PO Seminar
Japan Science and Technology Agency

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National Science Foundation

NSF Program Officer – a Definition

Professional scientists and engineers with a Ph.D. or equivalent experience in an appropriate field of science or engineering whose primary responsibility is to manage NSF's science, engineering and education funding programs

"Program Officer" includes:

- Program Director
- Assistant and Associate Program Director
- Program Manager
- Assistant and Associate Program Manager
- Project Manager

NSF Program Officer – Origin

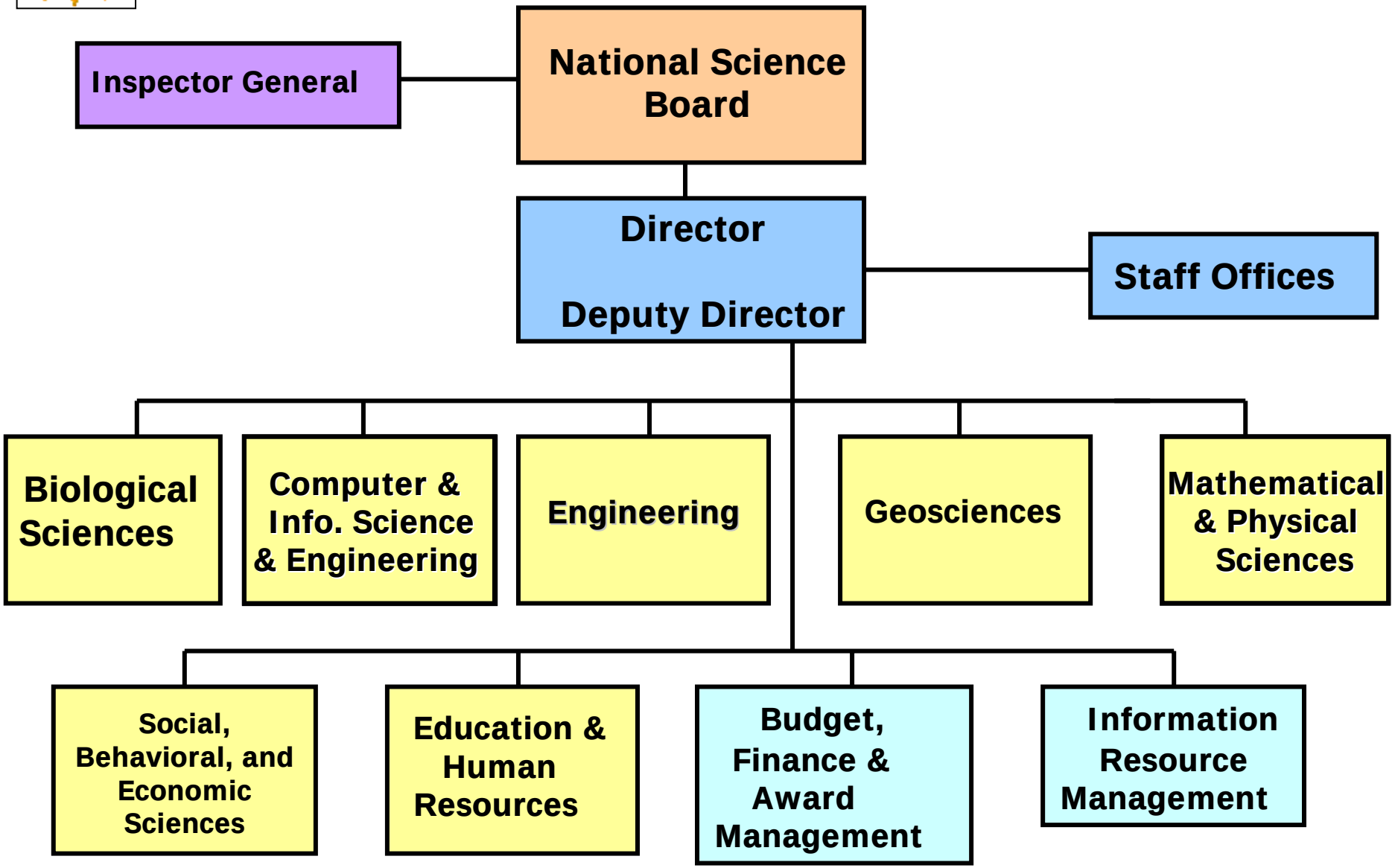
Background

- A long tradition of scientists managing support of academic science in the US
- Heightened credibility of academic scientists due to success of government-sponsored research at the nation's leading universities during WWII
- Need for academic science to be free from political intervention

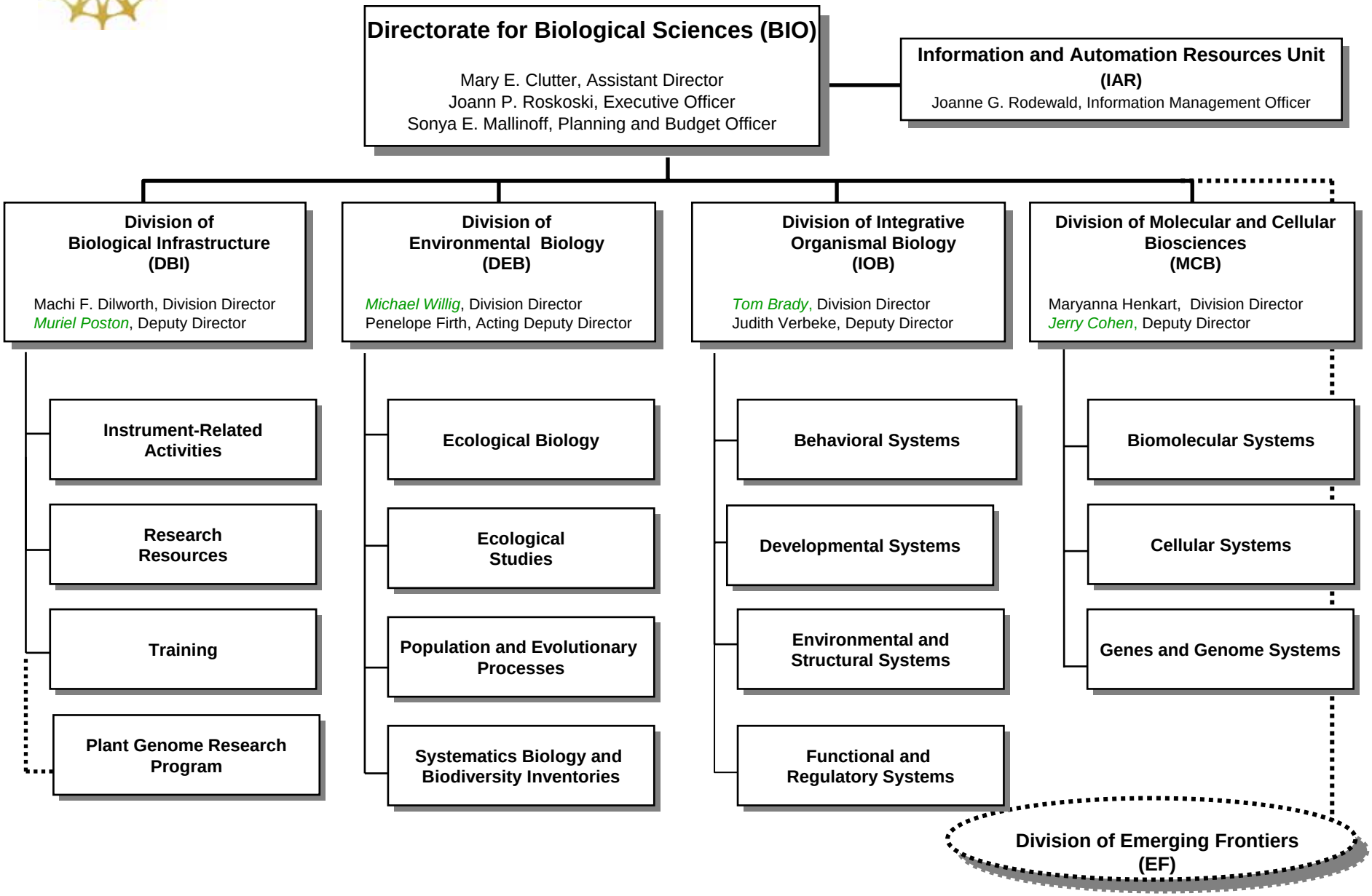
At the beginning in 1950

- First NSF Director Alan Waterman instituted the same program management system which he had set up at the Office of Naval Research.
- The idea was an "activist program officer" who makes a final decision with advice from peer reviewers

National Science Foundation



Directorate Organization – BIO Example



Division Organization and Staffing
DBI/ BIO Example

Division of Biological Infrastructure (DBI)
Division Director (Machi F. Dilworth)
Deputy Division Director (*Muriel Poston*)
Division Secretary
Administrative Officer
Financial Administrative Officer
Lead Program Assistant

Training Cluster

2 Program Directors
(Carter Kimsey**,** Sally O'Connor)
Science Assistant
Program Assistants

Plant Genome Research Program

3 Program Directors
(Jane Silverthorne, *Fedora Sutton, Rob Last*)
Science Assistant
Financial Administrative Officer
Program Assistant

Research Resources Cluster

4 Program Directors
(*Manfred Zorn, Elizabeth Blood, Gerald Guala*, Christopher Greer)
Science Assistants
Program Assistants

Instrumentation Related Activities Cluster

3 Program Directors
(Gerald Selzer, *Mark Farmer, Angela Klaus*)
Science Assistant
Program Assistant

Role of NSF Program Officers

Formulate, plan and execute program activities

Advise higher level management

Continue active participation in own discipline

Rotators and Permanent Program Officers

Almost a half of Program Officers at NSF are “Rotators”.
Both Rotators and Permanent Program Officers function as a bridge between Federal Government and the scientific community.

Rotators bring:

- Perspectives of active, practicing scientists
- Current and future needs of the academic community
- Fresh ideas about new programs and future directions

Permanent Program Officers bring:

- Historical perspectives
- Stability to the system
- Accountability
- Long-term changes

NSF Program Officer – “Rotators”

Types of Appointment for Rotators

Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA)
Visiting Scientists, Engineers, & Educators (VSEE)
Temporary Federal Government Employee
Interagency Detail
Full time, Intermittent/Part time
On-site, Off-site

Home Institutions of Rotators

Public and Private Colleges and Universities
Not-for-profit Research Institutions
Industry
Government Laboratories

NSF Program Officer – “Rotators”

Reasons for coming to NSF as a Rotator Program Officer

- Service to the community
- Sense of duty or expression of appreciation of NSF support
- Expanding one’s scientific horizon
- Experience in research administration and science policy
- Time to reflect
- Personal reasons

Recruitment of NSF Program Officers

Basic Qualifications

A Ph.D. or equivalent experience in the areas of science represented by the program plus six or more years of independent research activity, research administration, and/or managerial experience pertinent to the position.

Recruitment of NSF Program Officers
Additional Qualifications

1. Ability to effectively manage program resources to provide optimal appropriate scientific judgment to ensure integrity and consistency in the grant/declination process without conflict-of interest, and with balance among subfields and institutions, and participation of all qualified scientists.

2. Ability to implement long-range planning and budget development for the areas of science represented by the program.

3. Ability to contribute ideas and effort to improving the quality of NSF's performance of the overall mission. Develop policies and plans for strengthening research and education programs. Provide information to the community on how NSF is pursuing its mission and gather data and impressions from the community on the effectiveness of NSF's performance of its mission.

4. Ability to work effectively with and establish rapport and relationships within and among the scientific and research communities in order to foster and enhance the performance of the overall mission of the Program.

What a Division Director Looks for in a Program Officer
One Division Director's View

- An active researcher with broad interest in fields of science beyond his/her immediate area of expertise
- Enthusiasm for Division's goals and vision
- Experience in the NSF peer review process
- A person with common sense, an open-mind, and a sense of adventure
- Organizational skills, communication skills, and social skills

Recruitment of NSF Program Officers

Finding a candidate

- Announcement posted at NSF website, professional journals, professional society newsletters
- Letters sent to appropriate organization's officials
- Personal contacts at scientific meetings or outreach visits
- Nomination from former and current program officers
- Referral from other NSF colleagues
- Identify potential candidates at various NSF review panels and other committees

HRM

O V E R V I E W

TOPIC:
Employment

- Overview
- Salary and Benefits
- Learning Opportunities
- Worklife
- Local Area Information
- Orientation to NSF
- HRM HomePage

Search

GO

Funding Search
More Search Options

NSF offers its employees a competitive salary and benefits package, as well as a rich working environment. To learn about the agency's mission, goals, organization and research support activities, view the on-line Orientation to NSF.

Current Vacancies

- All Positions
- Administrative
- Clerical and Technical
- Executive
- Scientific and Professional
- Special Emphasis Programs

Create or update an eRecruit resume to apply for NSF positions.

Rotational Programs for Scientists, Engineers and Educators

The National Science Foundation (NSF) employs scientists, engineers, and educators on rotational assignment from academia, industry, or other eligible organizations to further the agency's mission of supporting our entire spectrum of science and engineering research and education. The most frequently used programs are the Visiting Scientist, Engineer, and Educator (VSEE) Program and the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Program. Both the VSEE and IPA Programs strengthen NSF's ties with the research community and provide the talent and resources that are critical to meeting NSF's mission.

Online Document System Search Results

27 Records Found

Title | Sort Results

Vacancy Announcements

Scientific and Professional

1. Associate Program Manager for ARCSS, AD-0401-3, OPP (Closes: 10/26/2004)
   Available Formats: PDF | TXT
   Document Number: e20040120
   Document History: Posted September 14, 2004.

2. Program Manager, AD 340-04 ENG/DMII (Closes: 09/17/2004)
   Available Formats: PDF | TXT
   Document Number: e20040116a
   Document History: Posted September 09, 2004. Replaces e20040116.

3. Program Director for the Graduate Research Fellowship Program, AD-1701-4, EHR/DGE (Closes: 10/12/2004)
   Available Formats: PDF | DOC
   Document Number: e20040118
   Document History: Posted September 09, 2004.

4. Chemist (Program Officer), AD-1320-4 (Closes: 10/20/2004)
   Available Formats: PDF | TXT
   Document Number: e20040117
   Document History: Posted September 07, 2004.

5. Computer Scientist (Program Director), AD-1550-4, Closes 9/23/2004
   Available Formats: PDF | TXT
   Document Number: e20040115
   Document History: Posted September 02, 2004.

6. Science Education Administrator/Prog Dir), AD-1701-4 EHR/ESIE (Closes: 09/16/2004)

Recruitment of NSF Program Officers

Making a selection and hiring

Rotating program officer:

- Applications sent directly to Division Director
- Potential candidate invited to NSF for an interview
- Division Director decides and sends a selection memo to the Human Resource Management Division (HRM)

Permanent program officer:

- Applications sent to the HRM
- HRM does the initial screening and selection of top candidates
- Top candidates interviewed by the Division
- Division Director decides and sends a selection memo to the HRM through the Directorate's office

NSF Program Officers – Career Path

Rotating Program Officers:

- Resume their former activity at home institutions
- Move to a new institution
- Become an academic administrator (Chairman, Dean, Vice President, etc.)
- Become a permanent program officer at NSF
- Become a permanent program officer at other Federal agencies

Permanent Program Officers:

- Move to other Federal agencies or NGOs as program officer or in management positions
- Move up within NSF (Division Director or other Executive positions)
- Go back to research and teaching
- Invited back to academia in an administrative position

Useful URLs

NSF Website http://www.nsf.gov

History of NSF including NSF annual reports since 1952
http://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/nsf50/history.htm

Job opportunities at NSF
http://www.nsf.gov/oirm/hrm/jobs/start.htm

NSF Manual No. 15: Conflicts of interest and standards of ethical conduct
http://www.nsf.gov/home/pubinfo/coi/manual15.htm

Science and Engineering Indicators 2004
http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/seind04/start.htm

Grant Policy Manual
http://www.nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm?gpm