



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 September 30, 2003. It has been another eventful reporting period for our office. We issued 15 audit reports that contained \$2,837,713 in questioned costs. We also made recommendations that would put \$4,619,248 in funds to better use. In addition, we closed 11 civil/criminal cases, 29 administrative cases, and made \$1,218,883 in recoveries. Finally, we referred 3 criminal/civil cases to the Department of Justice, and 4 administrative cases to NSF management.

In October, we marked the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Inspector General Act which established the institution of an independent IG at most large agencies. Upon signing the bill, President Carter called the Act “a chance to protect the taxpayer’s dollar, to root out corruption, fraud, waste, mismanagement, in the most effective and enthusiastic fashion.” The effectiveness of the IG Act has been born out over time, but it is interesting that the President chose to use the word “enthusiastic.” The people I have met in the OIG community are enthusiastic, I believe, because it is a privilege to be doing this important work.

During the October meeting of the National Science Board, Dr. Warren Washington, Chairman, recognized the contributions that Inspectors General make to the general efficiency and effectiveness of government, and specifically thanked the NSF’s OIG for assisting the Board in overseeing the complex and challenging operations of NSF.

Science and engineering research is becoming increasingly global. Through both formal and informal collaborations, individual researchers around the world are engaging in diverse and complex projects intended to foster creative solutions to important global challenges. In practice, international collaborations are frequently a good investment. They ease the financial burden on any one nation for shouldering the cost of complex and expensive projects, while they enhance the scientific knowledge base for participating nations. NSF supports international science through both U.S. and foreign institutions. During the past six months I have had the opportunity to meet with some of my colleagues engaged in the oversight of research funding. The purpose of the meetings was to promote an international exchange among those responsible for providing accountability through audits and investigations. These meetings were productive and demonstrated



National Science Board Chairman
Dr. Warren Washington with
Inspector General Dr. Christine Boesz
(Picture by Christy Bowe,
Imagecatcher News)

a commonality among those charged with detecting and preventing fraud and waste. While the countries with a shorter history of science funding benefited from exchanging information with their more experienced counterparts, all participants came away with a fresh perspective on familiar problems.

As NSF moves into fiscal year 2004, the OIG is committed to assisting the agency as it faces the challenges in a rapidly changing world of science and technology. We appreciate the cooperation and responsiveness of NSF management and staff, and look forward to a continuing productive relationship.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Christine C. Boesz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Christine C. Boesz, Dr.P.H.
Inspector General
November 17, 2003