

National Science Foundation
Advisory Committee for Business and Operations
Fall 2017 Meeting

December 6-7, 2017
Room E 2030

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

1:00 pm **Welcome/Introductions/Recap**

Co-Chairs: Chuck Grimes and Susan Sedwick

1:15 pm **BFA/OIRM/OLPA/Budget Updates**

Presenters: Teresa Grancorvitz, BFA, Joanne Tornow, OIRM; and Amanda Greenwell, OLPA

1:45 pm **Subcommittee on NSF's Strengthened Oversight of Large Facility Cost Surveillance**

At our Spring 2017 Advisory Committee meeting we recommended formation of a subcommittee on NSF End-to-End Cost Surveillance. The purpose of the Subcommittee is to use its members' in-depth knowledge of project management cost estimating and cost accounting, to evaluate NSF's strengthened policies and procedures relating to cost estimating, cost monitoring oversight and end-to-end cost surveillance.

This review came about because in January 2015, as part of the resolution of several of audit recommendations in connection with NSF's oversight of Large Facility Awards, the agency's Chief Operating Officer and Audit Resolution Follow-up Official noted that NSF has begun to strengthen cost estimating and cost monitoring oversight procedures and called for increased end-to-end cost surveillance policies and procedures. The COO committed the agency to inviting a qualified third-party organization to review NSF procedures once implemented. The subcommittee will prepare a report for the Committee that will evaluate NSF's current cost surveillance policies and procedures to ensure that they are sufficient to ensure sound, end-to-end oversight of all NSF Large Facility construction and operations awards.

NSF constituted the subcommittee with members who were recommended by the Committee and NSF staff. The subcommittee held an initiating conference call on Monday, October 23, 2017. Its first in-person meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 18, 2017. The subcommittee will conclude its work by June 2018.

Presenter: Kim Moreland

2:15 pm **Break**

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Shared Services: Best Practices and Case Studies

The goal of shared services solutions is to efficiently aggregate resources and systems to improve the quality, timeliness, and cost effectiveness of service delivery to customers. In the federal government, there has been a good deal of discussion about the potential of these solutions, as well as the risks. These conversations occur on multiple levels, including system-wide solutions across multiple agencies, business process or task-level solutions and whether such solutions should be mandatory. NSF is highly motivated to seek solutions that would increase efficiency and reduce staff workload and associated costs.

As NSF strategically manages its business infrastructure in this still-maturing shared-services environment, the agency must consider its options regarding what to choose, how to evaluate and what to expect. The agency, therefore, values advice from others' experiences with shared services at other levels of government and other types of institutions (e.g. universities, non-profits and private organizations).

Committee Action/Feedback:

NSF asks BOAC members to share their respective organizations' successes and challenges with shared services, both as providers and as customers. In hearing these examples, NSF seeks advice regarding:

- Best practices and lessons learned relating to shared services;
- Better understanding of the drivers pushing organizations towards shared services and how they may or may not align with organizational priorities;
- Useful resources (e.g. guidance, training, learning communities) for selecting, planning, and implementing shared services;
- Enhancing our understanding of the characteristics of processes/functions that lend themselves to shared services (at multiple levels);
- Enhancing our understanding of the characteristics of processes/functions that do not lend themselves to shared services (at multiple levels).

Presenter: Theresa Pardo

Discussant: Adam Goldberg

3:15 pm

Preparation for Meeting with Dr. Ferrini-Mundy

3:30 pm

Meeting with Dr. Ferrini-Mundy

4:30 pm

Break

4:45 pm

Tour of Alexandria Headquarters

Tour Guide: Brian MacDonald

5:30 pm

Adjourn

6:30 pm

Dinner – Delia's

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Thursday, December 7, 2017

8:00 am **Update: Committee on Equal Opportunities in Science and Engineering (CEOSE)**

Update on CEOSE activities

Presenter: Alicia Knoedler

8:15am **Strategic Coordination of NSF's Participation and Outreach with External Organizations**

NSF views its public outreach to the research community as fundamental to fulfilling its mission and accomplishes this by leveraging relationships with external organizations. The Foundation conducts this kind of outreach on many different levels. For example:

- Office of Legislative and Public Affairs sponsors NSF Days, which instruct researchers how to better compete for NSF funding,
- NSF's Policy Office within BFA's Division of Institution and Award Support is responsible for outreach activities to educate the research and administration communities about current and evolving policies related to proposal preparation, merit review and the effective management of NSF awards; and
- BFA's Division of Financial Management, Cash Management Branch conducts outreach to enhance grantees' understanding of Federal Financial management and the NSF cash management process.

The BOAC will hear a five-minute overview from three NSF experts in outreach. They will share how, when and where NSF conducts to the research community, including a description of their outreach strategy.

Committee Action/Feedback:

The Foundation seeks advice from the Committee on considering opportunities that may exist to leverage our existing activities to develop an interconnected strategy supporting both the research community and effective use of NSF resources (e.g. staff, budget and internal agency tools and facilities).

Specifically, NSF asks the Committee to consider the following with respect to our outreach to the research community:

- Should NSF create a way to document and share the agency's overarching outreach enterprise both internally and externally?
- Is NSF making effective use of its opportunities to conduct outreach? Are there additional prioritization strategies to consider?
- How should we manage the demand on staff time required to conduct outreach?
- Is NSF effectively using virtual technologies for outreach?

Presenter: Teresa Grancorvitz, BFA; Panelists: Kimberly Nelson, OLPA, Jeremy Leffler, BFA/DIAS, John Sholhead, BFA/DFM

Discussant: Rachel Levinson

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9:15 am **Break**

9:30 am **Renewing NSF**

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?

Presenter: Erwin Gianchandani, NSF

Discussants: John Kamensky and Joe Thompson

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10:15 am **Results from 2017 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and Maximizing Employee Performance**

NSF has received its 2017 FEVS results. NSF continues to enjoy a very high participation rate by staff, well above the government average, and scores in most areas rank among the top federal agencies. As reflected in NSF's FEVS scores on topics such as supervisor feedback, recognition, and communicating performance expectations, the employee performance management culture at NSF has shown continuous improvement over the last five years. While we have steadily improved and have strong FEVS scores in these areas, there is always room for reflection and improvement.

In the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-17-22, the White House has required that each federal agency develop a Plan to Maximize Employee Performance. NSF prepared a response to address the five items required by OMB, as they relate to enhancing our performance culture by increasing employee engagement and accountability. OMB approved NSF's plan in late July 2017.

Following OMB's approval, our plan was shared in leadership briefings and employee focus groups to gather internal feedback on all aspects of the plan. This feedback will be incorporated into the implementation of significant changes, to include performance and conduct policy revisions and enhancements to our employee training and guidance in these areas. Implementation of required items is to be completed by October 2018.

Our improvement efforts will also incorporate insights from our FEVS results.

Committee Action/Feedback:

- How do we ensure employee engagement in the planning efforts?
- How do we evaluate the effectiveness of our planning efforts?

Presenter: Joanne Tornow, OIRM and Dianne Campbell, OIRM

Discussant: John Palguta and Jan Jones

11:15 am **Break**

11:30 am **Committee Business/Wrap Up**

12:00 pm **Adjourn**