

“Being in an environment that challenged me to think about questions that I would not normally think about and subject matter I would not normally study helped me realize that I was able to quickly assess, incorporate, and communicate concepts in different disciplinary areas. This prepared me for the next step in my career. I now work in an interdisciplinary environment in which I need to apply my physical science background together with information from the social sciences and engineering.”

*Dr. Mary-Elena Carr, Former Associate Program
Director, Biological Oceanography, Geosciences*

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“As an NSF rotator, I had the opportunity to mentor and guide the next generation of researchers who will shape the future of science and engineering not only in the United States, but worldwide. These are scientists and engineers who are on a trajectory to be the leaders and experts in their field over the next 20 to 30 years.”

Dr. Ted Conway, NSF Program Director in Research in Disabilities Education, Directorate for Education and Human Resources

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“As a Program Director, I had the opportunity to draft a response to a Senator who raised questions about work that was being conducted and supported in the social sciences at NSF. I crafted the response to the Senator and was able to see the words I had written circulating among Social Science Advocacy Groups. Having the opportunity to see my words in print was very exciting and encouraging.”

*Dr. Kellina M. Craig-Henderson, Ph.D.,
Former NSF Program Director in the Social
Psychology Program, Social, Behavioral,
and Economic Sciences Directorate*

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“When I became an NSF rotator, I anticipated returning to my home institution following my 1 year experience at NSF. However, I was lucky enough to be recruited by UMASS-Boston to become a Department Chair, and I think one of the reasons they pursued me was due to my time at NSF. I had already proven that I could manage a large budget, analyze a portfolio, and effectively multitask. I also had proven that I was a leader who was able to excel while directing and shaping the future of an entire program, the biological implementation programs (MRI and instrument development for biological research).”

*Dr. Robyn Hannigan, Former NSF Program Director
in the Division of Biological Infrastructure*

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“ We ‘reductionist’ biologists are good at thinking about one or two variables at a time, and I wanted to understand how different variables affect the problem under study. The rotator experience made me think about the challenges and opportunities in analyzing large sets of data across different data types and from different perspectives, giving me a more holistic view of my field.”

*Dr. Robert Last, Former NSF Program Director
in the Plant Genome Research Program*

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“During my experience as an NSF rotator, I participated in a \$20 million project, in which a global team observed atmospheric patterns off the coast of Chile. As a part of this project, I was involved in the discussions with NOAA, attended principal investigator (PI) meetings as the proposal was being developed, ensured that U.S. investigators stayed focused on their role in the overall project, and traveled to Chile three times—to meet with Chilean officials, to plan the project, and to observe its field operations. All of these different opportunities together enabled me to work across my entire discipline.”

Dr. Walt Robinson, Former NSF Program Director in the Climate and Large-Scale Dynamics Program

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“NSF is a great place to work. Why? Because we make a difference. Program directors make a difference; programs make a difference. We’ve helped institutions gain international research recognition; we’ve helped tribal colleges implement baccalaureate programs; we’ve helped historically black colleges and universities provide undergraduate research experiences to all of their students in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. It doesn’t get better than that.”

*Dr. Victor Santiago, Program Director in
Education and Human Resources Directorate*

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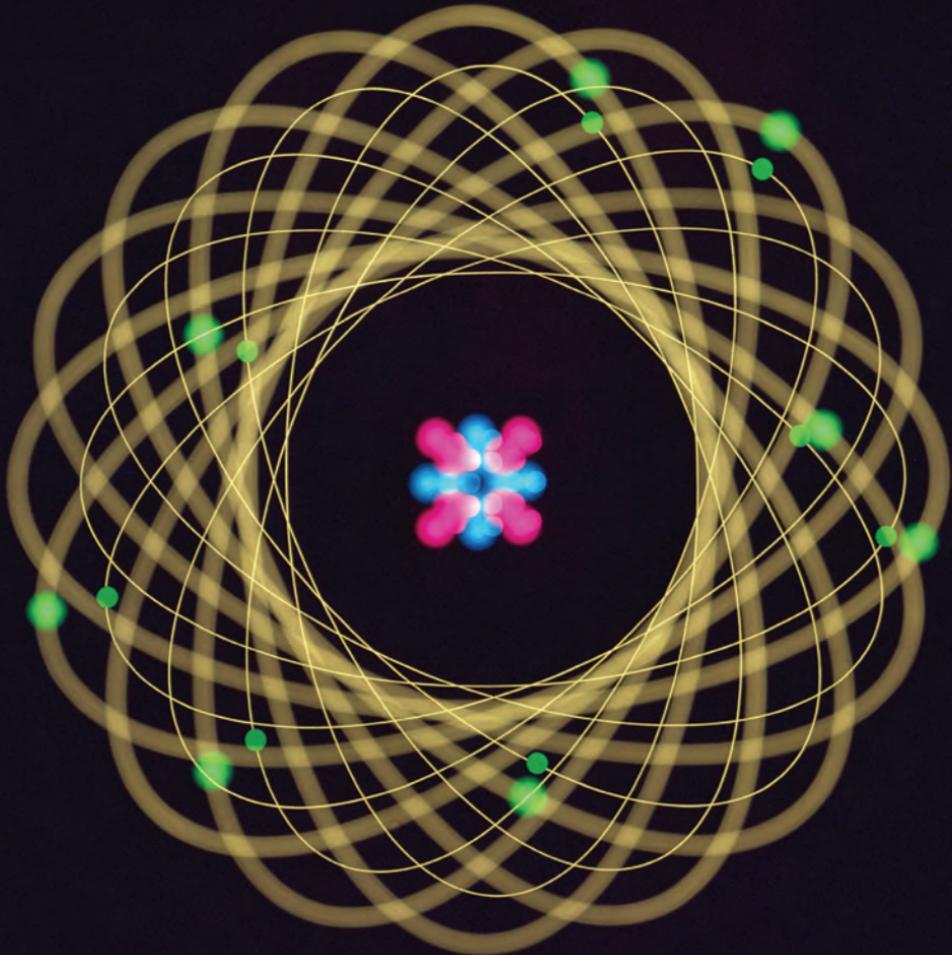
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“As an IPA, I was able to fulfill my NSF responsibilities while still remaining in touch with my research by taking full advantage of NSF’s Independent Research and Development (IRD). The Program Director position was flexible enough and provided adequate travel funds for me to travel between Washington, DC and Clemson University every two weeks to conduct research with my team and fulfill my teaching and training responsibilities to my Ph.D. students. A few of my Ph.D. students even graduated while I was a rotator.”

Guebre X. Tessema, former NSF Program Director in the Division of Materials Research, Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences

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“As an NSF rotator, I got to read about science and engineering that will change my field over the next 10 years. Now that I have returned to my home institution, I have a better sense of where the field is going, which helps me to stay on the cutting edge of my field.”

Dr. Ajit Subramaniam, Former NSF Associate Program Director in the Biological Oceanography Program

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