

SCIENCE'S COMPASS

(NSF) should be transferred to NASA (News of the Week, "Report finds fault with NSF oversight," A. Lawler, 14 Sept., p. 1967). The study, conducted by the Committee on the Organization and Management of Research in Astronomy and Astrophysics (COMRAA) of the National Research Council, was firmly against the transfer and made several alternative recommendations. However, I offer another idea of how to improve the balance of the NSF and NASA astronomy programs—upgrade NSF's Division of Astronomical Sciences (AST) to an Office of Astronomical Sciences.

A close look at AST's current responsibilities shows that such a change is overdue. No division at NSF has several national centers that give observing time to so wide a set of visitors; no division has such high levels of responsibility for international collaborations (namely, Gemini and ALMA); no division has such extensive responsibilities for operations abroad (e.g., in Chile); and no division needs a long-range spending plan to the degree that AST does. In contrast, an NSF office (like Polar Programs) routinely deals with international issues, has operations abroad involving several countries, and has long-range plans that must mesh with the plans

of other agencies and foreign organizations. The AST has operated with these types of responsibilities without adequate recognition for many years and has not had the budget that its responsibilities require for effective operation. In an office mode, the astronomy program at NSF would be much better matched to, and be on a more equal footing with, its counterpart, NASA's Office of Space Sciences.

Making such a change would be a first step toward solving the types of management problems that prompted the Office of Management and Budget to ask for their study, and it would be a step toward solving other problems addressed by the COMRAA recommendations.

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CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Letters: "Managing climate risk" by M. Obersteiner *et al.* (26 Oct., p. 786). In the list of authors' addresses, extra words were accidentally inserted in J. Yan's affiliation. It is "Shanghai Jiaotong University, China."

Brevia: "Climate change in nontraditional data sets" by R. Sagarin and F. Micheli (26 Oct., p. 811). Because of an editing error, the name of Alaska's Tanana River was misspelled.

Perspectives: "A census of cosmic matter" by B. D. Fields (19 Oct., p. 529). The final note was inadvertently omitted from the article. It is, "This material is based on work supported by the National Science Foundation under grant number AST-0092939."

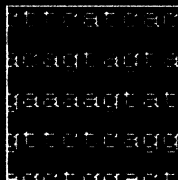
NetWatch: "Weather report" (5 Oct., p. 19). The URL for the University of Illinois weather site was incorrect; it is [ww2010.atmos.uiuc.edu/\(Gh\)/guides/mtr/cld/home.rxml](http://ww2010.atmos.uiuc.edu/(Gh)/guides/mtr/cld/home.rxml)

Letters to the Editor

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