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February 4, 2016

The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Research and Technology, held a hearing to discuss recommendations for management reform at the National Science Foundation (NSF). The hearing comes in the wake of a 2015 report from the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), a non-partisan organization chartered by Congress to evaluate, analyze, and make recommendations on management, governance, policy and operations at various government agencies. Congresswoman Barbara Comstock (R-VA) chaired the hearing and witnesses Cynthia Heckmann of NAPA, Richard Buckius of NSF, and Allison Lerner of NSF, provided testimony.

NSF's Director, France Cordova, and the National Science Board (NSB) requested the NAPA report to evaluate the agency's use of cooperative agreements (CAs) to support the development, construction, commissioning, and future operations of large-scale research facilities. Overall, the report found that CAs are appropriate to support research facility development, and provided recommendations on NSF and NSB governance issues.

Heckmann explained that the recommendations included in the NAPA report would ensure NSF program integrity by creating action options for the agency that focus on cost estimates and analysis, management policies and processes, and effective leadership and training. Buckius assured the committee that NSF is prioritizing the NAPA report and is creating committees to address their recommended target areas, which NSF has divided into two main topics: business practices and oversight accountability and stewardship. Lerner mentioned that detailed audits are needed for projects with budgets over \$50 million. Congressman Dan Lipinski (D-IL) asked how NSF will prioritize these recommendations given the associated costs without hindering NSF work. Heckmann responded by highlighting the importance of internalizing management practices for consistency. Lerner emphasized the importance of human capital investment, while Buckius pointed out that the proposed elimination of management fees will likely take the longest to implement because an alternative must be proposed.

Sources: House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, National Academy of Public Administration

Updated 3/10/2016
