

Reaction from Staff Regarding Pay Inequities Announced by NSF Director and Chief Operating Officer in Contradiction of President Biden's Executive Order 14061 issued December 22, 2023

1. I am astounded, and not in a good way by this breach of trust, with AD-4 employees. Thoroughly pissed off. To put it frankly. I have already lost a lot of trust in NSF due to the way remote work and telework has been rolled out. This finishes off any remaining trust. I say something stronger but I'm trying to contain my reaction in the moment.
2. I have let my AD and DAD know of my reaction to this. I am seething.
3. Factor in inflation and this erodes our relative pay levels.
4. What I see as another issue here is that there are AD-4 staff, including myself, that are still within the GS-14/15 pay range. I don't see why a GS-15, who makes more than I do, deserves a pay increase and I do not. Was there any discussion of the fact that many AD-4 employees are currently within the pay band of GS-14s and 15s? From my perspective, their reasoning does not make sense based on the wage gap explanation.
5. It's quite a betrayal.
6. So frustrating.
7. I have little respect for most SES level people here after this.
8. Program Directors work many long hours; this should stop immediately. SES have a higher responsibility – PDs should not make their bonuses easier by working for free.
9. Additionally, if new staff come on board at the same or higher salaries (IPA) then they should not be trained (extensively) by other Program Directors (adding to their workload but not their pay).
10. All employees are eligible for awards and bonuses, so this does not compensate for the lack of a salary increase.
11. My pay has been capped for over a decade – this is adding insult to injury.
12. I am hitting the roof and making calls. The rich get richer.
13. It is not covering inflation for sure.
14. I can't even with this pay thing. The level of contempt that "leadership" has for the science staff is truly shocking.

15. On top of the grossness of further lining the pockets of the career SES (who already receive enormous bonuses), the AD-4 staff effectively get a significant salary decrease during a time when we have the highest inflation in decades.
16. I have some other choice words but will keep them to myself until I work out a politically correct way to say them.
17. And AD 4s should be happy with 1% because there are annual bonuses and awards? This is insulting.
18. I agree – the reason for making such a distinction in salaries between the SES management and AD PDs is not only insulting, but it will also likely result in reduction of intellectual leadership from PDs. In my opinion PDs not only work (in terms of activities and time) as much or more than SES managers, but often devote inordinate time and effort towards ensuring strong, robust, and well devised documents, activities, and communications. Deeming them as less worthy of the annual pay raise, simply to increase the already sufficiently large gap between SES and AD is ridiculous and speaks against the very idea that we are working towards increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion.
19. AD-04 salary increases of ~1% in 2023 will struggle and *stagger* under the >5% economic inflation
20. At the same time, AD-04 program officers are *staggering* under our ever-increasing workload. Despite that, we remain committed to--and accomplish--the mission of NSF!
21. I would add that this decision made at the time of inflation reaching values unseen since 1980's is truly at odds with not just best management practices, but also common sense.
22. Arguments about SES pay gap can be made. But even if we agree it is a real issue, the remedy should not be imposed in such a drastic way. Instead it needs to be done in a deliberative, well-communicated, and well thought-out manner, spread over several years, and it should include a broader range of tools to make SES positions more attractive for all the right reasons. This should be done without severely damaging the morale of our hard working staff, and in a manner substantially different from what looks like a last-minute money grab prepared behind a closed door.
23. AD-4 personnel and their families are about to receive a pay cut while SES (many of whom do not work the scientific realm), are receiving plump bonuses and salary increases.
24. There have been no meetings among the members of the Senior Executive Service about this topic, so I was as surprised as many of you at the contents of the email. I am sorry that this is happening.
25. I feel tremendously disappointed and being let down by management.

26. Thank you for bringing to our attention the unfair distribution of funding for the increase in salary Biden promised to federal employees planned by NSF leadership. It seems unfair and based on wrong assumptions that the lack of salary gap is the main reason for PDs not applying for SES position. I can assure you and all interested parties that the SES salary does not play any role in my decision not to apply for the job. I would not apply even if it was 50% more! I prefer to work with the proposals and the PIs, not to manage people. And many of my colleagues expressed the same sentiment.
27. Such decision not to reward dedicated government servants with increase to partially offset inflations is very hurtful and disheartening. It does not help with increasing the morale, and will not help NSF to be the 2nd best organization in the government based on the future survey.
28. I hope the leadership will take our feedback into consideration and reconsider.
29. Polite words are not adequate to describe this situation, but I will refrain from the profanity it would require.
30. It is hard to accept that our leadership didn't know given that there was a memorandum that went to them on the 17th. And that that memorandum outlined raises well in excess of the 4.1% increase approved by Mr. Biden for almost all SES at the agency.
31. I certainly found this shameful decision demoralizing, not to mention that it flies in the face of the spirit of the Biden administration's provision for cost of living raises to government employees. My understanding was that this was to partially offset the runaway inflation the nation has experienced. Apparently, NSF senior leadership does not think that inflation affected people in the AD-4 classification.
32. I have worked in some bad work environments and while NSF is a wonderful place to work this seems like a decision intended to create a dehumanized workplace. I think what is missed in the argument for a larger gap between the AD-4 and SES level positions is that if one's motivation for moving into SES is increased pay, then one is probably not a good candidate for an SES position. I do feel there should be some difference in compensation, and I am not opposed to increasing the gap. However, this decision is in effect a decision to single out AD-4s for a pay cut rather than to adjust SES compensation to improve recruitment. The signal it sends is strong and negative. Singling out a segment of the workforce for punitive treatment is generally used as a mechanism to increase attrition in that segment, and it invariably decreases beneficial interactions.
33. This decision does not increase pay for SES employees it cuts the pay of AD-4s. It appears intended to decrease the shared purpose across the foundation and does not mesh with the 'shared community' style of ethics that makes NSF great. If an increase in Pay for SES positions is needed, then I suggest their pay be increased. This is a decrease which appears to be punitive with respect to AD-4s.

34. This is a shameful decision and failing of our senior leadership at the Foundation. I don't know a single PO who doesn't give their all for the Foundation. This will likely deteriorate with this level of support from leadership. I expect there will be flood of retirements in the near future.
35. If SES members think they are underpaid, they should take it up with the administration. Taking pay increases from the AD staff is not appropriate.
36. Why should there necessarily be a gap between AD and SES pay? The reason given (to incentivize AD employees to apply for SES positions) is NOT a reason to take AD staff's share of an across-the-board pay increase. This is a thinly-veiled self-serving act.
37. The SES already has much larger bonuses. That apparently is not enough and they want to take the AD staff's hard-earned pay increases too.
38. The SES took bonus pay away from AD staff and other higher-end categories a decade or so ago when they made the bonus payments flat instead of proportional to base salary. This was finally fixed recently. At least that time it was on behalf of GS employees at the lower end of the pay range. Taking pay raises away from AD staff to give them to themselves is an egregious abuse of power.
39. I am deeply disturbed to hear about this decision. Program directors are critical to NSF's mission and work tirelessly (well in excess of 40 hours) to make amazing things happen under often ridiculous deadlines. Highly qualified scientific staff have options and many will choose to explore them. It is going to impact morale at the agency at a time when we just can't afford it.
40. I was shocked by the message. I have been working for NSF for more than 14 years at AD-4 level. I love my job and work hard for advancing science and technology. I never felt treated unfairly at NSF. But this time I do. I fully support to address issues in inequity for Senior Executive Service (SES) pay, if any. However, it should be addressed by scarifying another group of people's interest and creating inequity for another group of people. Such inequity creates a bad example in the federal government agencies. It will also damage good relationship between SES and PDs in NSF if it is not corrected timely.
41. NSF's policies are making it completely unattractive for PDs.
42. I would like to express my deep disappointment with the choice NSF management made to not increase salaries of AD staff in a meaningful way, while GS and SES apparently will see significant increases in their salaries.
43. AD staff are, collectively, the main engine of the Foundation and working very hard to serve both the scientific communities we come from as well as the US Government. We process an ever-increasing number of proposals, and are managing an ever-expanding portfolio of programs. I have seen the - welcome! - expansion of collaboration, interactions among directorates, interdisciplinarity, attention to assessment, and to BPDEI concerns. This all, however, steadily increases the workload of all of us.

44. We have more and more working groups, joint solicitations, outreach activities, and other tasks. The Pandemic has added further complications to how we do business. However, I don't feel that NSF upper management fully appreciates their Program Directors. Between the push to lower performance ratings (we all do our jobs with passion and dedication! What is wrong with acknowledging that?) and singling out the AD staff for a much lower salary increase, the program directors feel deeply unappreciated. I can report that the level of disgruntlement and disappointment among my colleagues is high.
45. I am especially irked by the argument that the "low" SES salaries (before ~\$20K are added) are a disincentive for AD staff to apply for these positions. I am very sure that NSF has gotten in-house applications for every SES job that has been posted and yet, more often than not, outsiders end up being hired. This has created major morale problems among permanent and long-serving program directors for a long time. I urge you to reconsider the decision to not give AD staff the salary increases they deserve.
46. This is a glaring act of disrespect for hard-working program directors at NSF. Honestly, although I only get paid for 40 hours a week, I typically work much more, on the order of 50 hours weekly, and feel that this differential pay raise is a slap in the face.
47. I was distressed to hear about the pay raise minimization by NSF management. I understand the effect of pay caps but do not see that we should bear the impact, especially in the face of extraordinary bonuses for performance. I do not know what can be done, but I wanted you to know how unfair this is; inflation has hit us just like everyone in the past year+. I find the wishy-washy email from Marrongelle infuriating and a half truth, missing the impact on permanent AD-4.
48. I can't believe this!
49. I join with my AD colleagues in stating how insulting it feels to know that while President Biden recommended and Congress passed a 4.6% pay raise, the NSF leadership is choosing to enhance the salaries of SES employees at the expense of those employees designated on the AD scale.
50. It would appear that the rhetoric about how important we are and how much the work we have done during the pandemic and persist in doing during the COVID endemic is just that, "rhetoric." This action on salaries belies the rhetoric.
51. I hope that creative minds will find another way to ameliorate what is viewed as a gap in the pay scale than to devalue important AD employees.
52. I would like to express my dismay at the inequity that is being proposed that will impact every program officer on the AD scale at NSF. Every GS employee has received the full 4.6% pay raise, but AD Program Officers will receive only a 1% pay raise. I understand that the OD sees this as an opportunity to address the SES scale inequities, but this is a slap

in the face to every program officer at NSF. For many of us, we've already had no increases or increases that don't keep our pay even equal to the rate of inflation. If inequities were to be addressed, why not come up with an equal pay raise for all NSF employees? 4.6% compared to 1% - this is an inequity that hits a critical sector of the NSF workforce.

53. This seems counter to the culture and recognition of the hard work and creativity of staff at the AD level being articulated throughout the NSF. I echo my colleagues' sense of the devaluing the contributions and importance of AD employees.
54. I would like to also add my voice to that of my colleagues and register my dismay at the developments regarding the compensation for AD-4 employees. While I am sensitive to the challenges of executive management, I am in agreement that this decision is insulting, callous, and out of step with the sensitivity and care I have come to expect from our leadership. As noted, it runs counter to the rhetoric about our work in the COVID era and also feels oblivious of, or perhaps indifferent to, the impact of the substantive inflationary pressures of this past year.
55. The foundation and directorate have (rightly) trumpeted the positive feedback and high rankings received from FEVS over the past few years. This decision risks transforming that point of pride into a source of wry satire for a nontrivial part of our workforce. I echo the call for a serious reconsideration of this decision and a move towards a more respectful, reflective, and balanced path forward.
56. In particular, from a personal standpoint, I did two jobs over the last year because we were short staffed. At the same time, I have had a child who was in and out of the hospital since last April. They have not had a normal week of schooling since then, including two months as an inpatient in the hospital. Throughout that time, I could have taken FMLA, but out of obligation to the agency, my colleagues, and the facilities, I spread myself extremely thin trying to keep all of the balls in the air. Therefore, this is a huge kick in the stomach and reality check that the agency doesn't care.
57. Good people are already mad about the agency's handling of remote work, and good people are already looking at exit strategies. It is the good folks that will leave.