



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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 9, 2023

TO: Office of Integrative Activities

FROM: Simon Malcomber, Acting Assistant Director, Directorate for Biological Sciences

SUBJECT: Report and Diversity Memo of the 2022 Committee of Visitors for the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences

This memo reports on the diversity, independence, balance, and resolution of conflicts of the Committee of Visitors (COV) for the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences (MCB) in the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO), which was held from 25 - 27 May 2022 to review the division's work during FY2018 - FY2021.

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 MCB COV, the MCB Division Director and Deputy Division Director sought input from MCB Program Directors 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 MCB has oversight responsibilities.

The committee was composed of seventeen members, including one representative of the BIO Advisory Committee. Six members were female, and three were from groups underrepresented in the biological sciences. Members worked in thirteen states (AL, AZ, CA, KY, MD, MN, MO, NH, OH, OR, VA, WA, WI), three of which are EPSCoR jurisdictions. Thirteen members were from academic institutions, including one primarily undergraduate institution and two minority serving institutions. Two members were from government organizations (National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering and Department of Energy/Office of Basic Energy Science), and two were from private, non-profit scientific organizations. Nine of the members had not submitted a proposal to the division in the previous five years. Eleven 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 2018 MCB COV and is also a former NSF program director. One other member had prior experience as a rotator program director in BIO, but none of the COV members were at NSF during the years under review. Another member had previously served as a BIO Advisory Committee member and was the chair of the 2018 MCB COV.

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.