

Backgrounder: Fall 2017
NSF Advisory Committee for Business and Operations

Nature of Agenda Item: Renewing NSF

Presentation:

On April 12, 2017, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released [Memorandum M-17-22](#), titled “Comprehensive Plan for Reforming the Federal Government and Reducing the Federal Civilian Workforce,” for all executive departments and agencies. The memorandum instructed agencies to submit Agency Reform Plans to OMB as part of their FY 2019 budget submissions. In developing these plans, agencies were asked to consider their roles and responsibilities, what activities they should perform, and how to improve their existing business processes.

In a memo to staff shortly afterward, Dr. Córdova emphasized that this Memorandum constitutes an important opportunity to think deeply and critically about how we as an organization could transform to support and sustain NSF’s long-term research agenda. While the FY 2019 budget process is ongoing, NSF is committed to taking advantage of this opportunity. Specifically, following an agency-wide brainstorming process in spring 2017 that resulted in over 200 suggestions contributed by NSF staff, four broad areas contributing to renewing and re-imagining the agency’s future emerged:

- Making information technology work for us;
- Adapting the NSF workforce to our current and future work;
- Expanding public and private partnerships; and
- Streamlining, standardizing, and simplifying programs and processes.

NSF is now planning to establish a steering group and multiple working groups that will help shape activities in these areas, including effectively engaging all NSF staff, communicating to external stakeholders, and rigorously measuring performance and long-term impact on NSF’s mission.

Committee Action/Feedback:

NSF seeks advice and perspective on how to ensure NSF moves forward effectively on the four broad areas identified above. Specifically:

- Re: the implementation strategy: What are the committee’s thoughts on the implementation strategy, notably a steering group overseeing multiple working groups? How does this strategy relate to past successful efforts in other federal and non-federal contexts?
- Re: how to engage the workforce: What are the committee’s thoughts on how to quickly and effectively engage staff across all levels of the Foundation, particularly as we ramp up our efforts in the four broad areas described above? What lessons are to be learned from past successful efforts in other federal and non-federal contexts?

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