



**National Science Foundation**  
Office of the Director

November 16, 2020

Dear Colleague:

The National Science Foundation is beginning a national search for the Assistant Director for Geosciences (GEO) and we seek your help in identifying visionary candidates. The new Assistant Director (AD) will succeed Dr. William Easterling, who has served with distinction since June 2017.

The Assistant Director, GEO, leads a Directorate of three divisions — Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences (AGS); Earth Sciences (EAR); Ocean Sciences (OCE) — and the Office of Polar Programs (OPP). The Directorate's portfolio encompasses a broad range of the geosciences with a total budget of approximately \$1.5 billion. The enclosed information sheet summarizes the Directorate's activities, the responsibilities of the position, and the criteria for the search.

I am pleased that Dr. Inez Fung, Professor of Atmospheric Sciences at the University of California, Berkeley, and Dr. Margaret Leinen, Director of the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, will co-chair the search committee. We seek your help in identifying candidates who are outstanding leaders, have a deep sense of scholarship, and understand the issues facing the geosciences community, particularly in education, innovation, and fundamental research. Candidates must also have the skills and temperament to serve effectively as a key member of the NSF senior management team, working with the NSF Director and other Assistant Directors on interdisciplinary activities. The Geosciences AD also interacts with the executive and legislative branches of government and must be able to communicate effectively with leaders in business, industry, and philanthropy.

Employment in the position may be on a temporary or permanent basis in the Federal Service or by temporary assignment under provisions of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act. We welcome recommendations of individuals from any sector, including academia, industry, and government. The National Science Foundation is an equal opportunity employer committed to engaging a highly qualified staff that reflects the diversity of our nation.

Please send your recommendations, including any supporting information that you might be able to provide, to the AD/GEO Search Advisory Committee via e-mail to [geosrch@nsf.gov](mailto:geosrch@nsf.gov). In light of COVID-19, we cannot receive recommendations by conventional mail. Please submit your recommendations by February 26, 2021.

Thank you for your help with this important task.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sanchanathan'.

Sethuraman Panchanathan  
Director

Enclosures

**Search Advisory Committee Review Criteria  
for the Assistant Director for Geosciences (AD/GEO), NSF**

We are seeking demonstrated evidence of:

*Strategic Vision*

- Working knowledge of the major current intellectual challenges and opportunities in the geosciences.
- Ability to think strategically and formulate integrated plans for research and education activities in the geosciences, especially at the interfaces of, and boundaries with, other disciplines.
- Ability to bring about strategic change, within and outside the organization, to meet organizational goals. Includes the ability to establish an organizational vision and to implement it in a continuously changing environment.

*Leadership, Direction, Representation*

- Ability to lead people toward meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Includes the ability to provide an inclusive workplace that fosters the development of others, facilitates cooperation and teamwork, and supports constructive resolution of conflicts. Ability to provide innovative and transformative leadership of people, reflective of NSF's organizational values.
- Ability to serve effectively as a member of NSF's senior management team, helping to develop consensus both within the GEO directorate and across the agency on policy and plans.
- Ability to plan, prioritize, and coordinate interagency and international research, education, and infrastructure programs and to forge government-industry-university partnerships.
- Ability to manage an organization consisting of approximately 190 scientific and administrative professionals; ability to manage human, financial, and information resources strategically.
- Ability to communicate NSF policy and strategic plans to the external community, including the public, Congress, industry, and colleagues in other disciplines.
- Ability to meet organizational goals and customer expectations. Includes the ability to make decisions that produce high-quality results by applying technical knowledge, analyzing problems, and calculating risks.

*Commitment*

- Commitment to the goals of the NSF Strategic plan - *Transforming the Frontiers, Innovating for Society, and Performing as a Model Organization* - and to the strategies for achieving these goals through developing intellectual capital, integrating research and education, and promoting partnerships. Demonstrated ability to conceptualize the role of the geosciences in achieving those goals.
- Commitment to the appointment and development of a highly qualified staff that reflect the diversity of our nation and to the equitable representation of underrepresented groups and institutions on advisory committees, in workshops, and proposal review panels.
- Commitment to equitable representation of underrepresented groups in the national enterprise.

*Credibility within Research and Education Community*

- Substantial research contributions and experience in academic, government and/or private national research and education endeavors as evidenced in publications, innovative leadership in research administration and/or professional leadership awards.
- Ability to build coalitions internally and with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, nonprofit and private sector organizations, foreign governments, or international organizations to achieve common goals.
- Demonstrated commitment to scholarship and significant scientific contributions to the geosciences.
- Broad understanding of universities and other institutions where research and education in the geosciences are conducted.
- Familiarity with the existing U.S. and international infrastructure that supports research and education.

## **The National Science Foundation Directorate for Geosciences (GEO)**

The **National Science Foundation** (NSF) is an independent agency of the United States Government. Its vision is to enable the nation's future through its strategic goals of transforming the frontiers, innovating for society, and performing as a model organization. The Foundation seeks to realize these goals using five core values: vision, dedication to excellence, learning and growing, broad inclusiveness, and accountability to the research community and the taxpayer. NSF invests in supporting research that advances the frontiers of knowledge and establishes the nation as a leader in transformational science, in developing a world-class, broadly inclusive science and geosciences workforce and scientifically literate citizenry, in building the nation's research capacity with critical investments in advanced instruments, tools and facilities, and in cultivating a capable and responsive organization that promotes excellence in science and geosciences research and education.

The **Directorate for Geosciences** (GEO) is one of seven NSF directorates. GEO aims to help the U.S. harness the collective efforts of the geosciences communities to address the most compelling scientific questions, educate the future advanced high-tech workforce, and promote discoveries to meet the needs of the Nation. Research in GEO-supported disciplines has led to advances in a host of world-wide applications, such as improved freshwater management, developing novel observing infrastructure, understanding the impact of global change, and earlier prediction of natural hazards. Together, these achievements strengthen our national capacity to perform and innovate, which, in turn, contributes to national prosperity, security, and welfare. The Directorate's goals and strategies for all scales of research mirror those of the Foundation. The Directorate contains the Division of Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences (AGS); the Division of Earth Sciences; the Division of Ocean Sciences (OCE); and the Office of Polar Programs (OPP). A staff of approximately 190 administers a budget of about \$1.5 billion annually. GEO supports several major research facilities including the National Center for Atmospheric Research, the US Academic Research Fleet, and the McMurdo Station in Antarctica.

The **Assistant Director for Geosciences** (AD/GEO) serves as a key member of NSF's senior management and policy team and provides leadership and direction to the Directorate's programs and initiatives. The incumbent is responsible for planning and implementing programs, priorities, and policy within the framework of statutory and National Science Board authority. NSF seeks a candidate with outstanding leadership abilities, a deep sense of scholarship, a grasp of the issues facing the geosciences in the areas of education and research, and a commitment to the goals and strategies of the National Science Foundation.