



From the Inspector General

This report highlights the activities of the National Science Foundation (NSF) Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the six-month period ending March 31, 2003. It has been a most productive time. We issued 15 audit reports that identified \$9,720,295 in promised cost sharing “at risk” of not being contributed, \$4,159,513 in funds to be put to better use, and an additional \$324,971 in questioned costs. NSF disallowed \$851,014 during the past 6 months that had been questioned in previous audit reports. In addition, we closed 18 civil/criminal cases, 15 administrative cases, and made \$1,524,127 in recoveries. Two cases were referred to the Department of Justice.

The Office of Inspector General was established 25 years ago to be a watchdog for the taxpayer. People that are part of the OIG community are often asked the question: who watches the watchdogs? As members of Congress know, we are accountable to many. The NSF OIG reports to both the National Science Board and to Congress. The Office of Management and Budget reviews our budget request. The Executive Council of Integrity and Efficiency and even the press play a role in evaluating our performance. And we can count on the agency to double-check our facts. To further enhance our accountability to the public, we include in this Semiannual Report our first OIG Performance Report. The quality improvements discussed in the Report have already contributed to the successful peer review of our audit operations in this period, and include preparations for the first peer review of our Investigations office, scheduled to take place during the next reporting period.

In an effort to collect more information about best practices within our profession, we have held many productive discussions and exchanges over the past few years with our counterparts among the Federal OIGs and from other countries as well. These contacts have proven helpful not only in improving audit and investigative methods, but in developing performance measures that will gauge the overall effectiveness of our office. In this vein we will be hosting a conference at the end of this month that will be attended by representatives of 14 oversight agencies representing 10 countries.

Finally, we note a significant change in the way the National Science Board carries out its responsibilities. The Board has surmounted various logistical obstacles within a short time frame to open its committee meetings to the public for the first time. The new openness is certain to improve understanding among the science community and the public, of NSF and the challenges it faces.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Christine C. Boesz".

Christine C. Boesz, Dr.P.H.
Inspector General
May 15, 2003