

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 22, 2025, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Executive Committee (“Committee”) of the Board of Regents (“Board”) of the Smithsonian Institution (“Smithsonian”) conducted a videoconference meeting on April 22, 2025. Participating were Board and Executive Committee Chair Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey, Vice Chair Franklin Raines, and Committee member Denise O’Leary.

Also present by invitation of the Committee were Secretary Lonnie Bunch; Counselor to the Chief Justice Robert M. Dow, Jr.; Chief of Staff to the Secretary Greg Bettwy; Deputy Chief of Staff to the Regents Kate Forester; Special Assistant to the Regents Mallory Gianola (recorder); Chief Legal Officer Jennifer McIntyre; Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer Meroë Park; and Counselor and Chief of Staff to the Regents Porter Wilkinson.

CALL TO ORDER

Board and Executive Committee Chair Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the draft minutes of the March 27 and March 28, 2025, Committee meetings were approved.

COMMITTEE CHARTER REVIEW

The Committee reviewed its Charter per its mandate to annually review and assess the Charter and evaluate the Committee’s performance with respect to the requirements of the Charter. No modifications to the Charter were proposed.

JUNE BOARD MEETING

Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey provided a brief recap of the April 7, 2025, meeting of the Board of Regents. She acknowledged the success of the Regents’ annual strategic meeting, which explored the Smithsonian’s scientific contributions—past, present, and future—and what sets the Institution apart from other government agencies and science and research organizations across the globe.

Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey also led a discussion on the upcoming meeting of the Board of Regents to be held on June 9, 2025. The Board will discuss key matters at the Smithsonian, including the status of the fiscal year 2026 federal appropriation, the Smithsonian budget and related revenue generating activities, and strategic plan implementation. Dr. Lavizzo-Mourey noted the Board would also take up routine matters as presented by the Regents’ committees.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Secretary Bunch then updated the Committee on the state of the Smithsonian. He first shared feedback from the Smithsonian All-Staff meeting, which was held on April 10, 2025, in the Warner Brothers Theater at the National Museum of American History. The Secretary shared an update on the Smithsonian operating environment and his vision for the Institution. The meeting also included a panel discussion with five museum and research unit directors sharing new developments in exhibitions, education, research and outreach. Those participating included Kim Sajet, Director of the National Portrait Gallery; Chris Browne, John and Adrienne Mars Director of the National Air and Space Museum; Lisa Kewley, Director of the Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian; Melanie Adams, Roger Ferguson and Annette Nazareth Director of the Anacostia Community Museum; and Cliff Murphy, Director of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

Next, the Secretary briefed the Committee on the public announcement and launch of the Smithsonian Scientists Taking Astronomy to Rural Schools (“STARS”) program. The STARS program will equip schools with a donated telescope, accessories such as solar lenses, ongoing teacher training, and curricula designed to strengthen science, technology, engineering and mathematics (“STEM”) education for rural schoolchildren. As part of the program, staff from the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (“SAO”) will provide in-person and ongoing support for teachers as well as live observing sessions for students led by SAO staff and scientists. The STARS program will launch in Arizona during the 2025/2026 school year. Following the Arizona launch, the program will expand to reach rural schools across the country. The Secretary will share updates as the program gets underway.

To conclude, the Secretary informed the Committee that on April 10, U.S. Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz introduced the Bring the Space Shuttle Home Act. This legislation (S.1403) would authorize the movement of the Space Shuttle Discovery from the Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum’s Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Virginia, to the Space Center Houston Museum near the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. The Secretary shared that the bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, and he will keep the Committee apprised on any further action.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Committee moved into an executive session at approximately 2:15 p.m. to discuss the Smithsonian operating environment.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to consider, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey, Chair