

Message from the Director



I am pleased to present the National Science Foundation's Annual Performance Report for Fiscal Year 2001, as required by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA).

That law requires federal agencies to set clear goals and to explain what they have done to meet them. Again this year, NSF demonstrates a record of solid progress toward some of the most formidable challenges a government organization has ever set for itself. These include raising nationwide achievement in science and engineering, achieving processing electronically all proposals, and ensuring that America has a globally competitive and diverse workforce.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, the stakes for our investments could not be higher. The future of America – indeed the future of the world – is more dependent upon advances in science and technology than ever before. An inspired science and engineering community is focused on ensuring not just our security, but also our very quality of life. We well remember that our national security includes the condition of our spirit as much as the size of our arsenal, and we are heartened by the echo of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's words in his secret letter to Robert Oppenheimer in 1943: "Whatever the enemy may be planning, American science will be equal to the challenge."

We continue to meet this challenge today as we pursue our principal objectives – enabling discoveries at the frontiers of science and engineering, and encouraging significant improvement in the quality and scope of math, science and engineering education. Once again, the entire world acknowledged the fruits of those efforts. Of the 11 winners of 2001 Nobel Prizes in the sciences, eight had been funded by NSF grants.

Across the science and engineering frontiers, research progresses in ways that may culminate in discoveries this year, next year or in the next decade. This intrinsic uncertainty makes it more difficult for NSF to assess its overall achievements on a year-to-year basis. Nonetheless, the GPRA goals constitute a valuable set of benchmarks, and NSF is proud of its FY 2001 results.

The Foundation has set extremely high standards for success. This is what our tradition of excellence demands, and what taxpayers deserve. This year, we succeeded in realizing 15 of our 23 goals, and for most of the goals we did not meet, we demonstrated measurable improvement over last year's results. You will find a full description of our performance results in this report,

results that draw upon data that are complete and reliable. Because we are also committed to the highest standards of management integrity, we will continue to improve our data collection efforts and management processes.

NSF remains committed to the highest standards of management effectiveness and administrative integrity as we seek to provide science and engineering outcomes of major significance and widespread benefit to the nation. We look forward to an even more successful year in FY 2002.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rita R. Colwell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

*Rita R. Colwell,
Director*