

NSF

Annual Report to Employees

2007

National Science Foundation
Office of the Director

Dear Colleagues:

In the past year, you again helped NSF exceed its goals and further advance its commitment to excellence, results and stewardship. We saw continued successes in research, education and operations as measured against NSF's Strategic Plan, as well as through continued external recognition seen in high marks on the President's Management Scorecard and Congressional support. These accolades could not have been achieved without the dedication and innovation that all of you bring to NSF every day.

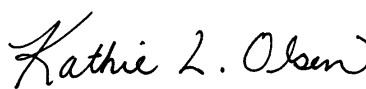
Our successes are directly related to your outstanding efforts and support. One example was this year's launch of the International Polar Year (IPY) to explore new frontiers in polar science. The IPY provides an extraordinary opportunity to educate people of all ages about many aspects of science and technology. Another example was meeting a key goal for NSF in expanding the scientific literacy of all citizens. To learn more about NSF's scientific accomplishments, we invite you to review our award-winning *2006 Performance Highlights report*.

This year's Report to Employees highlights many new practices employees developed and implemented to help further NSF's Stewardship goal. The report is organized around our core values, which underpin NSF's culture and ultimately influence our mission, vision and goals.

Thank you for your dedication, enthusiasm and willingness to go the extra mile. NSF would not be where it is today without its most valuable resource - - all of you.



Arden L. Bement, Jr.
Director



Kathie L. Olsen
Deputy Director

Stewardship Through NSF's Core Values

Stewardship is one of the four goals set forth in NSF's Strategic Plan, which defines Stewardship as:

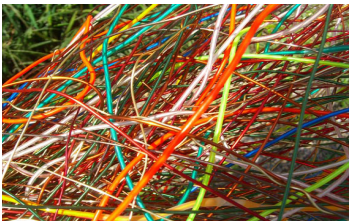
Support excellence in science and engineering research and education through a capable and responsive organization.

This internally-focused goal emphasizes the administrative and management efforts performed in the Foundation and provides a link to NSF's mission and the science-centric goals of discovery, learning and research infrastructure. Stewardship helps to relate many of the tasks that we perform each day to NSF's success and also provides ideas and goals to improve our performance.

NSF's core values are essential and enduring tenets that influence everyone in the organization and support NSF's mission, vision and goals. These core values reinforce the fine work done by NSF and help define our unique culture.



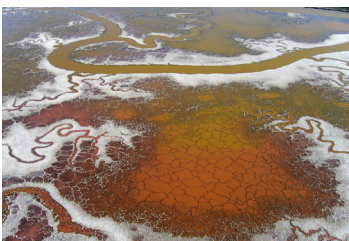
Dedicated to Excellence: continually improving our ability to identify opportunities; investing optimally the resources entrusted to us; managing a diverse, capable, motivated organization; rewarding accomplishment; and sharing our best insights with others.



Visionary: imagining the future, working at the frontier, realizing the full potential of people, furthering promising ideas wherever and whenever they arise, and encouraging creativity and initiative.



Broadly Inclusive: seeking and accommodating contributions from all sources while reaching out especially to groups that have been underrepresented; serving scientists, engineers, educators, students and the public across the nation; and exploring every opportunity for partnerships, both nationally and internationally.



Accountable: operating with integrity and transparency, maintaining quality and relevance in administration, management and oversight.

This report highlights the ways in which employees reflect our core values and ensure the Foundation meets its goal of stewardship for continued excellence in research and education.

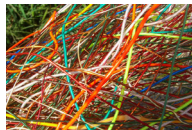
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Dedicated to Excellence

Continually improving our ability to identify opportunities; investing optimally the resources entrusted to us; managing a diverse, capable, motivated organization; rewarding accomplishment; and sharing our best insights with others.

Human Capital Management

Federal Human Capital Survey Results Show NSF Great Place to Work

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) released results of the 2006 Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) in February 2007. The 2006 survey was the third iteration of the OPM survey of 29 major Federal agencies and selected small and independent agencies intended to assess Federal employees' perceptions about how effectively agencies are managing their workforces.

Survey findings suggest that NSF employees continue to view the Foundation in a very positive light. NSF was one of only three agencies to be ranked in the top five in each of the four human capital management categories (Leadership and Knowledge Management, Results-Oriented Performance Culture, Talent Management, and Job Satisfaction). NSF was ranked #1 in the Results-Oriented Performance Culture category, and no lower than #4 in any of the other three categories. Findings from the 2006 FHCS were also used by the Partnership for Public Service and American University to compile their *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government* list. NSF was ranked #4 among 31 small agencies.

Succession Planning Underway

Given today's knowledge-intensive global economy, NSF is more committed than ever to strengthening its world-class workforce - - one that is highly skilled, diverse, visionary and dedicated to excellence. Earlier this year, an NSF committee, chaired by Dr. Kathie L. Olsen, Deputy Director, and composed of NSF senior executives, was established to focus on NSF succession planning - - a key facet of NSF's human capital management activities. The Succession Planning Working Group (SPWG) is examining current NSF succession planning activities and defining new strategies and initiatives to enhance NSF's ability to develop and recruit high-quality candidates for critical positions throughout the agency and quickly and effectively orient new, incoming staff.

During the summer of 2007, the SPWG began developing the framework for an NSF succession plan. Discussions with individual directorates and offices and the SPWG's coordinator, Kathryn Sullivan, began taking place in September 2007. The SPWG will produce an initial draft succession plan that will be made available to NSF staff for comment later in the year. Dr. Olsen will report to the National Science Board in December 2007 on the group's efforts. The NSF succession plan will enhance the Foundation's capacity to address the challenges of a constantly transforming scientific landscape and to execute our responsibilities as stewards of national research and education programs.

HRM Service Teams Result in Improved Customer Service

During the summer of 2006, the Office of Information and Resource Management (OIRM) Division of Human Resource Management (HRM) began changing the way it engages its customers across NSF by dedicating one customer account representative (CAR) to act as a business partner and human capital liaison in each NSF directorate and office. In the Spring of 2007, HRM conducted an agency-wide study of the effectiveness and efficiency of the service team model. Results of the study indicate that the initiation of these CAR service teams has resulted in improved service in both the strategic and operational areas of human resource staffing and strategic human capital planning.

The results of this study indicate strengths and opportunities in the following areas. These findings will help HRM continue to improve its consultative and strategic services to the Foundation.

Strengths	Continued Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the start of the HRM service team approach, NSF has seen a 37 percent reduction in the time it takes to fill vacancies; • Communication between customers and HRM has greatly improved; • Having a single point of contact enables customers to interact with HRM in a more collaborative manner; and • HRM is a better strategic partner and is proactively seeking solutions to human resource problems specific to directorates or systemic to the Foundation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalization of the service team model should continue to improve consistency and service delivery standards; • Standard decision frameworks and knowledge management tools should continue to be developed to further enable successful implementation of the model and preserve critical business decisions; and, • HRM should continue to provide core human resource services while broadening the scope of staff responsibilities.

In addition to this new CAR role, HRM has developed a significant number of improved standard operating procedures and communication items that facilitate consistent decision making and a better understanding of human resource processes by customers. For example, HRM developed a *Hiring Managers Tool Kit* that provides tools and information aids for managers and other interested individuals to support recruitment and hiring planning and management process. HRM also provides detailed workforce planning tools and reports to directorate management including demographic reports, attrition models, staffing planning tools and succession management strategies.

In support of these new operating procedures, HRM implemented a new Workforce Recruitment and Planning System (WRAPS) that enables planning, tracking and progressive management of the recruitment process. This system will enable HRM to target improvement programs for reducing the time it takes to fill NSF positions. To make it easier for job applicants, HRM recently completed major upgrades to its eRecruit system, giving candidates a simpler application process and more job search features. This new system also provides managers with a standard resume format and easier access to job certificates.



Performance

NSF Strives Toward Stewardship Goals

The Foundation established eight annual stewardship goals with associated measures or milestones based on several long-term investment priorities in the new Strategic Plan. Examples of such goals are: maintaining a high but realistic time-to-decision standard for informing investigators whether their proposal will be funded; improving the quality and transparency of the merit review process; improving customer service to the science, engineering, and education community; broadening participation from underrepresented groups and diverse institutions throughout the United States; and improving the management of large facilities. In addition, three goals focused on management priorities (post-award monitoring, E-Government and IT Security) were adopted for FY 2007. To achieve the stewardship goals, NSF created Foundation-wide focus groups and working groups to gather best practices from among NSF program staff and conduct surveys of investigators who have submitted proposals to NSF. Based on the findings and recommendations from these groups, it is likely that new or expanded stewardship goals will be introduced in FY 2008 and beyond.

The NSF Business and Operations Advisory Committee's Facilities Subcommittee's June 13, 2005, report observed that NSF's facilities projects are significant undertakings, "...more likely to be highly complex projects, dollar for dollar, than conventional construction projects of similar cost." The subcommittee stated that "...the project management resource represented by the Deputy, Large Facilities Projects needs to be supplemented by project management training of program officers and principal investigators in order to meet the objective of a knowledgeable management of MREFC (Major Research Equipment and Facility Construction) projects within the NSF."

The Division of Human Resource Management sponsors a Project Management curriculum, which is available to all NSF staff. As of September 2007, 80 NSF staff members have earned a Master's Certificate in Project Management and 117 have earned an Associate's Certificate from George Washington University upon successfully completing NSF's core curriculum.

AC/GPA Recognizes Significant Achievement

NSF's Advisory Committee for GPRA Performance Assessment (AC/GPA) held its annual meeting June 14-15, 2007, to discuss the Foundation's achievement as it relates to the strategic outcome goals of Discovery, Learning, and Research Infrastructure as outlined in NSF's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan. While NSF has a number of advisory committees, the AC/GPA is the only committee that addresses the Foundation's entire award portfolio and reports directly to the Director. As in prior years, NSF program officers submitted results in the form of performance highlights of NSF investments in basic science, engineering, and education research for the period between March 1, 2006, and March 1, 2007. These performance highlights were a primary means for committee members to assess NSF's performance.



2006 Presidential Rank Award



Wanda E. Ward
Deputy Assistant Director, EHR
Distinguished Executive

The Committee concluded that NSF demonstrated significant achievement under the discovery, learning, and research infrastructure goals. According to the [Committee's report](#), "From novel discoveries in the basic sciences and engineering to educational advancements across the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics disciplines, NSF has demonstrated continued commitment to its basic goals of pursuing the highest quality research, in innovative and transformative ways, while broadening the participation in science and engineering of people from all parts of society." The Committee recommended that the selection process for program highlights be improved to ensure that a broad range of projects are represented, and that specific evaluation criteria for the strategic outcome goals be developed to assist the Committee in its assessment. In response, NSF staff have added specific program categories for program highlights in FY 2008 to ensure broad coverage and have developed several evaluation criteria for the Committee's use.

Merit Review

Integrity of Process Improvements Strengthened

NSF's merit review process is one of our core competencies, and the major way the academic community interacts with us. Although it has been described as the "gold standard" for peer review, NSF is continually striving to better its performance and has identified improving the transparency, consistency and uniformity of the merit review process as one of the strategic investments under the stewardship goal.

Since 1977, NSF has submitted annually a report to the National Science Board on the NSF merit review process, presenting data on both the merit review outcome for the preceding fiscal year and the process itself (see the most [recent report](#) for details). In September 2005, the Board, at the request of Congress, issued [a review of the NSF merit review process](#). The report concluded that the NSF merit review process is a fair and effective way to review the more than 40,000 proposals the Foundation receives annually in a wide variety of subject areas. It also contained several recommendations for improving the transparency and effectiveness of the NSF merit review process, while preserving the ability of program officers to identify the most innovative proposals and effectively diversify and balance NSF's research and education portfolio.

In response to the Board's recommendations, NSF has initiated an agency-wide effort to address quality of reviews and transparency of the award or decline decision. To enhance and reward accountability, the operation of a credible, efficient merit review system was identified as a strategic goal in the FY 2007 NSF Budget Request, a merit review performance indicator was added to the Senior Executive Service annual personal performance plans, and the Director's Award for Merit Review Excellence was initiated in FY 2006. A number of sessions have been conducted with NSF Senior Managers, Division Directors, Program Officers, and Administrative Officers focusing on issues and best practices related to quality and transparency of merit review. Training on merit review has been incorporated into the Program Management Seminar - - a new course is being developed to highlight critical issues - - and an internal NSF web page is being designed to facilitate exchange of information related to merit review, including appropriate standards and effective practices. As part of the effort to improve the transparency of the merit review process, an [external NSF web page](#) was launched for the research and education community to explain the process and provide links to relevant policy documents.

NSF relies on the participation of thousands of reviewers each year to provide critical evaluations of the submitted proposals. To express our appreciation, NSF launched a new initiative to send email thank you letters from the Director and Deputy Director to the reviewer community. In the inaugural phase, thank you letters were sent in early October to everyone who had submitted a review in FY 2007.

Merit Review Training Enhanced

NSF is justifiably proud of its reputation for possessing the “gold standard” in merit review among all Federal agencies, which has resulted in our excellent reputation with Congress, our communities and the public for the quality of our funding decisions and the results they have produced. In order to assure NSF’s reputation in merit review remains at the highest levels, it is essential that all employees engaged in the process have a comprehensive and current understanding of the review practices and considerations.

As a result, program officials will be establishing recurring training for employees on merit review topics. To date, NSF has obtained input from a variety of agency personnel and will continue to seek suggestions and active participation from many others. Important areas for consideration will include such topics as: transparency of award and decline decisions; panel deliberations; transformative research; and alignment of award decisions with agency strategic goals and objectives. In the upcoming months, you will be hearing more about this very important initiative.

Reviewer Management Initiative Starts Up

Establishing a set of more modern tools and capabilities has become a priority in support of NSF’s Strategic Plan. With this priority in mind, the Foundation has advanced its Reviewer Management Initiative to improve the identification, selection, assignment, and tracking of individuals who serve as reviewers.

In the Fall of 2007, Dr. George Strawn, Chief Information Officer (CIO), will be convening directorate-specific focus groups to discuss the new reviewer management concept and to solicit feedback on the proposed approach.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS

2007 NAGC Gold Screen Award - First Place Presented to NSF for Electronic Publications

The Secret Lives of Wild Animals, a special report created for the NSF website, won first place for electronic publications. The website uses video and interactive features to tell the stories of researchers employing new technologies to gain unprecedented access to study the behavior of animals in the wild.



NAGC recognizes the government’s best in print, video, and multimedia presentations.

Key Findings Identified by IPAMM Working Group

The competition for NSF funds has always been intense, but it has grown more so in recent years. Between FY 2000 and FY 2006, the NSF budget increased by 44 percent, research proposal actions increased by 47 percent, and average award sizes increased by 43 percent. At the same time, NSF's overall funding rate for research proposals decreased from 30 to 21 percent. The declining funding rates raised concerns within NSF, the National Science Board, and the science and engineering research and education communities that NSF serves, including potential negative impacts on early career researchers and on the nature of the research that is proposed and funded. The heavier workloads associated with increased rate of proposal submissions raised concerns about impacts on NSF staff and the proposer and reviewer communities. To enable the development of evidence-based policy to address these concerns, in March 2006, NSF charged the Impact of Proposal and Award Management Mechanisms (IPAMM) Working Group to perform a detailed study of the trends, impacts, and causal factors associated with the recent declines in proposal funding rates and the simultaneous growth in proposal submission rates.

In conducting its analysis, IPAMM used both quantitative data from internal NSF databases and attitudinal data collected through a survey of all NSF principal investigators who submitted research proposals during FY 2004-2006. IPAMM published its [final report](#) in August 2007; the report and the results of the survey can both be found on the [IPAMM web page](#). IPAMM found that declining funding rates had affected the entire NSF proposer community proportionately and that there had been no disparate effect on beginning investigators, underrepresented groups or different institution types. IPAMM also found that the quality of the proposals being submitted had not deteriorated, although more high-quality proposals are being declined. The largest impacts were related to the increased number of proposals being submitted, which has put stress on NSF's merit review process.

The challenge facing NSF and the community is to find the right level of competition: that is, one that hones the quality of the proposals and results in funding quality research with the minimum amount of time spent in the propose-review-decline-resubmit cycle. IPAMM identified a variety of options for addressing this challenge, which balance trade-offs between keeping the proposal workload to a manageable and productive level, for both NSF and the community, and encouraging the free flow of ideas to NSF. The increase in proposal submissions can be attributed a number of different factors, including the increased size and capacity of the research community, loss of funding from other sources, increased use by NSF of targeted solicitations in new areas, and a perceived increase in institutional pressures on faculty members to get grants to achieve promotion and tenure, and to support their students and labs. The relative importance of any particular contributing factor varied across the different directorates/offices, and none emerged as a single dominating force. Because the needs and priorities of the communities that NSF serves differ across units, and also across time within units, the report recommended that the directorates and research offices be given the responsibility and flexibility to meet this challenge by developing strategies that are appropriate within the context of the directorate or office, and by balancing long-term planning with the ability to respond to changing needs.





Visionary

*Imagining the future, working at the frontier,
realizing the full potential of people, furthering
promising ideas wherever and whenever they arise,
and encouraging creativity and initiative.*

New Ideas in Administration and Management

Administrative Functions Study (AFS) Pilot Begins

The Administrative Functions Study (AFS) Management Pilot, which began in October 2007, will test two administrative positions in a career model that identifies potential career paths for employees and better aligns administrative functions to support NSF's mission and strategic goals. Divisions within four Directorates -- Biological Sciences (BIO), Engineering (ENG), Geosciences (GEO), and Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS) -- have developed a pilot to test some of the recommendations from the AFS and have hired temporary Pilot Coordinator's to help manage pilot activities.

Two pilot positions have been staffed in each participating Division: the Program Support Manager (PSM) and the Operations Specialist (OS). Approximately 30 staff members are serving in these new positions. Administrative Officer (AO) and Financial Operations Specialist (FOS) positions will not exist in participating Divisions during the year-long pilot. All other administrative positions will remain the same. Both the PSM and OS positions were created specifically for NSF to address the challenges identified in the findings from the AFS. The PSM is responsible for developing program support staff employees, managing the program support team across the merit review and award management and oversight processes, providing a single point of contact to resolve quality and timeliness issues related to product delivery from the program support staff, and performing several managerial responsibilities not currently being performed by AOs across the Foundation, such as workload forecasting and management, Directorate-level SOP development, and dynamic performance management. The OS is responsible for the Division's business operations, which includes budget execution/monitoring/tracking, financial reporting and analysis, accounts reconciliation, small contract management, facilities and space management, and transactional human capital support. Most of these duties were performed by AOs and /or FOSs previously.

Professional development for both positions is provided through a structured Learning and Development Program (LDP) that will provide PSMs and OSs with a formal learning program involving classroom training, professional coaching, and structured group activities to help the incumbents succeed in their new positions. The *AFS website* contains information about the history of the AFS, specifics about the PSM and OS positions (and the other positions in the AFS model), the LDP, and status updates on the AFS Management Pilot.

Financial and Award Management Training

The Office of Budget, Finance, and Award Management (BFA), with support from the NSF Academy and the Administrative Officer's Management Group, is planning BFA-sponsored Administrative Officer/equivalent positions training, which will take place in early 2008. This series will provide dedicated training on administrative functions. Pending topics to be covered in the inaugural series will include: Financial Accounting System overview, Enterprise Information System overview, review of procurement procedures, and grant policy document integration (the recent consolidation of the *Grant Proposal Guide* and *Grant Policy Manual* into the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures [PAPP] Guide*).

What is the **PAPP Guide**? The PAPP Guide is intended to: improve both the awareness and knowledge of the complete set of NSF policies and procedural documents; increase ease of access to the policies and procedures that govern the entire award life cycle; and increase the transparency of our proposal and award process. The Guide is a significant revision to the prior mechanism for the issuance of proposal and award policies and procedures.



eBusiness in Action

Budget Formulation and Execution Line of Business

NSF participates in the Budget Formulation and Execution Line of Business. This capability allows budget staff at NSF to work with other agencies to strengthen the Federal budgeting profession through a community of practice, establish a clearinghouse for sharing best practices, improve tools for government-wide budget exercises and collaboration, and establish standards for exchanging data. NSF is using a new “Budget Community” website to collaborate with colleagues and facilitate exchanges with OMB and other agencies.

Financial Management Line of Business

The Office of Management and Budget, through the Financial Management Line of Business (FMLoB), continues to work toward a Federal government that is standardized and transparent, provides access to accurate financial information and adopts effective and consistent internal controls. NSF continues to support these goals and objectives through our involvement in a variety of workgroups and by providing funding to support FMLoB.

During the past year, a number of standards and performance measurements have been established government-wide along with a new government-wide accounting code and standard processes for payments. NSF is also reporting our financial system performance in a number of information technology and financial reporting areas.

In the upcoming year, FMLoB will continue to identify standard business processes in a number of areas. A key area of concern for NSF is the definition of standards between the financial and grant systems. It will be critical that this effort coordinates with the Grants Management Line of Business (GMLoB) and [Grants Policy Committee](#) to ensure that the integration supports NSF GMLoB consortia approach.

NSF Business Applications: eJacket, FastLane, and Research.gov

NSF’s business applications help the Foundation accomplish its mission to advance science and engineering, as well as help support employees’ roles as effective stewards by facilitating more effective and efficient business practices and policies.

eJacket is *the* business application used by program officers. It facilitates electronic cross-program collaboration, which enables Program Officers to use electronic signatures and share documents in a more efficient way. eJacket is fully accessible to all NSF staff anytime and anywhere.

In FY 2007:

- NSF staff members accessed eJacket approximately 2.6 million times;
- NSF staff electronically processed 100 percent of non-award actions (36,850 non-award actions);
- NSF staff members sent out nearly 25,000 pieces of electronic correspondence per month via the eJacket eCorrespondence tool; and
- Visitors from over 45 Committee of Visitor meetings used eJacket to view proposal and award documentation.

FastLane, our award winning, external facing, Web-based proposal management system, is used by over 250,000 scientists, educators, administrators and technology experts. In the last year:

- Over 44,500 electronic proposals were processed;
- Over 206,000 Electronic Reviews were received via FastLane; and,
- IT Help Central answered over 50,000 FastLane inquiries.

Since the FastLane system is over 13 years old, NSF is initiating Research.gov, which will fulfill the Foundation's need for more modern proposal and awards management capabilities and meet the research grantee community's demand for common grants management tools and business processes.

Research.gov will provide a menu of services focused on the needs of research institutions and will enable NSF to comply with recent government-wide mandates and guidelines. As Research.gov evolves over the next few years, users will have the option of using the modernized services provided by Research.gov or the existing services on FastLane. Research.gov is important because it continues our leadership in advancing electronic grants management initiatives; evolves our grants applications and work processes; and helps NSF provide improved electronic services throughout the research community.

Currently, NSF has partnered with the Department of Agriculture's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) in a pilot program that allows Sponsored Research Offices and Principal Investigators to check the status of their proposals. NSF plans to deploy the initial set of Research.gov capabilities in December 2007 and incrementally add capabilities in upcoming fiscal years. Low cost, high impact capabilities that deliver the most value to grantees will be implemented first. Click on [Research.gov](#) initiative for more information.

A [September 2007 Research.gov](#) presentation to the Federal Demonstration Partnership provides a summary of the initiative.



The NSF special report providing a virtual tour of the new high-tech *U.S. South Pole Station in Antarctica* received the NAGC's Award of Excellence for Electronic Publications.

NSF Receives 2007 NAGC Award of Excellence for Electronic Publications

The screenshot shows the NSF website interface for a special report titled "U.S. SOUTH POLE STATION: NEW NSF STATION". The page includes a navigation menu with options like HOME, FUNDING, AWARDS, DISCOVERIES, NEWS, PUBLICATIONS, STATISTICS, ABOUT, and FastLane. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area features a 3D cutaway view of the new Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, with a text box explaining that the elevated two-story structure is shown in this cutaway view. Below the cutaway, there is a section titled "NEW AMUNDSEN-SCOTT SOUTH POLE STATION" with a sub-heading "Explore the hotspots on the cutaway or the bar on top to learn more about the new station." The page also includes a list of related resources such as PHOTO GALLERY, ILLUSTRATIONS (PDF), NEW STATION CUTAWAY, SUPPLY TRANSPORTATION, CHALLENGES, ALL PHOTO GALLERIES, ALL ILLUSTRATIONS, ALL VIDEOS, RELATED RESOURCES, and WEBCAM. A note at the bottom states: "These videos require the free RealPlayer plug-in." The page footer mentions that the new facility will replace the iconic domed facility built in 1975 and will mark two historic occasions: the 50th anniversary of the International Geophysical Year (IGY), when

NAGC recognizes the government's best in print, video, and multimedia presentations.

News From the Office of Legislative and Public Affairs

The Office of Legislative and Public Affairs (OLPA) media relations section recently hired six new public affairs specialists to better serve the NSF scientific community with its communication needs. The new specialists, along with their colleagues, will proactively seek out opportunities to publicize NSF-funded research and activities and also respond to scientists' needs for media training and other services. Each directorate has a public affairs specialist assigned to them and another specialist who will serve as a backup.

The OLPA web team, working with Web support contractor, Booz Allen, conducted a usability study of the NSF website. It was the first large-scale evaluation of site performance since the [redesigned site](#) was launched in 2005. Users representing four audience groups - - the research community, the legislative and policy community, media, and the general public - - participated in the testing. The study produced 44 findings, along with in-depth analysis and recommendations for site improvements such as visual organization of the NSF home page. Overall, customers believed that the website is well-designed and provides a wealth of information.

The web team also worked with the OIRM Division of Administrative Services to add *News From the Field* items to the content management system. These news briefs, based on news releases published by grantee institutions and other partners, provide the public with a new source of information about the results of NSF-supported research and education activities. *News from the Field* items are displayed in the [news section](#) of the website and also in the news sections of the relevant directorate, office and division websites.

Communications Awards

As part of NSF's continuing commitment to be informative and accountable to our stakeholders, customers and the public, NSF produces an annual report of its financial status and progress towards achieving performance goals.

This year, the Foundation received two prestigious communications awards for its 2005 and 2006 Performance Highlights Reports:

NSF's [FY 2005 Performance Highlights](#) received a Blue Pencil Award of Excellence from the National Association of Government Communicators. This is the second NAGC award that NSF has received for this report.



At the Vision Awards annual report competition, NSF received the League of American Communications Professionals Honors Award for its [2006 report](#).

NSF placed fifth among 65 government agencies with budgets of more than \$1 billion. In a field of more than 2,500 entrants, NSF placed in the top 16 percent. NSF is the only Federal agency to be honored by the league for its annual report for six consecutive years.



Together, the OLPA legislative affairs team and the Division of Information Systems have launched an automated award notification system for Congress. The system provides Congressional offices with electronic notifications of NSF awards granted in their state or district on the same day that the official research organization receives its notifications. To date, thousands of award notices have been sent via the system.

Outreach

Each academic year, the legislative affairs staff conducts eight to 10 workshops known as *NSF Days* at institutions of higher education around the country. These workshops focus on pre-award topics and target junior faculty and others beginning or restarting a research career. For the 2006-2007 academic year, *NSF Days* were held at the following institutions: University of Northern Colorado, Penn State Erie - The Behrend College, San Diego State University, Parkland College, Mississippi State University, Tulane University, Washington State University/Eastern Washington University, and Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Total attendance at these workshops was 1,588 from 232 institutions. Of these, 60 were research institutions, 107 were undergraduate institutions, 34 were community colleges, and 34 were other institutions, including local education administrations, independent research organizations, and businesses. Of the participants, 985 were from research institutions, 491 were from undergraduate institutions, 69 were from community colleges, 96 were from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 25 from Hispanic serving institutions, and 15 from other minority serving institutions. For the next academic year, the staff already has confirmed nine *NSF Days*, which will be held at a variety of colleges and universities across the country.

DGA Implements Portfolio Facilitation

To better support institutions, NSF has improved its approach to the award and administration of NSF grants and cooperative agreements. The Division of Grants and Agreements (DGA), which performs activities through presolicitation and award close-out, is now conducting its award and administration activities using identified points of contact under its Portfolio Facilitation Model.

Effective February 1, 2007, DGA provides three levels of support within each branch to assist in providing points-of-contact for each directorate and division, as well as cross-directorate activities. These efforts allow for early coordination between DGA and scientific directorates and divisions on all new programs and solicitations, thus, ensuring consistent use of appropriate business rules.

Each branch consists of a branch chief, two team leaders, two or three grant specialists who serve as portfolio facilitators, and two grant administrators. The new portfolio facilitator designation replaces the program liaison designation. Portfolio facilitators encompass the management of all activities related to the award and administration of grants and cooperative agreements within an assigned division. Administrators are assigned responsibility for a portfolio of specific divisions across their branch and serve as an additional point of contact for program inquiries. Additionally, team leaders are responsible for management of the day-to-day interactions between DGA and their assigned directorates. Team leaders also serve as the grants officer for mass approving all fast-track items and review all new cooperative agreements within their directorates.

The greater efficiency and consistency resulting from the use of the Portfolio Facilitation Model will not only improve internal NSF operations, but will also benefit the NSF awardee community. DGA rolled out Portfolio Facilitation by hosting an open house in March 2007 to introduce its customers in the NSF directorates to the “Faces of DGA.” Program staff in the NSF directorates was encouraged to come and meet their DGA portfolio facilitators. Initial indications are that program staff is gaining familiarity with our staff, which breeds an atmosphere of mutual trust. Identifying continued opportunities to mutually enlighten NSF staff fosters both outstanding science and business practices.

NSF Director Outlines Strategy for Transformative Research

For the last 18 months, transformative research has been the focus of discussions in several venues at NSF. At its May 2007 meeting, the National Science Board (NSB) issued a report entitled *Enhancing Support of Transformative Research at the National Science Foundation*, that requested the Foundation report back on activities to improve the recognition and support of transformative research proposals. The report defined transformative research as “research that has the capacity to revolutionize existing fields, create new subfields, cause paradigm shifts, support discovery and lead to radically new technologies.”

While the NSB was engaged in its deliberations leading up to the report, transformative research was also being discussed at all levels of the Foundation. The Assistant Directors and Division Directors focused on this topic at their retreats, while Program Officers helped identify potentially transformative research for the future and highlighted transformative research accomplishments resulting from previous awards. These discussions laid the foundation for the ideas that the NSF Director presented to the NSB at their August 2007 meeting.

In his response, Dr. Bement outlined an NSF strategy that included revising the Intellectual Merit review criterion and charging a working group to provide recommendations for facilitating transformative research at NSF, including developing the framework and implementation strategy for new funding mechanisms for urgent and early-concept research and suggestions for monitoring the impact. The working group, which is composed of representatives from each of the research directorates and offices, has been created and it is anticipated that the new funding mechanisms will be implemented by Spring 2008.

The revision of the Intellectual Merit review criterion, approved by the National Science Board in August, specifically included review of the extent to which a proposal also suggests and explores potentially transformative concepts. Effective October 1, 2007, the Grant Proposal Guide, as well as new funding opportunities issued after that date, will incorporate the revised new Intellectual Merit criterion. Necessary changes also will be made to NSF reviewer systems to incorporate the revised language. All proposals received after January 5, 2008, will be reviewed against the newly revised criterion.



Broadly Inclusive

Seeking and accommodating contributions from all sources while reaching out especially to groups that have been underrepresented; serving scientists, engineers, educators, students and the public across the nation; and exploring every opportunity for partnerships, both nationally and internationally.

Broadening Participation

Increasing Participation of Underrepresented Groups

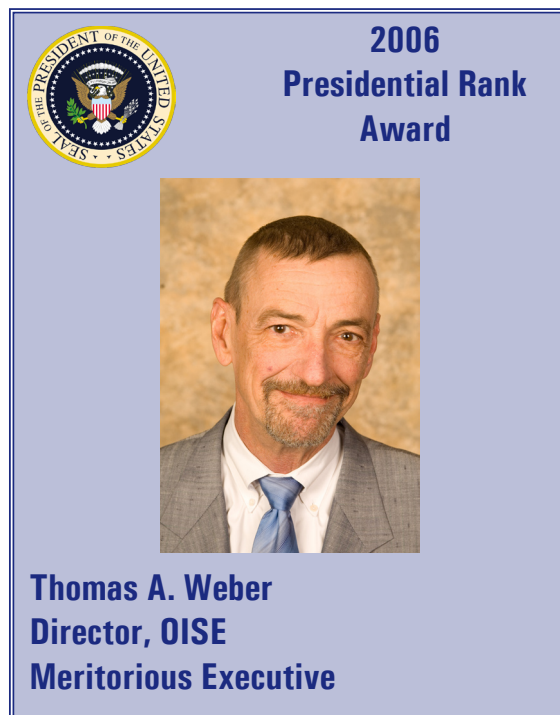
The goal of broadening participation of underrepresented groups in the sciences and engineering has long been a priority at NSF and is manifested in the 2006–2011 NSF Strategic Plan. In April 2007, a Broadening Participation Working Group was charged to develop a plan that addresses: (1) increasing the participation of underrepresented groups in NSF programs and activities, which includes defining existing baseline data; (2) increasing the representation of underrepresented groups in the pool of reviewers for NSF proposals; and (3) implementation of the above, including recommendations on prioritizing action steps. A representative from each Directorate and Office was tasked to be a member of the working group, which met weekly through July. A draft plan has been developed that sets forth comprehensive recommendations to increase participation in NSF programs from underrepresented groups.

CEOSE Looks to the Future

The *Committee on Equal Opportunities in Science and Engineering (CEOSE)* was established by Congress in 1980 to provide advice to NSF concerning (1) the implementation of the provisions of the Science and Engineering Equal Opportunities Act, and (2) other policies and activities of NSF to encourage women, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities to fully participate in scientific, engineering and professional fields. This committee continues to review the NSF policies, programs and activities pertinent to its mandate with the objective of making recommendations to NSF to improve these categories. It also meets with members of Congress to present its biennial report and to provide information on its activities relative to its mandate.

The mission of CEOSE is to:

- Expand interactions with NSF's research directorates and with scientific and engineering organizations to better understand the challenges, commonalities and differences in order to broaden participation faced by the diverse science and engineering fields funded by NSF.
- Continue its interactions with selected Federal agencies to promote interagency sharing of information and best practices.
- Implement mini-symposia, such as the CEOSE Mini-Symposium on Institutions Serving Persons with Disabilities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) that focus on selected aspects of the CEOSE mandate.



NSF Plays Pivotal Role in Research Grants Committees

Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP)

NSF has been an active participant in the *Federal Demonstration Partnership* (FDP) since its inception as the Florida Demonstration Partnership in 1986. FDP is now in its fourth phase and preparing for a fifth phase to begin in 2008. FDP is a cooperative initiative among key Federal research agencies and approximately 100 institutional recipients of Federal funds which range from major research universities to small, emerging research institutions. Its purpose is to reduce the administrative burdens associated with research grants and contracts and, in particular, to serve as a test bed for new procedures and policies.

NSF has relied on the FDP community for help implementing electronic signatures, improving the project reporting system and providing frank feedback on new policies. The interaction among university and Federal members takes place at periodic meetings in Washington DC and throughout the country and, more extensively, in the many collaborative working groups and task forces. FDP is a unique forum for individuals from universities and non-profits to work collaboratively with Federal agency officials to improve the national research enterprise. NSF is represented by a team of NSF staff including senior program officials as well as BFA and OIRM staff.

Grants Policy Committee (GPC)

NSF has continued to advance government-wide grants management issues through its leadership of key interagency committees charged with streamlining and implementing Federal grants policy and standards. NSF's Chief Financial Officer chairs the Grants Policy Committee of the U.S. Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Council, as well as the grants committee of the Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Task Force. GPC activities in FY 2007 placed special emphasis on outreach to the grants community, including universities, nonprofit organizations, states and local governments.

During this fiscal year, the GPC fulfilled its vision to do more outreach and be more inclusive of stakeholders' points of view by planning and executing three successful webcasts in October, March and June. All three webcasts exceeded expectations and garnered significant stakeholder participation and feedback. Webcast topics were guided by community interest and concern, and in the case of the March webcast, stakeholder representatives formally presented their concerns to the GPC.

NSF will continue to lead the Federal government in this regard. In FY 2008, we will continue building on the strategic planning that is in progress, and we will lead Federal grant-making agencies in this exercise, which is focused on grant policy streamlining, organizing additional webcasts, and continuing to guide government-wide FFATA activities. NSF's leadership on these issues gives the Foundation maximum input into the development of government-wide grants policy and allows us to ensure that those policies remain consistent and supportive of NSF's mission, core values, goals and objectives.

Journal Publications Citations Aids PIs

NSF launched many exciting new initiatives to continue to advance FastLane capabilities. For example, the new Publication Citations featured within FastLane's Project Reporting System (PRS) make it possible for Principal Investigators (PIs) to search a validated, third-party database for journal publications, and enable them to add journal citations to their project report with the click of a button. Since the launch of the Publication Citation feature at the end of June 2007:

- PIs have entered 12,282 publication citations via the new search function.
- The Award Search function has made over 78,000 citations available to the public.

In an effort to quickly and easily share research outcomes with the research community and the public, journal publications submitted by PIs as part of the project report, will be displayed on the NSF website as part of the Award Search.

New Diversity Management Seminar Rolled Out

The Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (OEOP) is responsible for ensuring equal opportunity in all phases of employment, delivery of services and administering of grants and contracts at NSF. The goals and mission of the Office are accomplished by maintaining effective programs for equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaint processing, alternative dispute resolution and training. All EEO complaints are promptly and thoroughly investigated and resolved through an impartial decision by the agency, which can be appealed through the proper channels. The Office offers alternative dispute resolution to resolve conflicts confidentially. EEO-related training is available online and in-person upon request.

On October 9, 2007, OEOP sponsored a Diversity Management Training Seminar for managers and supervisors; approximately 170 attended. One of the leading companies in the field of diversity training facilitated this seminar and provided valuable resources for managers and supervisors toolkits, including: recruitment, retention, community outreach, mentoring, and conflict resolution. OEOP will provide online diversity training, which all employees can access starting in 2008.



2007 NAGC Gold Screen Award

Presented to NSF for Best Use of Animation

NSF picked up a second place Gold Screen Award in the category of Best Use of Animation for *A Galactic Cataclysm*. The animated clip -- depicting star formation and based on research by astronomers using the Antarctic Submillimeter Telescope and Remote Observatory -- took second place.

****NAGC recognizes the government's best in print, video, and multimedia presentations.****



A Galactic Cataclysm
Every 20 million years or so, gas pours into the galactic center and sets off bursts of star formation. The larger stars soon go supernova, blasting the surrounding space and sterilizing it. NSF based this animation of such a cataclysm on research carried out by astronomer Antony Stark, using the Antarctic Submillimeter Telescope and Remote Observatory (AST / RO).

Credit: Trent Schindler, National Science Foundation



*Operating with integrity and transparency,
maintaining quality and relevance in
administration, management and oversight.*

Internal Controls Program Progresses

NSF has a fundamental responsibility to develop and maintain effective internal controls. These controls ensure proper stewardship of Federal resources by determining these resources are used efficiently and effectively to achieve the Foundation's mission. NSF conducts an annual review of these controls to support the assurances made by NSF's Director, which is reported in the *Performance and Accountability Report* (PAR). The report is submitted to the Office of Management and Budget and Congress.

The *Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA) of 1982* requires ongoing evaluations and reports of the adequacy of the systems of internal accounting and administrative control of each executive agency. FMFIA is implemented through Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-123: *Management's Responsibility for Internal Control (A-123)*. A-123 requires that each agency ensures compliance with laws and regulations, adequate controls over financial reporting, and efficiency and effectiveness of operations related to these issues.

A-123 guidance recommended establishing a senior assessment team to implement the requirements of the circular and a senior management council to provide oversight to the implementation process. In FY 2005, Dr. Arden Bement, Jr., the NSF Director, designated the Accountability and Performance Integration Council (APIC) as a senior assessment team. The council is chaired by Chief Financial Officer Thomas Cooley and reports to Chief Operating Officer Dr. Kathie L. Olsen. Dr. Olsen briefs the Senior Management Advisory Roundtable.

NSF is in the process of developing a plan to ensure our internal controls program is fully implemented by the end of FY 2008. NSF conducted training for the APIC Internal Controls Working Group, which is a sub-group representing APIC on the day-to-day implementation requirements, and individual business process owners who manage the key business functions.

NSF Receives Tenth Consecutive Clean Audit

NSF continues to receive clean audit opinions in its financial statements with no material weaknesses reported. In FY 2007, the Foundation received its tenth consecutive "clean opinion," maintaining its record of excellence in financial management. The post-award monitoring reportable condition was removed from the audit report and reduced to a management letter comment. This was the result of years of hard work by the Foundation in developing and strengthening its post-award monitoring program. NSF also made significant progress in closing the reportable condition on contract monitoring, which is now reflected as two significant deficiencies. NSF will strive to make significant progress to close these deficiencies during FY 2008. However, recent changes in auditing standards have increased the challenge to maintain a clean opinion by redefining internal control deficiencies. These changes in definition have widened the net to capture more weaknesses for reporting purposes.



**2006
Presidential Rank
Award**



**Thomas (Tim) Cross
Deputy Inspector General, OIG
Meritorious Executive**

Excellence in financial management enables NSF to pursue critical investments in science and engineering research and education that ultimately help ensure the nation's security, prosperity and well being. The Foundation plans to sustain its leadership in the government financial community and its "green" ratings of success in the President's Management Agenda. NSF has maintained its "green" from the initial baseline ratings in 2001 due to a proactive approach to financial challenges. In addition, NSF continues to score well on the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) audit, having received no significant deficiencies since 2003.

FFATA Task Force Solicits Citizen Feedback

On September 26, 2006, President Bush signed into law the *Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)*. This law, dubbed by some as "Google for Government Spending," requires the Federal government to create and maintain a publicly available online database containing information about entities that are awarded Federal grants, loans and contracts. The idea is to create an easy and accessible way for the public to learn how Federal agencies are spending their tax dollars. The theory is that transparency and accountability will allow the American people to have more confidence in the government, and that the database will deter frivolous and pork barrel spending.

There is little debate about the laudable goals and objectives of this legislation. But there is also little debate about the challenges it presents, and both government executives and watch dog organizations warn that adequate attention and requisite resources must be devoted to FFATA implementation issues, particularly in light of the short implementation deadlines set forth in the law. Recipients of Federal financial assistance must also adequately prepare for potential changes in reporting requirements and deadlines and for increased scrutiny that may result from having award information posted on an easily searchable website.

To ensure effective execution of requirements, OMB established an interagency taskforce and required each agency to appoint a senior level official to participate. The taskforce is committed to reaching out to the broadest possible spectrum of stakeholders who may be impacted by the FFATA. The taskforce has created a [website](#) where citizens can provide feedback on how they would like to see the FFATA implemented.

Post-Award Monitoring Keeps Advancing

Post-Award Administration

NSF continues to refine its post-award financial and administrative monitoring program. Within the last three years, BFA has established the Division of Institution and Award Support to lead the Agency's cradle-to-grave award administration efforts; significantly increased staff and contractor expertise specifically dedicated to post-award activities; and continued to incorporate government-wide best practices throughout its efforts. Through a combined set of activities (on-site reviews, business system reviews, desk reviews, transactional testing), NSF is confident in its ability to ensure exemplary stewardship of tax payer investment. Over the past several years we have worked diligently to develop a comprehensive and structured post-award monitoring program. The benefits of this program include the following:

- Using the sound and cost-beneficial approach of a risk assessment model allows us to focus monitoring resources on the 25% of NSF's awardees that manage 93% of the award dollars. In this way, we ensure stewardship over federal funding and manage burden on the community. We have used a mixed protocol of desk reviews, on-site visits, and financial transac-

tion testing that further targets the Foundation's resources in this endeavor.

- NSF now detects potential problems earlier in the award life cycle, and we can assist organizations in addressing deficiencies that impact their ability to adequately manage Federal funds and thus possibly avoid negative audit findings.
- With our more holistic perspective, we are able to mine monitoring results for "lessons learned" that help form both ours and the institutions' policies and practices around sound stewardship.

Our Award Monitoring and Business Assistance Program (AMBAP) is increasingly recognized as a standard of excellence across the Federal Government, consistent with the Foundation's reputation for first-class management. For example, (1) during our initial development of the AMBAP, NSF benchmarked other Federal agencies and found that nothing comprehensive existed; (2) during recent OMB Circular A-123 training conducted by OMB and a private sector CPA firm, the firm mentioned NSF's AMBAP as a "gold standard;" attendees included 60-80 people from various Federal and State entities, and several NSF staff; (3) NSF's financial statement auditors informed us that they have been advising other Federal clients to consider implementing a similar program for monitoring awards; and (4) a number of Federal agencies have benchmarked NSF.

Specific 2007 Achievements:

- Continued implementation and refinement of the AMBAP; the program provides disciplined and comprehensive post-award monitoring for NSF's high-risk and medium-risk awards. In FY 2007, staff conducted 22 AMBAP site visits; in addition, 115 desk reviews were completed and 38 are in progress, as of September 26, 2007.
- A database system was developed to enhance the tracking of post-award monitoring site visit and desk review activities.
- Submission of Indirect Cost Rate proposals from potential awardees has been streamlined.
- NSF's first, unified set of standard operating procedures for post-award monitoring now includes upgrades of site visit protocols and templates designed to elicit consistent and comprehensive information. The desk review protocol has been developed and implemented. Protocols for follow-up activities have been completed and are currently being implemented for both site visits and desk reviews.

Future Plans include, full implementation of the database and analytical tools, analysis of the survey feedback, and continued assessment and refinement of the AMBAP activities.



Financial Management Honors

Donald L. Scantlebury Memorial Award



Thomas Cooley (center), NSF's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), was one of two government senior finance executives honored at the Federal Financial Management Conference in Washington, D.C., on March 13, 2007, for spearheading agency and interagency financial management innovations.

Federal Financial Report

The Division of Financial Management (DFM) developed and implemented the NSF Federal Financial Report (FFR) as an optional grantee expenditure report. The FFR is a standard expenditure report intended to replace the SF 272 Federal Cash Transactions Report and SF 269 Financial Status Report for all Federal agencies. The FFR was launched in July 2007.

Approximately 10 percent of NSF grantees used the report in its first production quarter. Initial feedback indicated that users liked the enhanced navigation and improved functionality of the FFR. The FFR will serve as proof-of-concept for Federal adoption of the new form and represents the largest pilot implementation of the FFR by any Federal agency to date.



OMB Recognizes NSF as Top Agency in Enterprise Architecture

Enterprise Architecture (EA) is a description, or outline, of an organization's current and future business processes and information systems. EA is used to guide future information technology (IT) investments and to ensure that current IT investments comply with agency standards.

Beginning in 2004, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) initiated what has become an annual assessment of Federal agencies' enterprise architectures. The assessment is based on a framework developed by OMB to measure the maturity of an agency's EA program, and to determine how effectively EA is used in support of an agency's strategic objectives. During their latest assessment, OMB targeted three capability areas: (1) Completion of EA work products; (2) Use and integration of the EA with Information and Resource Management programs and IT management processes; and (3) Results achieved from the use of EA. The OMB EA assessment is a President's Management Agenda scorecard milestone.

In addition to being rated green in each of the three capability areas, NSF tied with Housing and Urban Development for the highest EA scores in the government. The **OMB assessment** validates that the Foundation has implemented and maintains a mature and effective EA program.

Project Reporting Enhancements

Enhancements to the FastLane Project Reporting System (PRS) went into effect in November 2006. The upgraded system:

- enforces the timely submission of annual and final project reports;
- incorporates reminder notices to principal investigators (PIs), co-principal investigators and sponsored projects offices;
- will block new funding and administrative actions on the award if there are overdue reports; and
- contains a journal publication search feature that makes it easier for PIs to report journal publications as part of annual and final project reports, to search a validated third-party database for journal publications, and to add journal citations to project reports with the click of a button.

More information on [FastLane](#) may be found on Inside NSF.

Security and Emergency Preparedness

NSF Plans for Emergency Events

In the event of a natural disaster or terrorist event, NSF must continue to support the research and education community by performing critical business functions. The Office of Information Resource Management (OIRM) staff perform a variety of activities “behind the scenes” to ensure that the Agency’s business functions would remain uninterrupted in the event of an emergency. The performance of these activities during an emergency is referred to as a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

The NSF director has designated more than 50 senior leaders as COOP Critical Personnel – those who would direct recovery efforts in a COOP situation. Anthony Arnolie, the director of OIRM, is the agency COOP coordinator. Within OIRM, the Division of Administrative Services is responsible for leading COOP operations; the Division of Information Systems manages IT service recovery activities; and the Human Resource Management Division ensures employee salaries are paid. BFA is also an important partner in ensuring that grantees get paid and outreach to grantee institutions is accomplished.

To ensure that COOP personnel know their responsibilities and to practice our emergency response effort, OIRM performs service recovery tests twice per year, one of which is combined with the annual COOP exercise. OIRM remains committed to testing NSF’s COOP capability regularly to ensure employees can all respond appropriately during a real emergency.



**2007
Presidential Rank
Award**



**Mary F. Santonastasso
Division Director, DIAS - BFA
Distinguished Executive**

New Employee Badges Issued - More to Come

In August 2004, the president signed *Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-12* requiring a mandatory, government-wide standard for secure and reliable forms of identification for all Federal employees and contractors. Last month, OIRM began issuing new photo identification cards, which will be used in conjunction with current NSF badges and will eventually replace the NSF identification badge. Cards were issued to staff stationed on the 12th floor and the process will continue in descending order by floor. Additional information on the [new photo identification badges](#) may be found on Inside NSF.

Security and Privacy Initiatives High Priority for NSF

Our strong and extensive IT Security and Privacy Program assures that NSF's infrastructure and its technology assets are appropriately protected, while maintaining an open and collaborative environment for scientific research and discovery.

In response to the increased need to prevent unauthorized disclosures and security breaches, many new and emerging government-wide mandates have been issued regarding security. NSF is working to implement these changes as seamlessly as possible. Some of our key initiatives to secure NSF's computing environment are highlighted below.

Security Awareness Training is one way NSF empowers its staff and contractors to help meet security mandates. Thanks to employee efforts, NSF achieved a 99.2 percent security awareness training completion rate (for employees stationed in Arlington). This fiscal year, updates were made to the training to reflect practical measures for:

- Protecting personal information;
- Safely handling portable media such as Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) and removable drives; and
- Safeguarding against malicious events and threats.

Another way NSF protects its IT assets is through improved network monitoring and security enforcement. Applications and devices that attempt to connect to the NSF network undergo extensive scanning to detect and fix irregularities. Applications connected to our network are subject to:

- Automated compliance checks to determine whether the device should be permitted on the NSF network;
- Automated desktop and server fixes and validation;
- Virus protection updates and checks to ensure virus protection capabilities are working properly; and
- "Real time" checks to prevent malicious network attacks.

As an additional security measure, NSF adopted standard security configurations for desktops, servers, operating systems and database platforms used throughout the Foundation. **These standard security configurations follow industry benchmarks established by the Center for Internet Security to improve out-of-the-box security and reduce risk from security threats and vulnerabilities.**

NSF fully recognizes the importance of protecting sensitive, personal information. We have taken a proactive and

risk-based approach to assessing safeguards around this type of information in our business applications. Our approach builds on a proven track record of success that balances the risk of loss of personal information with the impact to the individual and the Foundation. There are many controls in place to assure that personally identifiable information is treated appropriately.

During FY07, NSF implemented several measures to safeguard employee privacy. The IT division has assessed current safeguards, updated privacy policies, identified necessary investments and controls, and is developing near- and long-term plans for the implementation of additional controls. Over the last year, NSF greatly enhanced its privacy program through the following new policies:

- NSF Policy on Reporting the Breach of Personally Identifiable Information – Defines responsibilities and requirements related to addressing a suspected, or confirmed breach of personal information;
- NSF Policy on Encryption for Mobile Computing Devices – Addresses need to encrypt all data on portable computers and devices that carry NSF data;
- NSF Policy Regarding the Privacy of Sensitive Information – Discusses additional protective measures for personal information transported in electronic form;
- Publication of Sensitive Information Rules of Behavior – Provides NSF staff and contractors that have access to personal information with guidelines for handling that information; and
- Inclusion of sensitive information handling in NSF’s annual IT Security Awareness Training – Discusses topics such as physical handling, disclosure, need to know, and transport of sensitive information in electronic form.

Inclusion of the NSF Policy on Reporting the Breach of Personally Identifiable Information literature in new hire information packets educates new NSF staff on the significance of personal information and how it should be protected.

One of our key focus areas to further reduce the risk of personal information falling into the wrong hands is to **remove the use of Social Security Numbers (SSNs)** from NSF systems, where their use is not required. It began this effort with the FastLane system. Removal of the use of SSNs throughout FastLane consists of three phases:

- The first part of Phase One, released in August 2007, removed the collection of SSNs in all new FastLane registrations, removed the ability to select a Co-PI by using SSNs for FastLane proposal cover sheets, and introduced the term “NSF ID.”
- Subsequent phases will systematically replace the use of SSNs with an NSF ID in all processes, systems, and files where no business need exists to use it. Additionally, protection will be increased where SSNs must be used.

The success of our Security and Privacy Program can be attributed to NSF employees and their diligent attention and commitment to maintaining a secure computing environment. Thank you very much for your outstanding support this year and we ask for your continued support and cooperation when incorporating future security and privacy initiatives into your work environment.

Taking Care of Business

Large Facilities Manual

NSF publicly released the *Large Facilities Manual* in May 2007. This document defines, to NSF staff and research community advocates, a sequence of recommended steps for the planning and development, construction and operation of prospective new facilities. The *Large Facilities Manual* combines into a single reference document the material found in NSF's *Guidelines for Planning and Managing the MREFC Account* along with updated material from the *Facilities Management and Oversight Guide*.

Business Systems Review

The Business Systems Review (BSR) process was developed by BFA to provide compliance assistance to awardees, which are Federally Funded Research and Development Centers and other large facilities, so that they are better able to satisfy the portfolio of administrative standards set forth in 2 CFR Part 215 (formerly known as OMB Circular A-110, *Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Non-Profit Organizations*). The BSR was established as part of a corrective action plan for addressing the high risks associated with funding very large or complex projects. The BSR includes an assessment of business systems utilized by large facilities. Through a combination of desk and on-site reviews, these systems are evaluated to determine whether they meet NSF's expectations and follow-up support is provided to awardees when remediation is found to be necessary. Each large facility is subject to a BSR at least once per five-year award cycle. Approximately four BSR's are conducted each year under the direction of the Deputy Director for Large Facilities Projects and in coordination with program staff responsible for large facilities.



2007 NAGC Blue Pencil Award - First Place Presented to NSF for News Release

NSF's illustrated news story on the outbreak of an infectious disease and its devastating impact on *frog populations in central Panama* won NAGC's first place award in the Blue Pencil category for news releases.



NAGC recognizes the government's best in print, video, and multimedia presentations.

Contracting Manual

In July 2007, the Division of Acquisition and Cooperative Support (DACCS) issued the updated NSF *Contracting Manual* to refine and clearly establish a contract monitoring and oversight program. The revised manual provides internal guidance to implement requirements of the Federal Acquisition Regulation that are applicable to contracting or procurement. It includes a clear delineation of contracting personnel's roles and responsibilities regarding the DACCS oversight program.

Travel Card Guidance

During the past fiscal year the Division of Financial Management accomplished the following major milestones in managing the Foundation's Travel Charge Card Operation:

- Issued NSF Bulletin No. 07-02, which revises and updates NSF's *Government Travel Charge Card Information Guide*. The Guide details the policies and responsibilities associated with the use of the NSF issued Government Issued Travel Charge Card.
- Developed the *Travel Card Management Procedures Manual*. The manual details the procedures followed by DFM in managing NSF's Travel Charge Card Program.
- Developed and issued a *Travel Charge Card Customer Survey* to NSF personnel, employees and IPAs. The Division of Financial Management is in the process of completing a review and tabulation of the survey responses and will issue a report on the results of the survey in early FY 2008.

eTravel: FedTraveler

On July 20, 2007, the FedTraveler.com eTravel system became fully integrated with the NSF Financial Accounting System. This represents the culmination of many months of cooperation between staff and contractors within the Division of Administrative Services, BFA's Division of Financial Management, the Division of Information Systems, and Electronic Data Systems, the provider of eTravel services to NSF. The objective of the combined effort was to ensure the smooth processing of travel actions in the integrated system and to intensively test the system to identify and resolve potential problems. The team worked closely with pilot participants in OIRM, BFA, and the Directorates for Engineering and Biological Sciences to evaluate and incorporate feedback, which showed that participants found the processing of documents to be faster and easier in the new, integrated system.

The integrated FedTraveler and the Financial Accounting System offers a number of advantages and represents significant progress in the end-to-end processing of NSF travel. These advantages include:

- elimination of numerous paper processes;
- elimination of the need to manually enter social security numbers in travel documents;
- electronic processing of expense report receipts and other attachments;
- automatic obligation of travel funds when travel plans receive final approval; and
- electronic transmission of expense reports to the Division of Financial Management.

Work continues between the electronic data systems and NSF to improve the *eTravel* system and achieve the electronic processing of a few remaining paper documents.

Documenting International Implications

Accurate information about international activities is important for all NSF directorates and offices, in addition to the Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE), since such activities are funded across NSF. More than 80 percent of FY 2006 awards with international implications reported were managed outside OISE. International activity data is collected on NSF proposals and awards in several ways: during submission, internal award processing, and subsequent project reports. However, the collected information is often incomplete, making analysis and use of the data difficult or impossible.


During FY 2007, an OISE working group proposed revision to international implications screens within the Electronic Jacket and Proposal Approval Routing System as a first step in improving international data collection. For every award, program staff will be required to answer either “Yes” or “No” to the question “Any Foreign or International Activity?” If an award includes international activity, two follow-on questions must be answered on location and student involvement. The Senior Management Advisory Roundtable approved this revision in July 2007.

OISE continues to work with the Division of Information Systems towards implementation of the revised data collection screens in early 2008.


NSF Reaches Out

In FY 2007, the Division of Institution and Award Support (DIAS) Policy Office conducted a number of **outreach** sessions. As part of its outreach activities, the Policy Office held two NSF Regional Grants Conferences. These ongoing conferences are held throughout the country, and allow faculty and sponsored project administrators from many institutions to attend a two-day comprehensive overview of the Foundation where all NSF Directorates are represented. NSF representatives from OISE, the Office of the General Counsel, and the Office of Inspector General regularly attend. Topics include: the state of current funding; new and current policies and procedures; and pertinent administrative issues. The Fall 2006 conference was held in College Park, Maryland; the Spring 2007 conference was held in Oklahoma City. In FY 2008, the first NSF Regional Grants Conference was held in Portland, Oregon, and the second will be held in Providence, Rhode Island.

In addition to these general conferences, the Policy Office, with support from the NSF Office of the Director, has conducted focused outreach events for specific types of institutions. This has included conferences focusing on the needs of Tribal Colleges and Universities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), as well as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). Workshop participants attend at the invitation of NSF. In fiscal year 2007, the Policy Office held two workshops for HSI institutions in Miami, FL, and in Albuquerque, NM. Plans for FY 2008 include a workshop for Tribal Colleges and Universities.



**2007
Presidential Rank
Award**



John W. Lightbody
Deputy Assistant Director, MPS
Distinguished Executive

Good Ethics is Good Business

The purpose of the “ethics in Government” program is to ensure that decisions made by executive branch employees are neither tainted by nor appear to be tainted by any question of conflicts of interest on the part of the employees. Because the integrity of decision making is fundamental to every government program, the head of each agency selects an employee to serve as the Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO). The DAEO, along with the Deputy Ethics Official, manages the ethics program which includes financial disclosure, **conflict of interest (COI) training**, and advice and counsel.

The NSF DAEO is **Karen Santoro** and the NSF Deputy Ethics Official is **Robin Fritsch**. They may be contacted at (703) 292-8060. In addition, each Division has a Conflicts Official.

Employees who file financial disclosure reports are required to attend annual COI training but all employees are encouraged to attend; see the schedule for COI training. The Office of the General Counsel has established an on-line COI training course which covers the areas of misuse of position and political activities. It is available on the **AcademyLearn website**.



NSF Receives 2007 NAGC Award of Excellence for Audio/Public Service Announcement

The Discovery Files, a series of one-minute radio spots and podcasts covering NSF-supported research, garnered an NAGC Award of Excellence in the Audio/Public Service Announcement program category.



NAGC recognizes the government's best in print, video, and multimedia presentations.

NSF Employees Embrace Telework

NSF has had a “flexiplace” policy in effect since 1996. Then in 2004, with the support of the Office of the Director, and after successful negotiations with AFGC Local 3403 (the union representing more than 60 percent of NSF employees) a new telework policy was adopted. Under this policy, all NSF employees are eligible for telework, provided that they meet the required criteria.

Every teleworker is required to have a Telework Agreement in place. The teleworker may request to be a “core” teleworker, having a regular and recurring telework day of one day per week or more; a “situational” teleworker, having an occasional, non-routine work at home schedule; or both “core and situational.”

OPM’s *A Guide to Telework in the Federal Government* states that agencies may, at their own discretion, define the use and types of telework that best fits their business needs. Telework is not an employee right. Federal law requires agencies to have telework programs in place, but does not give individual employees a legal right to telework. An employee’s supervisor must approve of the arrangement.

Statistics from July 2007 show that NSF has 793 telework agreements on file, which represents 57 percent of the employee population. Of those, 580 agreements are for “situational” telework while 213 are for “core” or “core and situational” arrangements. NSF’s statistics compare extremely favorably to OPM’s government-wide statistics for FY 2005, which indicated that only 6.6 percent of Federal employees teleworked one day per month or more.

More information on [Teleworking](#) may be found on Inside NSF.

Moving Forward

For over 50 years, NSF has been a steward of the nation’s science and engineering enterprise. It is clear, however, that the Foundation’s success would not be possible without the commitment and dedication of its employees.

Thank you for your service. As we move forward, we look forward to exploring the boundaries of discovery - - together.

NSF Voted One of Six Top Federal Agencies



“In the end, our Great Places to Work all scored very well on flexible schedules, good pay and benefits, employee development, interesting work, employee recognition, supportive managers, open communication, and collegial staffs.”

Washingtonian, November 2007

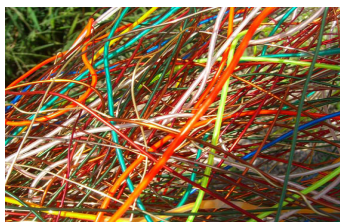
Acronyms

AC/GPA	Advisory Committee for GPRA Performance Assessment	FMLoB	Financial Management Line of Business
AFS	Administrative Functions Study	GMLoB	Grants Management Line of Business
AMBAP	Award Monitoring and Business Assistance Program	GPC	Grants Policy Committee
APIC	Accountability and Performance Integration Council	HRM	Division of Human Resource Management
		HSPD-12	Homeland Security Presidential Directive-12
BFA	Office of Budget, Finance, and Award Management	IPAMM	Impact of Proposal and Award Management Mechanisms
BSR	Business Systems Review	IPY	International Polar Year
CAR	Customer Account Representative	LACP	League of American Communications Professionals
CEOSE	Committee on Equal Opportunities in Science and Engineering	MREFC	Major Research Equipment and Facility Construction
CIO	Chief Information Officer	NAGC	National Association of Government Communicators
COI	Conflicts of Interest	NSB	National Science Board
COOP	Continuity of Operations Plan	NSF	National Science Foundation
CSREES	US Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service	OEOP	Office of Equal Opportunity Programs
DACS	Division of Acquisition and Cooperative Support	OIRM	Office of Information Resource Management
DAEO	Designated Agency Ethics Official	OISE	Office of International Science and Engineering
DAS	Division of Administrative Services	OLPA	Office of Legislative and Public Affairs
DFM	Division of Financial Management	OPM	Office of Personnel Management
DGA	Division of Grants and Agreements	PAPP	Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures
DIAS	Division of Institution and Award Support	PAR	Performance and Accountability Report
DIS	Division of Information Systems	PART	Performance Assessment Rating Tool
EA	Enterprise Architecture	PDA	Personal Digital Assistant
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity	PIs	Principal Investigators
EIS	Enterprise Information System	PRS	Project Reporting System
FDP	Federal Demonstration Partnership	SPWG	Succession Planning Working Group
FFATA	Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (P.L. 109-282)	SSNs	Social Security Numbers
FFR	Federal Financial Report	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
FHCS	Federal Human Capital Survey	WRAPS	Workforce Recruitment and Planning System
FISMA	Federal Information Security Management Act		
FMFIA	Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA) of 1982		

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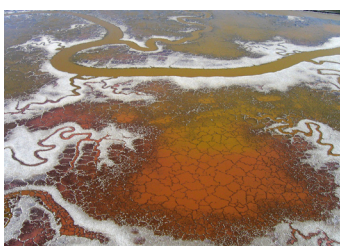
p. 3, 4 & 5
Credit: Gemini Observatory



p. 3, 4 & 12
Credit: Sensation: Interior View by Nancy Cohen, Jim Sturm, Shirley Tilghman, A.R. Willey; Edward Greenblat, photographer



p. 3, 4 & 19
Credit: Jim Laundre, Arctic LTER Credit: ©Charles C. Benton, UC Berkeley



p. 3, 4 & 23
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External Web Resources

2006 Performance Highlights Report (p. 2, 16)

http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf0711

AC/GPA Report on GPRA (p.9)

<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2007/nsf07207/nsf07207.pdf>

Report to the NSB on NSF's Merit Review Process (p.9)

http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/documents/2007/2006_merit_review.pdf

NSB Report on NSF Merit Review Process (p.9)

http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/documents/2005/0930/merit_review.pdf

Merit Review - External Web Page (p.9)

<http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/meritreview/index.jsp>

The Secret Lives of Wild Animals (p.10)

http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/animals/index.jsp

IPAMM Final Report (NSF 07-45) (p.11)

http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2007/nsf0745/nsf0745_1.pdf

IPAMM Web Page (p.11)

<http://www.nsf.gov/od/ipamm/ipamm.jsp>

PAPP Guide (p.13)

http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=papp

Research.gov (p.15)

<https://www.research.gov>

September 2007 Research.gov Presentation (p.15)

http://www.thefdp.org/Present_5_Sept_2007.pdf

U.S. South Pole Station in Antarctica (p.15)

http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/livingsouthpole/index.jsp

NSF Website (p.16)

www.nsf.gov

NSF Website News Section (p.16)

<http://www.nsf.gov/news/>

NSF FY 2005 Performance Highlights (p. 16)

<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2006/nsf0602/NSF-06-02.pdf>

Enhancing Support of Transformative Research at the National Science Foundation (p.18)

http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/documents/2007/tr_report

Committee on Equal Opportunities in Science and Engineering (CEOSE) (p.20)

<http://www.nsf.gov/od/oia/activities/ceose/index.jsp>

Federal Demonstration Partnership (p.21)

<http://www.thefdp.org/>

A Galactic Cataclysm (p.22)

http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/livingsouthpole/station_new.jsp#galactic

Performance and Accountability Report (p.24)

http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=par

Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (p.24)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/financial/fm-fia1982.html>

Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (p.25)

http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/grants_news.jsp

Interagency Taskforce Website on FFATA (p.25)

<http://www.federalspending.gov/comments/comments.do>

Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) - 12 (p.29)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/08/20040827-8.html>

Large Facilities Manual (p.31)

<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2007/nsf0738/nsf0738.pdf>

Frog Populations in Central Panama (p.31)

http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=105788

DIAS Outreach (p.33)

<http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/outreach.jsp>

Conflict of Interest Training (p.34)

<http://www.nsf.gov/od/ogc/coi.jsp>

The Discovery Files (p.34)

http://www.nsf.gov/news/mmg/mmg_search_list.cfm?CFID=440824&CFTOKEN=66037728&jessionid=3e302936091195334361366

Internal Web Resources

Hiring Managers Tool Kit (p.7)

http://www.inside.nsf.gov/oirm/hrm/general_information/recruitment_tool/index.jsp

Administrative Functions Study (AFS) (p. 13)

<http://www.inside.nsf.gov/oirm/hrm/wpab/afs/index.jsp>

OMB Assessment of NSF Enterprise Architecture (p.27)

https://wiki.nsf.gov/wiki/index.php/Enterprise_Architecture

FastLane (p.28)

<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/fastlane.jsp>

New Federal Identification Badge (p.29)

<http://www.inside.nsf.gov/hspd12/index.jsp>

Removal of Use of Social Security Numbers (p.30)

http://www.inside.nsf.gov/oirm/dis/hot_topics/ssn.jsp

NSF Contracting Manual (p.32)

http://infoshare.nsf.gov/viewDocumentDetails.do?docKey=contract_manual

NSF Government Travel Charge Card Informaiton Guide (p.32)

http://www.inside.nsf.gov/travel/travel_procedures/staff_travel/card.jsp

eTravel (p.32)

<http://www.inside.nsf.gov/travel/>

AcademyLearn (p.34)

<http://www.inside.nsf.gov/oirm/hrm/academy/index.jsp>

Teleworking (p.35)

<http://www.inside.nsf.gov/oirm/hrm/lmr/telework/index.jsp>

Other Helpful Web Resources:

Office of Budget, Finance, and Award Management

<http://www.inside.nsf.gov/bfa/>

Office of Information and Resource Management

<http://www.inside.nsf.gov/oirm/>

Presidential Rank Awards

<https://www.opm.gov/ses/presrankaward.asp>