

NSF reorganization

A new internal structure for the National Science Foundation involving seven directorates has been announced. The change results in four new directorates, three of them—Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences; Astronomical, Earth and Ocean Sciences; and Biological and Social Sciences—are to cover the basic sciences. They are formed from two existing ones, the directorate for Research and the directorate for National and International Programs.

The fourth new directorate, for Scientific, Technological and International Affairs, has been designed to link those activities that provide science advisory support. NSF director Stever noted, "With the President's announcement of his intention to reestablish within the White House organization the office of the Science Adviser, it is important that we bring together and coordinate more closely those units of NSF that may be called upon to provide effective support."

The reorganization, however, does not

involve major changes for the three remaining directorates that existed before the reorganization, those of Science Education, Research Applications, and Administration.

Edward Creutz, formerly assistant director for research, will head the Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences directorate. The divisions of Materials Research and Computer Research will be in this directorate along with those divisions indicated in the directorate's name. The astronomy section has been taken out of the division of mathematical and physical sciences and is now part of Astronomical, Earth and Ocean Sciences. Robert E. Hughes has been designated to head this directorate, and he will also serve as acting head for the directorate for Scientific, Technological and International Affairs. Included here among others are the Science and Technology Policy Office, the Office of Energy R&D and the Division of Science Resources Studies. NSF deputy director Richard Atkinson will serve as acting assistant director for biological and social sciences.

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research directorates and three assistant directors of NSF to act as spokesmen for basic science.

Bauman joined Conlan in decrying the closed aspects of NSF operations. He asked, "To what extent do NSF grants overlap or duplicate the authority of other agencies of government?" and "Is there a possibility that NSF's grant-making procedure is retarding rather than promoting the cause of basic scientific research?" He feels these questions cannot be answered with the present level of secrecy. How could any biases be detected? Although it is his amendment for Congressional review of NSF operations that was riding with the House NSF authorization bill, he is not committed to it particularly—"I am open to suggestions as to how it might be modified without sacrificing the principle of Congressional review."

Stever said he is powerless to open up the peer-review process completely. Nonetheless, NSF is moving to answer its critics. "We are discovering that the difference of opinion is much sharper for the social sciences than for the physical sciences," Stever noted. "We believe we must be more careful in this area." To achieve this goal, a social scientist, Richard Atkinson, has recently joined the staff as deputy director and he has solicited the aid of a National Academy review panel to help in the NSF evaluation of social-science programs.

Whatever changes takes place at NSF because of the current wave of concern will doubtless occur only after long de-

bate and deliberation. If there are problems of bias and favoritism on the part of reviewers and NSF employees, will opening the peer-review system to Congressional overview help the situation? Or will it only serve to politicize the scientific community's selection process—might a scientist be tempted to use his Congressman's influence to help him receive a grant? Perhaps Chairman Symington provided watchwords for the proceedings: "We must be careful not to break what we are trying to mend."

—RAS

in brief

Opportunities to attend summer seminars or to teach abroad during the 1976-77 academic year are available under the Fulbright-Hays act. Assistant professors, instructors, elementary and secondary school teachers may be eligible; applications are due by 1 November. The Teacher Exchange Section, Division of International Education, US Office of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202, will supply details.

Research and Development in Industry 1972, an NSF report, is available from the US Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for \$2.05.

Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corp, formerly a subsidiary of Babcock & Wilcox Co, is now the Nuclear Materials Division of B & W.

A Directory of Visiting Lecturers and Research Scholars, listing researchers in the US under the Fulbright-

Hays program, is available free from Council of International Exchange of Scholars, 2101 Constitution Ave NW, Washington, D.C. 20418.

Ceremonies marked the activation of the new US Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, replacing the original one constructed in 1956 but now crushed under ice.

A new quarterly journal, *Electrocomponent Science and Technology* (incorporating *Thin Films*) has appeared. Annual subscriptions are available from Gordon and Breach, One Park Ave, New York, N.Y. 10016 for \$21.00.

The Atomic Energy Commission (now ERDA) has extended, for five years, its contract with the University of Rochester to carry out biomedical research programs, especially relating to the effects of radiation and radioactive materials.

A Surface Science Center has been formed within the Argonne National Laboratory CTR program with Manfred Kaminsky as director.

Publication of a new bimonthly journal *Physika Plasmy* was announced by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Inquiries should be addressed to Lebedev Physical Inst., *Plasma Physics*, Leninsky Prospect 53, Moscow, USSR.

The Atomic Industrial Forum plans to transfer the bulk of its operations from New York to Washington, D.C. during 1975.

ERDA has awarded two contracts of about \$500 000 each to assess the potential for wind energy conversion systems. Lockheed-California and General Electric Space Division will do the work.

Federal Funds for Research, Development, and Other Scientific Activities, an NSF report covering the fiscal years 1973 through 1975 is available from the US Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for \$1.70.

Ground was broken for the \$1.8 million Sherman Fairchild Laboratory for solid-state research at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa.

A National Science Board report, *Scientific and Technical Manpower Projections*, is available from the US Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for \$1.45.

ERDA estimates that US uranium reserves as of January 1975 are 200 000 tons of U_3O_8 recoverable at \$8.00 or less per pound.

A new quarterly, *Journal of Electrostatics* will carry papers on static electricity—its fundamental aspects, applications and hazards. Annual subscriptions for \$47.95 and free sample copies are available from Elsevier, PO Box 211, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. □