



National Science Foundation
Directorate for Biological Sciences
Office of the Assistant Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 4, 2021

TO: Office of Integrative Activities

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

SUBJECT: Report and Diversity Memo of the 2020 Committee of Visitors for the Division of Biological Infrastructure

This memo reports on the diversity, independence, balance, and resolution of conflicts of the Committee of Visitors (COV) for the Division of Biological Infrastructure (DBI) in the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO), which was held from 15 - 17 December 2020 to review the division's work during FY2016 - FY2020.

The credibility of the COV mechanism rests, in large measure, on the selection of independent experts who can provide balanced and impartial assessments to NSF. Prior to issuing letters of invitation to serve on the DBI COV, the DBI Division Director and Deputy Division Director sought input from DBI Program Officers regarding potential COV candidates, and the slate of invitees was approved by Office of the Assistant Director in BIO. The COV represented a broad segment of the disciplines consistent with the scope of activities for which DBI has oversight responsibilities.

The committee was composed of eleven members, including one representative of the BIO Advisory Committee. Seven members were female, and two were from groups underrepresented in the biological sciences. Members currently worked in ten states (CA, CO, FL, MD, MA, ME, MO, NY, VA, WA) and Puerto Rico. Nine members were from academic institutions, including one primarily undergraduate institution. One member was from a government organization (National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Mental Health), and one was from a private, non-profit scientific organization. Seven of the members had not submitted a proposal to the Division in the previous five years. Six of the members had not served on a review panel for the Division in the previous five years, but all had prior NSF review experience. The COV Chair had served on the 2016 DBI COV and is also a former BIO AC member. Three members had prior experience as rotators in BIO and ENG at varying points in the past, but none were at NSF during the years under review.

Committee members were advised about confidentiality and conflicts of interest both prior to 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.