

## Summary of Findings to Date Regarding Marcia K. McNutt, *Science*, and National Academy of Sciences, and Their Connection to Suppression of Scientific Dissent

James E. Enstrom, Ph.D., M.P.H.

February 16, 2016

Incestuous relationships exist between *Science*, AAAS, NAS, and California. The last five *Science* Editors-in-Chief dating back to 1985 (McNutt, Alberts, Kennedy, Bloom, Koshland) are NAS and AAAS members with careers in California; Alberts was also NAS President; new AAAS President Schaal selected NAS President-Elect McNutt; AAAS Board is dominated by UC faculty or graduates; NAS President Cicerone and NAS Executive Officer Darling had long careers at UC and they know about the liberal domination of UC and California State Agencies and the extreme regulatory policies in California.

NAS officials (Cicerone, Darling, and Hinchman) and key NAS members (Schaal and Wessler) have refused to release any details about the January election of McNutt, the only candidate for new NAS President. They have refused to identify all members of the Presidential Nomination Committee, the number of votes for and against McNutt, or the total number of votes by state.

Of the 2,095 active U.S. members of NAS, 618 (29.5%) are from CA, 823 (39.3%) are from five other liberal states (MA, NY, NJ, MD, IL), and there are only 138 (6.6%) from the 24 states with 1-14 members each, and 8 states have no members. Based on public information about 113 NAS members in Los Angeles County, NAS is overwhelmingly and increasingly dominated by Democrats. Among 61 members born before 1945, 14.8% are Republicans; among 52 members born since 1945, 7.7% are Republicans. Of the 255 NAS members who signed the May 7, 2010 *Science* 'delay must not be an option' letter entitled "Climate Change and the Integrity of Science," all ten Los Angeles County signers are Democrats and presumably almost all of the other 245 signers are Democrats.

Only two of the ~600 NAS members who received the December 9, 2015 National Association of Scholars letter have expressed concern about McNutt or suppression of scientific dissent on three important regulatory-related issues (LNT, PM2.5, AGW), which are described in the letter. These two members have experienced retaliation because of their "politically incorrect" views on other scientific issues. One of them stated "Dissenting voices and scientifically well-supported warnings are not appreciated. I suspect that the current system is too big and powerful to change, and I fear for the future of my grandchildren." NAS member Lindzen has published evidence that environmental activists like Cicerone, Holdren, Hanson, and Gleick, were admitted to NAS via a special ad hoc committee. NAS member Goodman has just published evidence that USGS Director McNutt failed to investigate his 2012 misconduct complaint. Additional evidence challenging the objectivity of McNutt is forthcoming.

McNutt issued a February 5, 2016 retraction of the May 7, 2004 *Science* Report by Lina A. Gugliotti and May 28, 2015 retraction of the December 12, 2014 *Science* Report by Michael LaCour. However, she absolutely refuses to peer-review or investigate in any way the massive evidence submitted to her since June 2015 of scientific misconduct regarding three *Science* papers involving LNT, PM2.5, and AGW. If *Science* and/or qualified NAS members peer-reviewed this misconduct evidence, confirmed that is valid, and published it, this evidence could lead to major changes in U.S. environmental regulatory policy, primarily coming from EPA.

Since McNutt, *Science*, and NAS refuse to evaluate or publish evidence of *Science*-related misconduct, the broader scientific community, the general public, and Congress must evaluate this evidence. Once this misconduct evidence is confirmed, McNutt, *Science*, and NAS must be held accountable for their failure to evaluate and publish it.

**From:** Peter Wood [mailto:pwood@nas.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 15, 2016 9:36 AM  
**To:** 'Vernon Smith' <vlomaxsmith@gmail.com>  
**Cc:** 'Dumas, Cyndi' <dumas@chapman.edu>  
**Subject:** RE: FW: Concerns about NAS and scientific dissent

Dear Vernon,

Thank you for responding and for your constructive tone.

When models fail to match reality, something must give. It makes good sense to scrutinize the data, to adjust the models, and to readjust the models. But at some point, we must also entertain the possibilities that the underlying hypotheses may be flawed and/or that there is systematic error built into the models that mere adjustment will not cure. This doesn't necessarily exhaust the possibilities. There is, for example, a wing of climate science that says that CO2 forcing works as advertised but that there can be significant delays in atmospheric response including prolonged "pauses."

The mal-prediction of the models, however, one way or another, requires open debate. I am dedicated to the idea that scientific openness is the only cure for the basic problem. Whether global temperatures are dominated by relatively slight changes in CO2, the mixture of other greenhouse gases, by solar activity, or complex and chaotic systems, I don't profess to know. But I will go out on the limb to say that 18-plus years of insignificant global warming as measured by two independent satellite-based observation systems requires a more vigorous scientific reassessment than we have had so far. The Karol paper, published by Science, was a dubious effort to "save" a hypothesis that has plainly failed. That doesn't mean CO2-forced global warming is a discredited idea. It just means that the current models of it are false. The idea itself ought to be open for question too.

Your comment that the conversation should be "humble" as well as open strikes me as exactly right. Admitting that we don't know something is the prerequisite to moving forward. But of course there is that "conflict of interest" between public funding and honest science. We cannot do without the public funding, but the institutions intended to ensure the integrity of government-funded research are, like all institutions, imperfect. Sometimes they give us politicized agenda in place of open inquiry. When that happens, it is very hard to pull science back on course. I appreciate your help with that difficult task.

Yours,

Peter

**From:** Vernon Smith [mailto:vlomaxsmith@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 15, 2016 12:14 PM  
**To:** [pwood@nas.org](mailto:pwood@nas.org)  
**Cc:** Dumas, Cyndi <[dumas@chapman.edu](mailto:dumas@chapman.edu)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: FW: Concerns about NAS and scientific dissent

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Vernon Smith** <[vlomaxsmith@gmail.com](mailto:vlomaxsmith@gmail.com)>

Date: Tue, Mar 15, 2016 at 9:12 AM

Subject: Re: FW: Concerns about NAS and scientific dissent

To: "Dumas, Cyndi" <[dumas@chapman.edu](mailto:dumas@chapman.edu)>

**Peter:**

Thank you for your careful report on these issues. Of the three you discuss, I have been most concerned with the lack of openness on the "climate-consensus". The editorial language in both Science and Nature (the journal I read regularly)-- "the hiatus, or pause"--reveals strong commitments to beliefs that are contrary to scientific method. At what point do we say that the models have failed, or have invited increased skepticism?

The "hiatus" has not been predicted by the simulation models. It is these models that are and should be on the block, and scientists should say so.

As an economist, I can say that the standard Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium (DSGE) model used in economics failed to predict the massive collapse in housing/mortgage markets that precipitated the Great Recession. The global climate like the economy is a complex system; both defy sober modeling efforts to improve our understanding of them. In both cases the scientific conversation must remain open and humble, with particular attention to avoiding the pretense that

we know more than in fact we can demonstrate that we know.

There is a conflict of interest in maintaining public support for funding of research--"the government-science funding complex"--and issuing honest reports on the state of scientific learning.

Again , thanks for your forthright stand. I support it,...Vernon...

On Mon, Mar 14, 2016 at 8:34 AM, Dumas, Cyndi <[dumas@chapman.edu](mailto:dumas@chapman.edu)> wrote:

**From:** Peter Wood [mailto:[pwood@nas.org](mailto:pwood@nas.org)]

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 08, 2016 1:21 PM

**To:** Smith, Vernon

**Subject:** Concerns about NAS and scientific dissent

March 8, 2016

Dear Professor Smith,

This is an NAS to NAS letter—which requires some “disambiguation.” I am president of the National Association of Scholars, founded in 1987, and whose organizers apparently didn’t give much thought to the space already occupied by those initials by the National Academy of Sciences, founded 124 years earlier. I’ll defer to the Academy’s seniority by reserving NAS in what follows for the body of scientists who incorporated during President Lincoln’s tenure. The National Association of Scholars is a broad-based group of academics that includes professors in the humanities and social sciences (I’m an anthropologist) as well as the natural sciences.

What prompts this letter is the election of Dr. Marcia K. McNutt, currently Editor-in-Chief of *Science*, to be the next NAS President, effective July 1, 2016. I am concerned about the way in which she was elected and the role she has played in scientific controversies while leading *Science*.

While the National Association of Scholars did not oppose Dr. McNutt's candidacy, we note that she was the only official candidate on the ballot and that no details have been released about how she was nominated or elected. Her imminent presidency came about through a secret one-candidate election with no transparency, which should be of concern to all NAS members. It raises the question as to whether NAS is living up to its mission to provide "independent, objective advice to the nation on matters related to science and technology."

I also have serious concerns about the current state of discourse in the sciences. Dr. McNutt has played a significant role in three active controversies involving national regulatory policy that deserve attention in themselves and that are also part of a larger problem. The larger problem is how the scientific establishment, particularly *Science* and NAS, should evaluate and respond to serious dissent from legitimate scientists. Dr. McNutt has refused to deal with strong evidence that there are major errors in *Science* articles.

The three controversies are:

1. The status of the **linear no-threshold (LNT) dose-response model** for the biological effects of nuclear radiation. The prominence of the model stems from the June 29, 1956 *Science* paper, "Genetic Effects of Atomic Radiation," authored by the NAS Committee on the Biological Effects of Atomic Radiation. This paper is now widely questioned and has been seriously critiqued in many peer-reviewed publications, including two detailed 2015 papers. These criticisms are being taken seriously around the world, as summarized in a December 2, 2015 *Wall Street Journal* commentary. In August 2015 four distinguished critics of LNT made a formal request to Dr. McNutt to examine the evidence of fundamental flaws in the 1956 paper and retract it. However, on August 11, 2015, Dr. McNutt rejected this request without even reviewing the detailed evidence. Furthermore, Dr. McNutt did not even consider recusing herself and having independent reviewers examine evidence that challenges the validity of both a *Science* paper and an NAS Committee Report.

This is a consequential matter that bears on a great deal of national public policy, as the LNT model has served as the basis for risk assessment and risk management of radiation and chemical carcinogens for decades, but now needs to be seriously reassessed. This reassessment could profoundly alter many regulations from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, and other government agencies. The relevant documents regarding the 1956 *Science* paper and Dr. McNutt as of October 2015 can be examined at

[www.nas.org/images/documents/LNT.pdf](http://www.nas.org/images/documents/LNT.pdf). A recent indication of the intense controversy surrounding LNT are the [635 comments](#) submitted by November 19, 2015 to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (**Docket ID** NRC-2015-0057 “Linear No-Threshold Model and Standards for Protection Against Radiation”).

2. Extensive evidence of scientific misconduct in the epidemiology of **fine particulate air pollution** (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and its relationship to mortality. Since 1997 EPA has claimed that lifetime inhalation of about a teaspoon of particles with diameter less than 2.5 microns *causes* premature death in the United States and it established an national regulation based on this claim. *Science* has provided extensive news coverage of this issue and its regulatory significance, but has never published any scientific criticism of this questionable claim, which is largely based on nontransparent research.

Earlier this year, nine accomplished scientists and academics submitted to *Science* well-documented evidence of misconduct by several of the PM<sub>2.5</sub> researchers relied upon by EPA. The evidence of misconduct was first submitted to Dr. McNutt in a detailed June 4, 2015 email letter, then in a detailed July 20, 2015 Policy Forum manuscript “Transparent Science is Necessary for EPA Regulations,” and finally in an August 17, 2015 Perspective manuscript “Particulate Matter Does Not Cause Premature Deaths.” Dr. McNutt and two

*Science* editors immediately rejected the letter and the manuscripts and never conducted any internal or external review of the evidence. This a consequential matter because many multi-billion dollar EPA air pollution regulations, such as, the Clean Power Plan, are primarily justified by the claim that PM<sub>2.5</sub> is killing Americans. The relevant documents regarding this controversy as of August 2015 can be examined at <https://www.nas.org/images/documents/PM2.5.pdf>. The evidence that PM<sub>2.5</sub> does not cause premature deaths got stronger with a major September 15, 2015 *Environmental Health Perspectives* paper “[Ambient Particulate Matter Air Pollution Exposure and Mortality in the NIH-AARP Diet and Health Cohort](#)” by proponents of a causal relationship.

3. *Science* promotes the so-called **consensus model of climate change** and excludes any contrary views. This issue has become so polarized and polarizing that it is difficult to bring up, but at some point the scientific community will have to reckon with the dramatic discrepancies between current climate models and substantial parts of the empirical record. Recent evidence of *Science* bias on this issue is the June 26, 2015 article by Dr. Thomas R. Karl, “Possible artifacts of data biases in the recent global surface warming hiatus”; the July 3, 2015 McNutt editorial, “The

beyond-two-degree inferno”; the November 13, 2015 McNutt editorial, “Climate warning, 50 years later”; and the November 25, 2015 AAAS News Release, “AAAS Leads Coalition to Protest Climate Science Inquiry.”

Dr. McNutt’s position is, of course, consistent with the official position of the AAAS. But the attempt to declare that the “pause” in global warming was an illusion has not been accepted by several respected and well-informed scientists.

One would not know this, however, from reading *Science*, which has declined to publish any dissenting views. One can be a strong supporter of the consensus model and yet be disturbed by the role which *Science* has played in this controversy. Dr. McNutt and the journal have acted more like partisan activists than like responsible stewards of scientific standards confronted with contentious claims and ambiguous evidence. The relevant documents and commentary regarding the Karl paper and McNutt editorials through November 2015 can be examined at [https://www.nas.org/images/documents/Climate\\_Change.pdf](https://www.nas.org/images/documents/Climate_Change.pdf). New evidence for a “global warming slowdown or hiatus” is the February 24, 2016 *Nature Climate Change* article “[Making sense of the early-2000s warming slowdown](#),” whose authors, John Fyfe, Gerald Meehl, Matthew England, Michael Mann, *et al*, are major figures closely associated with the thesis that global warming is real. Their rejection of the Karl paper is further indication that that paper was not adequately vetted.

All three of these controversies have arisen on issues in which a strong degree of scientific consensus became intertwined with public policy and institutional self-interest. That intertwining can create selective blindness.

Dr. McNutt has in her career found herself faced more than once with the challenge of what to do when an entrenched orthodoxy meets a substantial scientific challenge. The challenge in each case could itself prove to be mistaken, but it met what most scientists would concede to be the threshold criteria to deserve a serious hearing. Yet in each case Dr. McNutt chose to reinforce the orthodoxy by shutting the door on the challenge.

The three areas that I sketched above, however, seem to have such prominence in public policy that they would warrant an even greater investment in time, care, and attention than would normally be the case. In that light, Dr. McNutt’s dismissive treatment of scientific criticisms is disturbing.

I bring these matters to your attention in the hope that you and other members of the NAS would address these criticisms and call on Dr. McNutt to do so while she

is still Editor-in-Chief of *Science*. I welcome your response. The National Association of Scholars will present an open forum on these matters with a section reserved specifically for NAS members.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Wood  
President  
National Association of Scholars  
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## Concerns about National Academy of Sciences and Scientific Dissent

Dec 15, 2015 | [Peter Wood](#)

*Introductory note: NAS president Peter Wood sent the following letter by email on December 9, 2015 to California members of the National Academy of Sciences.*

Dear Members of the National Academy of Sciences,

This is an NAS to NAS letter—which requires some “disambiguation.” I am president of the National Association of Scholars, founded in 1987, and whose organizers apparently didn’t give much thought to the space already occupied by those initials by the National Academy of Sciences, founded 124 years earlier. I’ll defer to the Academy’s seniority by reserving NAS in what follows for the body of scientists who incorporated during President Lincoln’s tenure. The National Association of Scholars is a broad-based group of academics that includes professors in the humanities and social sciences (I’m an anthropologist) as well as the natural sciences.

The occasion for this letter is Dr. Marcia K. McNutt, Editor-in-Chief of *Science*. We are concerned that she is the only official candidate to be the next NAS president. To be clear, the National Association of Scholars does not oppose Dr. McNutt’s candidacy. We simply believe that members of an important national organization like NAS should have at least two candidates to consider when voting for your next president. Indeed, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), which publishes *Science*, always has two candidates for president and its other elected positions. Other scientific organizations also have two candidates for their elected positions.

Also, we want to bring to your attention our serious concerns about the current state of discourse in the sciences. Dr. McNutt has played a significant role in three active controversies involving national regulatory policy that deserve attention in themselves and that are also part of a larger problem. The larger problem is how the scientific establishment, particularly *Science* and NAS, should evaluate and respond to serious dissent from legitimate scientists. This is an especially important consideration for NAS, which was established to provide “independent, objective advice on issues that affect people's lives worldwide.”

The three controversies are:

1. The status of the **linear no-threshold (LNT) dose-response model** for the biological effects of nuclear radiation. The prominence of the model stems from the June 29, 1956 *Science* paper, “Genetic Effects of Atomic Radiation,” authored by the NAS Committee on the Biological Effects of Atomic Radiation. This paper is now widely questioned and has been seriously critiqued in many peer-reviewed publications, including two detailed 2015 papers. These criticisms are being taken seriously around the world, as summarized in a December 2, 2015 *Wall Street Journal* commentary. In August 2015 four distinguished critics of LNT made a

formal request to Dr. McNutt to examine the evidence of fundamental flaws in the 1956 paper and retract it. However, on August 11, 2015 Dr. McNutt rejected this request without even reviewing the detailed evidence. Furthermore, Dr. McNutt did not even consider recusing herself and having independent reviewers examine evidence that challenges the validity of both a *Science* paper and an NAS Committee Report.

This is a consequential matter that bears on a great deal of national public policy, as the LNT model has served as the basis for risk assessment and risk management of radiation and chemical carcinogens for decades, but now needs to be seriously reassessed. This reassessment could profoundly alter many regulations from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, and other government agencies. The relevant documents regarding the 1956 *Science* paper and Dr. McNutt can be examined at [www.nas.org/images/documents/LNT.pdf](http://www.nas.org/images/documents/LNT.pdf).

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Earlier this year, nine accomplished scientists and academics submitted to *Science* well-documented evidence of misconduct by several of the PM<sub>2.5</sub> researchers relied upon by EPA. The evidence of misconduct was first submitted to Dr. McNutt in a detailed June 4, 2015 email letter, then in a detailed July 20, 2015 Policy Forum manuscript “Transparent Science is Necessary for EPA Regulations,” and finally in an August 17, 2015 Perspective manuscript “Particulate Matter Does Not Cause Premature Deaths.” Dr. McNutt and two *Science* editors immediately rejected the letter and the manuscripts and never conducted any internal or external review of the evidence. This a consequential matter because many multi-billion dollar EPA air pollution regulations, such as, the Clean Power Plan, are primarily justified by the claim that PM<sub>2.5</sub> is killing Americans. The relevant documents regarding this controversy can be examined at <https://www.nas.org/images/documents/PM2.5.pdf>.

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*Science*, which has declined to publish any dissenting views. One can be a strong supporter of the consensus model and yet be disturbed by the role which *Science* has played in this controversy. Dr. McNutt and the journal have acted more like partisan activists than like responsible stewards of scientific standards confronted with contentious claims and ambiguous evidence. The relevant documents and commentary regarding the Karl paper and McNutt editorials can be examined at [https://www.nas.org/images/documents/Climate\\_Change.pdf](https://www.nas.org/images/documents/Climate_Change.pdf).

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Dr. McNutt has in her career found herself faced more than once with the challenge of what to do when an entrenched orthodoxy meets a substantial scientific challenge. The challenge in each case could itself prove to be mistaken, but it met what most scientists would concede to be the threshold criteria to deserve a serious hearing. Yet in each case Dr. McNutt chose to reinforce the orthodoxy by shutting the door on the challenge.

The three areas that I sketched above, however, seem to have such prominence in public policy that they would warrant an even greater investment in time, care, and attention than would be normally the case. In that light, Dr. McNutt's dismissive treatment of scientific criticisms is disturbing.

I bring these matters to your attention in the hope of accomplishing two things: raise awareness that the three issues represent threats to the integrity of science arising from the all-too-human tendency to turn ideas into orthodoxies; and suggest that it might be wise for NAS to nominate as a second candidate for president someone who has a reputation for scientific objectivity and fairness and who does not enforce orthodoxy.

I welcome your responses. The National Association of Scholars will present an open forum on these matters with a section reserved specifically for NAS members. Furthermore, I will put you in contact with NAS members who are concerned about Dr. McNutt becoming the next NAS president.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Wood  
President  
National Association of Scholars  
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