

Carter Reducing Plan Adds Pounds

Amid great fanfare and as a major part of his plan to reduce the size of the federal bureaucracy, President Carter announced in August that the number of federal advisory committees would be reduced by 40 percent this year. Although about half of the reductions would be the result of committee consolidations and not outright terminations, it was anticipated that the overall number of members on panels would decline as a result of the reorganization.

Now, in at least one federal agency, the National Science Foundation (NSF), this has not proved to be the case. Although 36 NSF committees have been consolidated into 14, the overall membership as reflected in the new advisory committee charters actually will increase from 378 to 540.

An explanation for the anomaly may be found in the way the cuts were imposed and, according to NSF officials, in the peculiar mandate of the agency. The cuts were imposed after the President ordered a government-wide "zero-based" review of the panels in February. After an initial elimination in May of 304 committees, or 25 percent of the total 1189, reportedly made over resistance in a number of the agencies, Carter sent each agency head a letter that said, "I believe more can be done." As a result of this memo and some firm prodding by William Bonsteel of the Committee Management Secretariat in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), another 176 committees were added to the Administration's hit list.

None of the cuts were welcomed at NSF, according to one official. "The Foundation has always viewed itself peculiarly," the official said. "We are both a public and a private institution, and our lifeblood is the peer and program review accomplished through the advisory panel system."

Thus, when OMB turned down an NSF request to keep the advisory panels, a decision was made to consolidate the panels into large committees, each with subcommittees structured roughly the same as the panels they were designed to replace. Some of the new committees, each of which will have about 50 or 60 members, are not likely to ever meet, according to Becky Winkler, the NSF Committee Management Coordinator. Instead, their component subcommittees will continue meeting as before.

The NSF did terminate nine advisory committees outright, including its Advisory Committee for Research, Advisory Panel for Weather Modification, Science Applications Task Force, and the advisory committee on ethics and values. Although Administration officials said that the announced terminations were made as the result of the review ordered by Carter, Winkler said that five of the nine panels had been scheduled for termination this year irrespective of the review.

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The advisory committees that were chosen for termination by NSF and other agencies were selected on the basis of three criteria established by Carter: the lack of a compelling need for their continuation, a lack of balance in their membership, and a lack of openness in the way they conduct their business.

To monitor the second standard—a balance in membership—the Senate Subcommittee on Reports, Accounting, and Management since 1974 has published, at the direction of subcommittee chairman Lee Metcalf (D-Mont.), a

yearly index to the advisory committee membership.

The 1340-page index for 1976, which was released on 20 October, reveals extraordinary patterns of personal, corporate, and academic influence, according to an analysis by the subcommittee staff. Among their findings are:

- Representatives of 28 large companies, led by American Telephone & Telegraph, hold more than 1000 seats on the advisory committees. RCA, for example, has 94 members on 24 panels advising eight federal agencies and departments on such topics as international shipping, radiation safety standards, and higher education.

- Representatives of 14 universities, led by the University of California, hold more than 1800 seats on the committees.

- Four labor unions, led by the AFL-CIO, hold nearly 200 seats.

- One hundred seventy-three individuals, most of them from corporations, hold between 4 and 12 seats each.

Such information is relevant to Carter's plan for cutting the number of panels, according to Metcalf, because "depending on how they are implemented, the cuts and consolidations could result in even stronger patterns of personal, corporate, and institutional influence."—R. JEFFREY SMITH

Corporations with the greatest number of members on federal advisory panels.

Rank	Company	Number
1	American Telephone & Telegraph	120
2	RCA	94
3	General Electric	74
4	Communications Satellite	60
5	Rockwell International Corporation	50
6	International Telephone and Telegraph	44
7	Exxon	38
8	Western Union International	35
9	Boeing	33
9	General Telephone & Electronics	33
11	Motorola	32
12	Ford Motor	29
13	International Business Machines	27
14	Aeronautical Radio	26

Universities with the greatest number of members on federal advisory panels.

University	1976		1975 Rank	1974 Rank
	Number	Rank		
University of California	394	1	1	1
University of Texas	160	2	3	3
Harvard University	140	3	2	2
University of Washington	123	4	5	9
University of Michigan	118	5	6	6
Johns Hopkins	114	6	9	5
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	113	7	7	4
University of Wisconsin	104	8	10	8
State University of New York	101	9	*	11
Yale University	100	10	8	13
Columbia University	96	11	*	7
Stanford University	96	11	4	10
University of Illinois	93	13	*	14
University of Minnesota	93	13	*	16

*No data available.