

**Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE)  
Advisory Committee Meeting Summary  
Via Teleconference  
May 4, 2007  
3:00 to 5:00 pm**

Update and Recent OISE Developments

Thomas A. Weber convened this Advisory Committee Meeting via Telephonic Conference, welcomed the Committee, and explained that the reason the meeting had to be held in this mode was because of current budgetary restrictions on the NSF administrative budget. He mentioned that other parts of NSF were also holding their advisory committee meetings via telephonic conference. The meeting was attended by all Members of the Committee via telephone, and at NSF headquarters by most of the OISE program staff.

Even though there were restrictions on the administrative part of the NSF budget, the current fiscal year NSF was given the full amount of budgeted funds for programs.

The Committee was given an update on OISE and NSF senior staff leaving NSF as well as new arrivals and current recruitments. David Stonner was introduced as the new incumbent for the NSF Europe Office, replacing Mark Suskin; and Machi Dilworth will replace Larry Weber at the end of the summer. The Office was attracting internal rotators for some of the program positions, and was in the process of recruiting an external rotator for the Americas Programs, a new AAAS Fellow, and an Einstein Fellow, for rotations at the end of the summer.

An OISE Vision Statement had been posted in the OISE NSF website, which became the touchstone for an animated discussion between the members of the Committee and the Office Director and the staff. Thomas Weber expressed his belief that ideally there would not need to be an office of international programs because every discipline program in science, engineering and education, would include international activities in their regular portfolio. In the course of the discussion, the Committee ended up by validating that there was a multiplicity of actions that NSF needed to take in international programs that would be very difficult to expect the discipline program officers to either have the capability, knowledge or inclination to attend to. Such as:

- Creating and stimulating new modalities of international cooperation (such as the Partnerships for International Research and Education Program)
- Supplementing and complementing existing NSF supported projects to extend them into a cooperative mode with resources in other countries
- Acting as a catalyst agent to support planning workshops and scientific visits
- Evaluating the capacities and opportunities resident in other countries to engage in cooperation

- Finding ways to collaborate with other agencies and non-governmental institutions to extend collaboration with developing countries
- Acting as a liaison for the NSF with foreign entities and organizations, as well as domestic agencies involved in foreign S&T policy (Office of Science and Technology in the White House, the Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development)
- Facilitating interactions between NSF staff at all levels in their hosting of visitors from abroad, or themselves visiting other countries

All of these statements and others underlined the need for an office that not only acted as a liaison for international relations for the NSF but which also has programs and resources to stimulate and support international cooperation which in time extend to the rest of the NSF.

As this discussion proceeded, the Committee was reassured that the present NSF administration was quite supportive of international cooperation in general, and the multiple roles that OISE performs for the NSF to expand the opportunities of the NSF clientele in international cooperation. This was reflected in the growth of OISE's program budget, and in the support that OISE gets from the NSF leadership to pursue new programs and new opportunities. It is further exemplified by OISE having at present a Visiting Scientist from Howard University, Dr. Wayne Patterson, whose task is to explore ways and means to expand cooperation with developing countries, keeping in mind the existing limitations that NSF has on using its resources mainly for the U.S. side in any cooperative activity, and the modalities of existing NSF programs, both inside and outside of the OISE.

Asked about the National Science Board International Taskforce, Thomas Weber characterized its work as spanning the entire U.S. government, and not only addressing the NSF. It is still a work in progress which will conclude towards the end of the year in a report and recommendations. At this stage the Taskforce is still holding fact finding meetings abroad.

Frances Li, Program Coordinator of the East Asia and Pacific Programs, gave a brief update on the East Asia and Pacific Summer Institutes Program. The program has doubled since 2003, especially as a result of the expansion of the program from Japan to now include opportunities for advanced graduate students from the U.S. to work in university or industry laboratories in China, Korea, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, and soon to be joined by Singapore. Applications in last year have grown from 233 to 297, and included disciplines covered in all but one of the NSF directorates (missing is Science Education). Because of the increased administrative workload that this growth represents, NSF has decided to contract for external administrative support for the coming year. Some Committee members offered suggestions to increase the diversity of the participants in this program, something that remains as a continuing challenge.

## Budget Discussion

Kathryn Sullivan, OISE Deputy Director, gave an update of the current OISE budget request for Fiscal Year 2008. The request is for \$45 million, a growth of 10.8% over Fiscal Year 2007, where OISE used \$40.61 million.

The planned expenditures can broadly be divided into two main categories: a) Investing in research excellence (through international cooperation): Cyber-enabled discovery and cyber-based research; discovery research; International Polar Year, Partnerships for International Research and Education, and collaboration with developing countries, (\$30.05 million). b) Globally engaged U.S. S&E workforce: International Research Fellowship Program, International Research Experience for Students, East Asia and Pacific Summer Institutes Program, Research Experiences for Teachers, Dissertation Enhancements, and Other Learning/S&E Workforce Programs, (\$12.6 million).

Thomas Weber addressed the planning for Fiscal Year 2009 by stating that the process is in its preliminary stage, and that discussions are at a very large and aggregated level. There is optimism that the President's pronouncement of an American Competitiveness Initiative would favor the science agencies such as NSF and the Department of Energy, and my put the NSF's budget on a doubling trajectory for the next 5 to 7 years.

## Update on Partnerships for International Research and Education (PIRE)

The Committee was given a brief update on the PIRE program, where OISE was entertaining a second round of competition for five year awards of \$500,000 per year for novel modalities of engaging U.S. research institutions with international partners, with a heavy research and educational component by actively involving students and young faculty in the international cooperation. NSF received over 500 pre-proposals from a potential pool of over 700 (each submitting university was restricted to one single pre-proposal). Seventy-one of these were given a green light to submit a full proposal. The intention is to fund 14. This number could increase if other parts of NSF partner with OISE and contribute substantial resources to this partnership. This is a first step in trying to see if in the future the PIRE program could be increasingly transferred to the rest of NSF in partnership with OISE, especially in the outlying years of the five-year commitment.