

## OPENING STATEMENT

**The Honorable Mo Brooks (R-AL), Chairman**  
Subcommittee on Research and Science Education  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

*Ensuring the Best Stewardship of American Taxpayer Dollars at the National Science Foundation*

May 9, 2012

Good afternoon and welcome. I'd like to thank Ms. Lerner for being with us today to discuss the oversight role of the National Science Foundation (NSF) Office of Inspector General (OIG) and current stewardship issues confronting NSF.

While we have devoted a number of hearings to oversight in this Congress, including oversight of NSF programs and activities, hearing from the Foundation's Inspector General (IG) about internal and external oversight is particularly important. With the recent revelations about GSA extravagance and the NOAA magician debacle still fresh in our minds, I trust there will be no similar surprises in the upcoming NSF OIG report.

The NSF OIG provides independent oversight of the Foundation's programs and operations. By statute, the NSF OIG is independent from the agency, with the IG reporting directly to the National Science Board (NSB) and the Congress. The Administration's FY13 budget request includes over \$14 million for the OIG, an amount equal to the FY12 estimate.

The OIG assesses internal controls, financial management, information technology, and other systems that affect the operation of NSF programs. By identifying individuals who attempt to abuse the public trust or defraud government programs, the OIG also enforces integrity in agency operations.

The next semi-annual NSF OIG report will be available next month; however, there are number of issues ripe for discussion today. Last year alone, for the six months ending September 30, 2011, the OIG investigative staff closed 50 investigations, had five research misconduct cases result in findings by NSF, and recovered over \$12 million for the government. Additionally, eleven audit reports and reviews were issued which identified over \$200 thousand in questioned costs.

In addition to general audit and investigation updates, we look forward to receiving the latest developments on the Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC) projects contingency issue, something we began discussions about in a recent Subcommittee hearing. I am particularly interested to learn more about OIG's oversight of stimulus spending and its concerns regarding fraud within the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program,

It is my hope, Ms. Lerner, that the OIG will continue to be a steward of taxpayer dollars, ensuring that NSF programs and awardees are managed responsibly. I look forward to hearing the testimony to be presented today and thank you again, for taking time to share your insights with us.