# Transparency and Accountability

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BIO Advisory Committee Meeting

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# Why is Transparency and Accountability Important?

- **Public trust** requires knowing what is being funded, and how NSF's investments serve to promote the progress of science, ….
- Continuous improvement is an **NSF core principle**
  - Good stewardship of public resources requires ongoing examination of our processes and procedures
- Merit Review Process is **NSF's key process**
  - Ensuring its integrity is critical to fulfill NSF's mission, and to maintaining public trust
- Roles and Responsibilities must be **understood across NSF**
  - Critical to maintaining and enhancing integrity of Merit Review process
- Transparency and accountability **strengthens NSF's process** to assure the highest quality science portfolio investments

# Transparency and Accountability at NSF

Transparency and Accountability initiative launched in late 2013 to strengthen efforts in transparency and accountability around the merit review process

- Important Notice No. 135 to Presidents of Universities and Colleges and Heads or Other National Science Foundation Awardee Organizations issued on December 11, 2013 indicating NSF's intent to develop **policies to improve transparency and accountability regarding NSF's funding**

- Important Notice No. 136 to Presidents of Universities and Colleges and Heads or Other National Science Foundation Awardee Organizations issued on March 28, 2014 outlining NSF's efforts in two areas:
  - Improving **public understanding of abstracts and titles**
  - Ensuring that **portfolios are aligned to the national interest** as defined by NSF's mission

- A web site was set up containing a summary of efforts in the areas of abstracts and titles, training, and outreach

Press Release 14-163
**National Science Foundation updates transparency and accountability practices**



NSF supports fundamental research and education across all fields of science and engineering.
Credit and Larger Version

**December 3, 2014**

At the November National Science Board (NSB) meeting, National Science Foundation (NSF) Director France A. Córdova outlined the agency's new approaches to enhancing transparency and accountability, including a revision to the agency's guidelines for program officers and providing regular updates on the agency's transparency and accountability web page.

- Policy Changes on Award Abstracts and Titles

- Training and Ongoing Activities

- Additional Actions and Outreach

http://www.nsf.gov/od/transparency/transparency.jsp

# Working Groups and Activities

- Transparency and Accountability Working Group (TAWG1)
  - Internal report issued May 2014: resulted in policy clarification and implementation for awards titles and abstracts

- Second Transparency and Accountability Working Group (TAWG2)
  - Internal report Issued November 2014: clarified roles and responsibilities of Program Directors and Division Directors in merit review in policy; developed on-boarding resources

- Office of the Director liaison for Transparency and Accountability appointed May 2014
  - Works with Directorates on implementation of the new policies
  - Provides periodic updates to the NSF Senior Management and the National Science Board

- [Important Notice No. 137](#) to Presidents of Universities and Colleges and Heads or Other National Science Foundation Grantee Organizations issued on January 13, 2015.
  - Involvement of the PI in preparing the public award abstract, effective with the December 26, 2014 update of the PAPPG ([NSF 15-1](#))

# BIO Implementation Plan

- Developed in May 2014
- Initiated pilot activities to test best approaches
- Designed to build on existing best practices to achieve the goals of the initiative
- Minimizes unnecessary additional workload

# Pilot activities in FY 2014

- **Titles and Abstracts Manual** distributed to the Directorate
- **Title and Abstract review** at DD Concur step
- Post-panel briefings used to ensure **alignment of Division portfolios with NSF's mission**
- **BIO Portfolio Analysis Working Group** (BPAWG) established to lead Directorate-level analyses
- Directorate-wide discussion of the leading edges in BIO was held to identify funding **gaps and opportunities**
- BIO funded the development of custom Carrot **text mining tool** delivered March 2015
- Divisions submitted summary **Annual Reports** to BIO OAD

# FY 2015 BIO Activities

- Add a critical element component to the generic Program Director performance plan
- Update the BIO Titles and Abstracts Manual
- Reinstate the Leading Edge Discussion in Fall 2015
- Reconstitute the BPAWG
- Revise the Annual Report template
  - Detailed guidance about its preparation
  - Earlier start to process

Questions?