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
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?