

GSMT SWG Activity

The View from NSF

Brief Background

- NSF has asked AURA to serve as its Program Manager for GSMT
- AURA and NSF working closely with both TMT and GMT
- NOAO will represent the national community in GSMT activity
- SWG is a vital connection between GSMT program and national community
- NSF has asked that that the “Design Reference Mission” be developed as a community activity and input to Decade Survey

Current Environment

- FY2008 budget flat with FY2007
- FY2009 likely to be continuing resolution through ~ March
 - Again, flat with 2007
- No FY 2010 budget will be prepared until after new administration is in place
- ***Substantial uncertainty in budgets and programs will continue well into calendar 2009 and possibly beyond***

Programmatic Considerations

- ALMA is still four years from completion
- Director has said no new AST entry into MREFC until Decade Survey is complete
- Questions that must be addressed:
 - Does the US community support a GSMT ?
 - How much time is required for the national community and how can this be provided?
 - Can we afford the price of operations?
 - How many such telescopes does the global community need?

FAQ and Their Answers

- Will NSF pay attention to the SWG activity?
 - Absolutely – we asked that it be formed and have expanded its charge
- Could NSF support a GSMT at the same level as ALMA?
 - For construction costs, yes. For operations, we all need to consider the consequences
- Could NSF enter into a public-private partnership for a GSMT?
 - Yes – the will exists at AST and MPS levels to work out a way to do it. It will require Decade Survey ranking, time, patience, and ingenuity on both sides.
- Isn't the ability of private institutions to come up with ~\$300M for a GSMT an overwhelming argument for NSF participation?
 - No