



U.S. National Science Foundation
Office of the Director

July 2, 2024

Dear Colleague:

The National Science Foundation is beginning a national search for the Assistant Director for Geosciences (GEO). We ask for your help in identifying visionary candidates to lead the Directorate during the coming years. The new Assistant Director (AD) will succeed Dr. Alexandra Isern, who has served with distinction in this position since July 19, 2021. The incoming AD will have similar opportunities to shape future research and workforce development in the geosciences and to lead GEO as a key participant in exciting new developments in the Foundation.

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

I am pleased that Dr. Timothy Killeen, President of the University of Illinois System, will chair the search committee. The Committee consists of these confirmed members:

- Dr. Dorota Grejner-Brzezinska, Vice President for Knowledge Enterprise, The Ohio State University, and member of the National Science Board;
- Dr. Margaret Leinen, Director, Scripps Institute of Oceanography;
- Dr. Peter de Menocal, President and Director, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute;
- Dr. Francisca Oboh-Ikuenobe, Professor and Associate Dean, Department of Geosciences and Petroleum Engineering, Missouri University of Science and Technology; and
- Dr. Ben van der Pluijm, Bruce R. Clark Professor of Geology, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.

The Committee and I 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, facilities, and fundamental research. Candidates must also have the skills and temperament to serve effectively as a key member of the NSF executive leadership 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 of business and industry as well as with the philanthropic community.

Employment in the position may be on a permanent basis in the Federal Service or by temporary assignment under provisions of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA). The candidate must

be able to acquire and maintain a Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) security clearance. 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.

Candidates interested in a Senior Executive Service (SES) appointment must apply online via USAJobs ([vacancy announcement GEO-EXEC-2024-0004](#)). Please send your recommendations, including any supporting information that you might be able to provide, to the AD/GEO Search Committee via e-mail to geosrch@nsf.gov or at the following address: National Science Foundation, Office of the Director, 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA, 22314. Please submit your recommendations by August 14, 2024.

Thank you for your help with this important task.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sethuraman Panchanathan". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "S" and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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 — *Leading the World in Discovery and Innovation, STEM Talent Development and the Delivery of Benefits from Research* — 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 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 engineering 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 eight 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 Divisions of Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences (AGS); Earth Sciences (EAR); Ocean Sciences (OCE); Research, Innovation, Synergies, and Education (RISE); and the Office of Polar Programs (OPP). A staff of more than 200 administers a budget of about \$1.5 billion annually. GEO supports several major research facilities such as the National Center for Atmospheric Research, the US Academic Research Fleet, and research stations in both the Arctic and Antarctic.

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.