

Directorate for Biological Sciences
Office of the Assistant Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 15, 2019

TO: Gisele T. Muller-Parker, Staff Associate, Office of Integrative Activities

FROM: Joanne Tornow, Assistant Director, Directorate for Biological Sciences

SUBJECT: Report and Diversity Memo of the 2018 Committee of Visitors for Integrative Organismal Systems

This memo reports on the diversity, independence, balance, and resolution of conflicts of the Committee of Visitors (CoV) for the Integrative Organismal Systems (IOS) held from the 6 - 8 June, 2018 at NSF to review the Division's work during FY2014 - FY2017, and the activities of the Plant Genome Research Program from FY2013 - FY2017.

The credibility of the CoV mechanism rests, in large measure, on the selection of independent experts who are able to provide balanced and impartial assessments to NSF. Prior to issuing letters of invitation to serve on the IOS CoV, the IOS Division Director, Deputy Division Director and Science Advisor were consulted regarding potential CoV candidates and the slate of invitees was approved by BIO/OAD. Program Officers in IOS also were instrumental in identifying and selecting membership of the CoV.

The CoV represented a broad segment of the disciplines consistent with the scope of activities for which IOS has oversight responsibilities. The committee was composed of twenty-three members, including one representative of the BIO Advisory Committee. Eleven members are female, and two are from underrepresented minorities in the field of organismal biology. Members currently work in eighteen different states (AK, CA, CT, FL, GA, IL, IN, KS, LA, MD, MI, MO, ND, PA, RI, SD, WI, WY). Twenty-one members are from academic institutions, including four Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions and four Minority Serving Institutions. Two members are from government (NIH, USDA) and one is from industry. Five of the members had not submitted a proposal to the Division in the previous five years. Fourteen of the members had not served on a review panel for the Division in the review period, but all had prior NSF review experience. Three members had prior IOS CoV experience, and one member had previous CoV experience for a different Division. One member had prior experience as a rotator in BIO, but was not at NSF during the years under review.

Committee members were advised about confidentiality and conflicts of interest both prior to arriving at NSF and on the first day of meeting. All CoV members were required to complete the NSF Conflict of Interest form and submit a list of potential conflicts prior to receiving access to CoV materials. All identified conflicts were managed in the Electronic Jacket CoV module and individual CoV members were unable to see conflicted proposals and were absent from any discussion of conflicted proposals.