



ASTROPHYSICS SEMINAR SERIES

“Opportunities and Challenges in Federal Ground-Based Astronomy”

James Ulvestad

Division Director, NSF Division of Astronomical Sciences

Monday, October 22, 2012

Refreshments at 3:30pm in CAS 502

Talk begins at 4:00pm in CAS 522

Abstract:

In 2010 and 2011, the National Academy of Sciences released its latest decadal surveys in Astronomy and Astrophysics and in Planetary Science. These reports portrayed a vibrant future for U.S. ground-based astronomy, with important science questions that could be addressed by a range of recommended new capabilities, as well as the operation of new capabilities recommended in previous decadal surveys. However, these reports arrived at an economically difficult time, with discretionary spending for astronomy flattening out at the same time new capabilities are coming into operation. As a consequence, NSF commissioned its recently completed Portfolio Review to make recommendations regarding the execution of decadal survey science in the current constrained budget environment. In this talk, I will describe some of the opportunities foreseen by the decadal surveys, the challenges imposed by the current fiscal reality, the advice of the Portfolio Review Committee on how best to respond to the present situation, and the actions that NSF and the universities can take to position the U.S. for continued leadership in ground-based astronomy.