

**National Science Foundation**  
**Advisory Committee for Business and Operations**  
Spring 2020 Virtual Meeting

June 29, 2020  
Zoom

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**Monday, June 29, 2020**

1:00 pm

**Welcome/Introductions/Recap**

*Co-Chairs: Chuck Grimes and Pamela Webb*

1:15 pm

**Updates: Annual Conflicts of Interest; BFA; OIRM; Budget/OLPA**

*Presenters: Teresa Grancorvitz, BFA; Wonzie Gardner, OIRM; Caitlyn Fife, BFA; Amanda Greenwell, OLPA*

1:45 pm

**Understanding the Top Five Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the National Research Community and the NSF Response**

*Presenters: Keith Boyea, BFA; Alex Wynnyk, BFA*

*Panel: Sylvia James, EHR; Steve Meacham, OIA; Joanne Tornow, BIO*

*Discussants: David Mayo, Kim Moreland, Pamela Webb*

The rapid outbreak of COVID-19 has had a tremendous impact on the way research institutions are conducting their daily business. With some exceptions, research institutions/facilities have severely curtailed their research activities to reduce the risk of faculty, staff, and students to COVID-19. This rapidly evolving and highly unusual interruption of research and related loss of operations has challenged the viability of the research enterprise.

During these unprecedented times, institutions and individuals funded on grants and other mechanisms faced many unknowns and uncertainties. For example, how do you determine allowability of certain costs (e.g., effort reporting, travel, conferences) and compensation challenges while ensuring safety of the research community and accountability of federal funds? How do you conduct audits based on rapidly emerging policies/guidance exceptions, such as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136)?

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, NSF was open for business working quickly and collaboratively across NSF directorates/divisions, as well as very closely with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the research community, and other grant-making partners in assessing the situation. NSF received \$76 million in 2020 to support NSF's ongoing RAPID grant response to coronavirus. NSF developed new policies, procedures, mechanisms and issued timely guidance in response to NSF's Implementation of OMB Memorandum M-20-20 and OMB Memorandum M-20-17 and the CARES Act. Many administrative flexibilities were put in place by NSF for research to continue while keeping its workforce and researchers safe while furthering the fight against COVID-19 on behalf on the American public. For more information, see: [nsf.gov/coronavirus](https://www.nsf.gov/coronavirus).

**Presentation:**

NSF's immediate responses to the pandemic have been focused on working with our awardees providing them near-term policy guidance in the areas of grants, cooperative agreements and contracts. The Foundation has also used existing mechanisms to fund dozens of research projects on COVID-19 to mobilize the scientific community to better understand and develop measures to respond to the virus.

As our response to the crisis progresses, NSF can benefit from BOAC advice, particularly hearing directly from committee members on the top five impacts of COVID-10 on the researcher community, at least in the near-term and medium-term future. Understanding longer-term impacts is also important, although we recognize that COVID-19 related-issues are dynamic and rapidly evolving.

This session will include:

- An NSF overview of our COVID-19 related responses to date, including how NSF has worked with our grantee, facilities and contractor communities.

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- Joanne Tornow, AD in the BIO Directorate and Sylvia James and Steve Meacham, co-chairs of the Research Recovery Planning Task Force, will also provide program's perspectives on COVID-19 impacts and the agency response to date.
- Feedback from the FDP or COGR meetings where some conversations have taken place broadly across disciplines and with the research administration community.
- Insight from BOAC members listing the top 5 COVID-19 impacts affecting their institutions in the short and medium term as context for NSF as the agency progresses into out next phases of COVID-19 response. Insight/projections on the long-term outlook are welcome.

This session may serve as a prelude for a future BOAC meeting where we can examine our "lessons learned" and what we might choose to do differently if there were to be a future crisis. Given the scope of the COVID-19 crisis, the session may also serve as a Part I to an ongoing conversation on understanding the impacts.

**Committee Action/Feedback:**

1. What are the top five COVID-19 impacts on federal and NSF grant awards, sponsored activities at research institutions? Short term (pandemic inception to the start of fall semester), medium term (~18 months after that) and, if relevant, long term?
2. What were the major impacts on researchers and faculty (including early-career faculty), administrators, postdoc researchers/students as a result of on severely curtailed research and related activities due to COVID-19?
3. What was the impact and what measures were put in place for institutional operations to quickly shut down and then safely restart laboratory research and other related activities?
4. How has the NSF response addressed the impacts to date and what future needs are anticipated?

2:30 pm

**Break**

2:45 pm

**Understanding the Top Five Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the National Research Community and the NSF Response (continued)**

3:30 pm

**Enterprise Risk Management in the COVID-19 Environment**

*Presenter: Mike Wetklow, BFA*

*Discussant: Larry Koskinen*

NSF's Data Analytics & Assurance Program (DAAP) supports the NSF mission by:

- Dealing with the proliferation of data;
- Leveraging artificial intelligence and automation;
- Managing and reducing the cost of compliance efforts; and
- Building even stronger organizations.

As with all NSF efforts and operations, the focus of the DAAP shifted as the agency worked through the COVID-19 response and started looking ahead to recovery planning and transformation for increased resiliency. The DAAP team, working in concert with the NSF Risk Captains Community of Interest, identified an opportunity for NSF to leverage and expand Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) in its day-to-day decision making to better respond to the significant risk presented by the COVID-19 outbreak and position the agency to identify and address other "black swan" risk events in the future. ERM can help NSF pinpoint the most valuable business drivers; identify, prioritize, and respond to challenges triggered by COVID-19; and assess damage and rebuild for the future.

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**Committee Action/Feedback**

1. Do you have feedback on NSF's approach to ERM and / or COVID-19 considerations?
2. What lessons learned or best practices have you seen in practice during COVID-19 that might benefit our organization?
3. Have you encountered successful approaches to collaborating with universities and grantees to manage the impacts of COVID-19 that you would recommend to NSF?
4. Do you have any additional suggestions about how NSF can use ERM to leverage / integrate the results of its COVID-19 crisis management efforts?

4:30 pm

**Preparation for Meeting with Dr. Droegemeier and Dr. Crim/Break**

4:45 pm

**Meeting with Dr. Droegemeier and Dr. Crim**

5:30 pm

**Adjourn**

