



Department of Physics Colloquium

Distinguished Alumni Award Winner

Friday, May 7, 2010 • 4:00 P.M. • 2241 Chamberlin Hall

cookies & coffee served at 3:30 p.m

Does the nation have a nuclear future?

The role of science in the regulation of the nation's most controversial energy source.



Dr. Gregory B. Jaczko

Chairman of the U.S.
Nuclear Regulatory
Commission (NRC)

Throughout its history, nuclear power has been one of the most controversial energy sources in the United States. Despite this history, the challenges of global warming and energy security have led to a renewed interest in nuclear power in the United States. At the center of the renewed focus is the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the agency responsible for deciding whether any new plants on the drawing board will be approved for construction. Many factors play an important role in the agency's decisions about the safety of nuclear power plants. Chairman Jaczko will discuss specifically the role science plays in helping the agency make sound decisions about the safety of nuclear power, with an insider's perspective on the use of science in debates in the nation's capital.

Biography

Dr. Gregory B. Jaczko was designated Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) by President Barack Obama on May 13, 2009. He was first sworn in as a Commissioner on Jan. 21, 2005, and his term runs through June 2013.

Throughout his tenure on the Commission, Dr. Jaczko has focused on the NRC being a decisive safety regulator with the confidence of the public, and has worked to have the agency clearly communicate with the public and its licensees. He is committed to the safety of existing nuclear reactors and radioactive materials, implementing a predictable safety review process for license applications, ensuring the agency conducts thorough environmental reviews, and promoting strong enforcement and accountability.

Prior to assuming the post of Commissioner, Dr. Jaczko served as appropriations director for U.S. Sen. Harry Reid and also as the Senator's science policy advisor. Earlier he was a congressional science fellow in the office of U.S. Rep. Edward Markey. He has been an adjunct professor at Georgetown University, teaching science and policy. Dr. Jaczko holds a bachelor's degree in physics and philosophy from Cornell University, and a doctorate in physics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.