National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001

NID 1000-69
NPD 1000.3
NPR 3335.1

December 4, 2008

TO: Officials-in-Charge of Headquarters Offices
Directors, NASA Centers

FROM: Associate Administrator

SUBJECT: NASA Interim Directive (NID): Agency Policy for Personnel Assignments to the Independent Program Assessment Office (IPAO), the NASA Engineering and Safety Center (NESC), and the NASA Safety Center (NSC)

The purpose of this NID is to issue an interim policy that provides a consistent approach for staffing organizations with responsibility for Agency-level functions, such as the IPAO, the NESC, and the NSC. This policy is designed to enable these organizations to recruit and select candidates for key positions from highly qualified individuals across the Agency.

This NID shall be in effect until the release of updates to NPD 1000.3C, The NASA Organization, and NPR 3335.1G, Internal Placement of NASA Employees, as directed below.

Unless specifically covered by this policy, this NID does not supersede existing Human Resources policies for NASA personnel (e.g., reduction in force).

Background

The work of the IPAO, NESC, and NSC organizations requires experts in engineering and program/project management.

The IPAO, which is resident at the Langley Research Center (LaRC) and reports to the Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation, provides independent assessments of NASA programs and projects at life-cycle milestones to enhance the Agency review processes and associated decision making to ensure the highest probability of mission success.

The NESC, which is resident at LaRC and reports to the Office of the Chief Engineer, serves as an Agency-wide resource to perform value-added independent testing, analyses, and technical assessments of NASA's projects and technical activities to enhance safety and mission success. The NESC is also proactive in helping NASA prevent future problems.

The NSC, which is resident at the Glenn Research Center and reports to the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance, serves as an Agency-wide resource for strengthening safety and mission assurance (SMA) capabilities and enabling more uniform and effective SMA support for the safe and successful execution of all NASA programs.

Goal

The Agency's goal is to ensure that these organizations are staffed by top Agency talent, with varied experiences and perspectives, while providing unique career development opportunities to participating employees. The approach for achieving this goal is to staff key positions, using permanent or long-term rotational assignments, to attract Agency experts and, in the case of the rotational assignments, to return the participating employees to the engineering and program/project management workforce enriched by the experiences gained by conducting Agency functions. After serving in an IPAO, NESC, or NSC position, an employee will be afforded the ability to return to the at-large workforce to a position that provides the most benefit to the employee and to the Agency.

Criteria for Organizational Eligibility

Agency management has established certain organizations that:

1. Serve as an Agency-level check and balance, such as the IPAO, or provides an Agency-level cadre of experts which serves the Agency, such as the NESC and the NSC.

2. Employ permanent and long-term rotational employees from across the Agency to ensure technical excellence, specialized expertise, and breadth of experience are available within each organization.

Eligibility for assignments governed by this policy is presently limited to the IPAO, NESC, and NSC. However, future application of the policies contained in this NID, and, ultimately, institutionalized in permanent Agency policy documents to organizations beyond the IPAO, NESC, and NSC, will require categorization within NPD 1000.3 as an organization with responsibility for an Agency-level function or technical resource.

As such, the next update of NPD 1000.3 shall:

1. Introduce and define such an organization as one that fulfills Agency policy or provides special expertise across all areas of NASA's mission portfolio.

2. Designate IPAO, NESC, and NSC as organizations governed by this policy.

3. Include a new section in Chapter 5 (Mission Statements and Organizational Charts for Centers as well as Technical and Service Support Centers) to describe IPAO as an organization with responsibility for providing independent project and program reviews as required by NPR 7120.5D, NASA Space Flight Program and Project Management Requirements.

Note: The NESC and NSC are already captured in Chapter 5 of NPD 1000.3 (Section 5.10 and 5.12, respectively).

Agency Policy for Personnel Assignments to Agency-level Functions:

Personnel assignments supporting applicable organizations in technical roles shall adhere to the following policies. Administrative, secretarial, and business support roles within these organizations will continue to be governed by existing Agency policies. **NPR 3335.1G, Internal Placement of NASA Employees, will be updated in accordance with applicable policy updates directed by this NID.**

1. **Duration:** Assignment periods shall either be designated as permanent or as long-term rotational assignments. Long-term rotational assignments shall be two to five years in duration. Assignments beyond two years will be assessed and discussed with the employee on an annual basis.

2. **Placement:** To attract NASA's best talent to Agency-level positions, temporary promotion opportunities may be offered. Temporary promotions, when offered, will apply for the duration of the appointment and, therefore, will be reassessed prior to exercising each one-year option.

   a. GS-level temporary promotions require approval by Human Resources.

   b. Senior Level (SL) and Senior Scientific and Technical (ST) positions will continue to be regulated by the Executive Resources Board as specified by NASA Management (NPR 3319.1, Management of Senior Scientific and Technical (ST) and other Senior Level (SL) Positions).

3. **Duty Location:** Vacancy announcements for positions within these organizations will specify the duty location. The duty location may be the employee's home Center, the home Center of the employing organization, or, in some cases, another facility. To provide employees flexibility in relocation based on their individual circumstances, employees relocating to another facility will be processed using either Permanent Change of Station (PCS) or Temporary Change of Station (TCS), as negotiated between the employee, the receiving, and the losing organizations (Federal Travel Regulations, Chapter 302, Subchapter B: Relocation Allowances (TCS), or Chapter 302, Subchapter C: Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Allowances for Subsistence and Transportation Expenses).

   a. The employee will be reimbursed for the move.

   b. The employee will be compensated at the pay rate of the assigned duty facility.

   c. All provisions in sections 4-8 shall apply to relocations processed under either PCS or TCS procedures.

d. TCS options should only be considered for shorter term rotational assignments whose duration is known to be approximately 2 years and must be restricted to assignment durations no greater than 30 months.

4. **Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Billets**: The receiving organization shall provide an FTE billet for each position regardless of the employee's duty location. When a Center employee is selected for a long-term rotational position serving one of these entities, the Center retains the vacated FTE billet and may backfill the position. Upon completion of the rotational term when an employee returns to the at-large workforce, the losing organization retains the vacated FTE billet, and the receiving Center assigns an FTE, billet and assumes responsibility for the returning employee.

5. **Reentry**:

a. At any point in the employee's appointment, employees serving in these organizations shall be eligible to apply for all vacancies listed in the Agency.

b. If an employee serving in a long-term rotational position chooses to return to his/her home Center, the Center shall place the returning employee either non-competitively into a position at their original grade level (honoring any within grade increases that would have otherwise accrued) or competitively into a position at a higher level than the original position they held at the home Center.

c. If the returning employee is competitively placed into an Agency position at another facility, the hiring organization will be responsible for the employee's geographic move and change of station. For employees returning to their home Center at their original grade level, the organization releasing that employee will be responsible for the employee's geographic move and change of station.

6. **Badging**: Consistent with NPR 1600.1, NASA Security Program Procedural Requirements, employees accepting long-term rotational appointments shall maintain their home Center security badge. The director of the employing organization may request an exception to this policy from the resident Chief, Protective Services Office. The exception request must identify the rationale for rebadging the employee(s) and why it is deemed advantageous and improves the ability of the employee(s) to perform the duties of their position.

7. **Funding**: Salaries, travel, training, awards, office space and furnishings, and information technology equipment will be funded by the employing organization, or as otherwise negotiated by the employing organization with other Agency entities.

8. **Performance Plans and Appraisals**: Consistent with NPR 3430.1C, NASA Employee Performance Communication System (EPCS), performance plans and appraisals shall be the responsibility of the organization employing each permanent and long-term rotational employee.

9. **Consistency**: All future changes to the terms and conditions for employees assigned to one of these organizations shall be uniformly applied to the other organizations, unless specific exceptions are made by the NASA Associate Administrator.

Questions regarding this NID should be forwarded to Tina Palacios in my office. She can be reached at tina.palacios@nasa.gov or by phone: 202-358-2136.

C J Scolese

Christopher J. Scolese