and attendee must have substantial involvement