FY 2018 Committee of Visitors (COV)
Responses from OISE

The Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE) extends its gratitude to the members of the 2018 COV panel for their time and effort on the review. We are very grateful to the COV Chair for her strong leadership during the COV process, and the timely completion of the final report.

In addition, we appreciate the actionable recommendations. In the following, we respond to the specific recommendations in the same order as presented in the report. The recommendations are listed in bold and the responses follow with a bullet.

Recommendation #1. Total funding for each PIRE project should be capped at $5 million over five years.
- Response #1. After a decade of performance, OISE intends to assess the program for sufficiency in Fiscal Year 2019. Funding levels for projects will be included in this assessment.

Recommendation #2. The pending International Research Experiences for Students (IRES) evaluation should include clear and well-designed questions in order to gather useful information to guide future development of the program.
- Response #2. OISE, with input from the Evaluation and Assessment Capability (EAC) Section of the Office of Integrative Activities (OIA) will collaborate on the evaluation of IRES. The lessons learned from the IRES evaluation will be integrated into the future solicitations and the award conditions.

Recommendation #3. OISE should search for information on and evaluations of the many existing international undergraduate research opportunities and determine how to both complement and leverage these.
- Response #3. OISE will collaborate with EAC to develop a systematic study of existing STEM international research opportunities for undergraduates funded by the NSF to aide in shaping current and future program offerings.

Recommendation #4. The COV urges that staffing be augmented to support analysis and planning, as well as to meet the need to support NSF's diplomatic mission.
- Response #4. OISE will continue to balance workload by performing an annual review of the programs and staff to maximize the impact of its resources. Included in this effort is setting clear priorities and sun-setting those activities that have met their stated goals.

Recommendation #5. Recommendation #7 from the 2014 COV should be incorporated into OISE efforts to increase its foresight and analytics capabilities.
- Response #5. OISE is developing analysis and foresight capabilities in concert with other NSF units.

Recommendation #6. OISE should align its programs with NSF's thematic priorities – currently the 10 Big Ideas – and concentrate on those that are explicitly international and complementary to other (e.g. big science) international activities.
- Response #6. OISE will continue to contribute to NSF priority activities by leveraging strategic international partnerships.

Recommendation #7. OISE should take leadership to address data collection, analysis, storage and management regarding the extent of international research and education across the Foundation.
- Response #7. OISE will continue to expand its capability to identify NSF funded projects that include international cooperation. OISE will continue to work with other NSF units to strengthen existing tools processes related to the NSF e-business systems.

Recommendation #8. OISE should contract with an evaluator to conduct a study of undergraduate and graduate research programs and the impact of these activities on the career development of the participating students.

- Response #8. OISE will initiate discussions with EAC to draw on the strengths of existing evaluations that focus on the impacts undergraduate and graduate research programs have on the career of the participants.

Recommendation #9. OISE should review examples from OIA, Engineering and other agencies and directorates to gain knowledge on best practices to manage large research projects to ensure success. This knowledge gained should be used by OISE to develop effective strategies, including site visits, to assess award progress.

- Response #9. OISE will continue to strengthen post award management using best practices from within the Foundation.

Recommendation #10. OISE should partner with directorates such as SBE, EHR and CISE as well as OIA to leverage their networking expertise.

- Response #10. OISE will partner with other NSF units as we seek to develop new opportunities for international network-to-network partnerships. OISE has established an internal working group that includes representatives from across the Foundation.