

Dear Colleagues,

It has been a while since we completed our initial report and submitted it to the NSF -- an event that not only represented the culmination of a good deal of hard members but the beginning of what we all hope will be a fruitful ongoing dialog with the NSF and our community. Thank you all for making the SWG report a compelling and effective document and for your commitment to this process. Now it is time to resume our work!

I would like to take this occasion to bring you up to date regarding the status of the report; outline SWG activities for the next 18-24 months; and suggest a time and venue for our next meeting.

1. Update

Following completion of the SWG report, Steve Strom and I made a formal presentation to members of the NSF AST division and others at the Foundation in mid August. Based on feedback during and after the meeting, the report appears to have been well received.

NSF AST was particularly impressed by the consensus developed by the SWG. They Emphasized that continued strong, broadly-based support from the community will be critical to AST as it seeks funds to implement the technology development programs recommended by the SWG.

The CAA has asked me to summarize the SWG report and its recommendations at its Dec 2-3 meeting in Irvine, California. I hope to use the opportunity to summarize (a) the enormous scientific potential of a 20-30m telescope, and (b) the need for early investment in technology investment so that ELT programs can be advanced rapidly enough so that one or more facilities can be completed early in the JWST/ALMA era.

I have also contacted the chair of the National Astronomy and Astrophysics Advisory Committee (NAAAC) to present our report to this important committee.

At a meeting of the AURA Board in Leiden in September I had the opportunity to discuss with the ESO Director General the possibility of the cooperation of our SWG with a corresponding European committee.

2. Next Steps

There are 3 areas where I believe the SWG can make important contributions:

- (1) developing a white paper outlining in far more detail the complementarity and synergies between GSMT and JWST.

Here the goal would be to examine the science programs developed by the GSMT SWG and the JWST DRM; understand the role of GSMT and JWST in carrying out these

programs; lay out an 'integrated science program'; and indicate the particular capabilities of GSMT and JWST that are critical to enabling the science.

The potential value of this study is:

(a) providing input to the National Astronomy and Astrophysics Advisory Committee (NAAAC) which is charged with advising both NASA and NSF regarding potential strategic collaborations. NAAAC has been supportive of the essential role of GSMT in the JWST era, and providing specific, compelling, quantitative examples can only strengthen their advocacy for funding to advance GSMT.

(b) answering sharp questions from both agencies. For example: "I thought JWST was going to observe 'first light'. But you say GSMT is really the right tool. Who is right?" or "It looks to me as if most of the science laid out for JWST can be done by GSMT. Is that right?"

(c) laying the groundwork for potential collaboration between the agencies in advancing GSMT or that subset of the GSMT program that specifically links to key JWST goals. The goal is to define the key issues we need to study along with an agreement on timescale; key milestones; responsible individuals; and a definition of needed interfaces with the JWST SWG

(2) Providing feedback to the TMT, GMT and other ELT projects, and serving as a locus for open exchange between the projects. Here, I propose asking representatives from TMT and GMT to provide ongoing updates on the status of science requirements documents and technology investments. I suggest that the SWG develop mechanisms for providing advice and commentary to the TMT and GMT projects. Strong community input is needed in order to ensure that if significant federal funding is provided -- now or in the future -- the resulting facilities are responsive to community aspirations.

(3) Developing working relationships between the SWG and its counterparts in Europe and Japan. Here, the goal is to provide a mechanism for exchanging information, identifying potential advantages in aligning technology development or design efforts, and making recommendations to the NSF regarding strategic investments that could accelerate the development of GSMT or provide complementary capabilities via collaboration or cooperation. I have an invitation by Masanori Iye to attend a meeting of the Japanese Decadal Review committee in January to present our SWG report. This might be a good opportunity to exchange views and discuss avenues for further dialog between the US and Japanese communities.

3. Next GSMT SWG Meeting:

I propose that the next meeting of the SWG be held either on 5-6 February or 12-13 February in Honolulu at the IfA. (Note that I am flexible with regard to meeting dates and venue, but am suggesting these dates and the IfA location as one possibility). At that meeting we would

- (1) Provide feedback from CAA and NSF
- (2) Develop a detailed plan for the proposed GSMT/JWST study
- (3) Seek detailed input from and provide feedback to the TMT and GMT projects.
- (4) Discuss plans for interaction with ESO and Japan.

Please advise HOLLY NOVACK (hnovack@gemini.edu) regarding your availability on BOTH those dates by no later than 31 October. I will send a follow-up e-mail informing you of the final choice of dates as well as logistical information by 5 November.

It was a pleasure and fun to work with you. Now, I look forward to continue to collaborate with you in our most important endeavor.

Rolf-Peter Kudritzki
GSMT SWG Chair