

NRC/UMC Forum on Materials and Society to be Held in March 2002

The Board on Manufacturing and Engineering Design (BMAED) of the National Research Council (NRC) and the University Materials Council (UMC) will present a forum on "Materials and Society: From Research to Manufacturing," March 27–28, 2002, at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C. The forum is designed to bring together government policymakers, members of the materials research and manufacturing communities, and end users of materials to review, consider, and discuss the current state of materials science and engineering in the United States and the challenges of the coming years. "Materials and Society" is part of an ongoing series of forums focused on materials that have been presented about every two years by the NRC's National Materials Advisory Board (NMAB) and Solid State Sciences Committee (SSSC).

This year, the forum will provide a series of challenge-oriented presentations and panel discussions on

- materials in national security;
- materials in commercial vehicles;
- materials in energy production, distribution, and consumption;
- work force and education issues; and
- the role of materials in future industries.

The forum's agenda will offer opportunities for the materials community to discuss issues and challenges with invited panels of congressional staff and staff from government agencies that support materials research. An exhibition held in parallel with the forum will focus on small businesses in the materials sector.

For more information, access Web site www4.nas.edu/cets/nmab.nsf/web/Materials_Forum or contact Teri Thorowgood, tel. 202-334-1487.

Science Advisor Marburger to Establish Interagency Antiterrorism Task Force

In addressing the role of science in the war on terrorism, John H. Marburger III, director of the President's Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), announced that he is establishing an interagency Antiterrorism Task Force under the structure of the National Science and Technology Council. On December 5, Marburger appeared before both the Senate Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space and the House Committee on Science, describing the task force and other steps OSTP has taken in response to terrorism.

He said that the four working groups within the Antiterrorism Task Force

focus on biological/chemical detection and response; radiological/nuclear/conventional detection and response; protection of vulnerable systems; and social, behavioral, and education sciences. The fifth working group is a technical response team responsible for emergencies as they arise.

Marburger said, "The [technical response] team will serve as a clearinghouse for technical reviews of the many incoming proposals on technologies related to homeland security. It is important that these proposals be assessed for scientific merit and referred, as necessary, to the appropriate agency or organization for further review, feedback, and action as appropriate."

OSTP coordinates and recruits technical expertise for the service of governmental policymakers. In this capacity, Marburger has been meeting with chief science officials from federal agencies to determine the role of science and technology to combat terrorism.

In his statement before the House committee, Marburger said that "the fronts in the war against terrorism cover multiple dimensions.... We need a taxonomy and a common language to assess threats, avoid duplication, and facilitate inter-agency cooperation and coordination."

To this end, Marburger enlisted the assistance of the National Academies and the RAND Corporation.

"[RAND] began by polling the agencies on current antiterrorism R&D, starting with a simple spreadsheet on which the agencies identify their activities in broad categories," said Marburger in his statement to the House committee. "The ultimate goal of these projects is to identify gaps, duplication, and opportunities for collaboration."

With the influx of proposals from individual researchers offering their help since the attacks on September 11, OSTP has been working closely with the National Coordination Office for Information Technology R&D (NCOITRD) in the Department of Commerce to handle the proposals. Marburger told the Senate subcommittee that "NCOITRD will be developing a repository/database of nongovernment people that have offered their expertise to help the federal agencies counter terrorism."

He said, "Contact information and relevant expertise will be available on a password-protected Web site for access by authorized persons in the federal government to connect critical human resources to the important work of both agencies and the National Academies."

On December 18, Marburger addressed

a symposium on science and terrorism sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. There he reiterated the message that the Bush administration is dedicated to "winning the war on terrorism and employing science and technology in this endeavor."

In his keynote address at the symposium, Marburger also told the group that antiterrorism efforts would not draw funds away from other research priorities.

NSF Supports AAAS Women's International Science Collaboration Program, 2001–2003

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Directorate for International Programs announced last fall the Women's International Science Collaboration (WISC) program for 2001–2003. Supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF), this program aims to increase the participation of women in international scientific research by helping to establish new research partnerships with colleagues in Central/Eastern Europe, the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union, the Near East, Middle East, Pacific, Americas, and Africa and Asia.

Grants of \$4,000–\$5,000 will go toward travel and living expenses for a U.S. scientist and, when appropriate, a co-principal investigator to visit a partner country to develop a research program. Funds can also be used to support a second visit to the partner country or for a non-U.S. partner to travel to the United States.

Scientists with PhD degrees or equivalent research experience who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents are eligible to apply. Applicants who have received their doctoral degrees within the past six years will receive special consideration, as will scientists applying to work with colleagues in less frequently represented countries and regions. With the exception of applications involving the Americas, applications from male co-PIs must be accompanied by an application from a female co-PI as part of a U.S. research team. Grant opportunities are also available to PhD degree candidates.

Only fields funded by NSF and interdisciplinary research cutting across these fields are eligible.

The competition deadline is July 15, 2002. Approximately 40 awards will be made.

For further information, visit the NSF Web site at URL www.nsf.gov; for further application information and region-specific guidelines, visit URL www.aaas.org/international/wiscnew.shtml. □