

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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OFFICE OF THE
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
FOR GEOSCIENCES

2 April 2014

Dr. John Cassano
Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences
University of Colorado at Boulder
216 UCB
Boulder, CO 80309

Dear Dr. Cassano,

Thank you for chairing the 2013 Committee of Visitors (COV) review of the Division of Polar Programs' Antarctic Sciences and Antarctic Infrastructure and Logistics Sections. I am grateful for your committee's thorough and insightful analysis of these programs.

I very much appreciate the time and effort that your committee devoted to this activity. COV reviews such as this are a very important mechanism that the Foundation uses to ensure that programs are vibrant and continue to serve the research community and the nation. In addition to the effort of examining a large number of proposal decisions during the meeting at NSF, I understand that the committee worked hard in preparation for the review and also in efforts after the meeting to prepare the formal report for our use.

I am pleased that the COV was favorably impressed with management of both sections and that the COV saw evidence of close collaboration between these groups. I see this as essential to NSF's stewardship of the US Antarctic Program. I'm also pleased that the COV, as well as the Advisory Committee, commended the Antarctic Sciences group for conducting the merit review process in an exceptionally high quality fashion and for their efforts to maintain good communication with the community.

The Antarctic Sciences and Antarctic Infrastructure and Logistics Sections prepared a response to your report and this was considered by the GEO Advisory Committee (all documents can be found at: http://www.nsf.gov/geo/acgeo_cov.jsp). While the Advisory Committee meeting planned for November 2013 was preempted by the partial government shutdown, the Advisory Committee has deliberated off-line and found both documents useful.

I do take note of your recommendation to improve opportunities for program officer travel for site visits and other interactions with the community. I also note your comment about the value of using both ad hoc and panel review for proposals such as those managed by the Division of Polar Programs. These comments will prove useful to inform discussions within the Foundation. We will strive to support these important activities to the extent that resources allow.

Thanks very much to you and your committee for your hard work and thoughtful report. Your findings and recommendations will help guide and improve the Antarctic program in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Wakimoto". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roger Wakimoto
Assistant Director