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## Rita Colwell leaves NSF

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The National Science Foundation (NSF) announced on Wednesday (February 11) that [Rita Colwell](#) will be [leaving her position](#) as director of the NSF, effective February 21, 2004, and accepting a position at Canon US Life Sciences.

Colwell's term was set to expire in August. NSF spokesperson Leslie Fink said that only three previous NSF directors have stayed until their term expired, so it's "not unusual" for Colwell to be leaving at this time.

Debra Epstein, vice president of Corporate Communications for [Canon USA](#), told us that Colwell will be serving as chairman of Canon US Life Sciences, a subsidiary of Canon USA. According to Epstein, Canon US Life Sciences was founded in December 2002 to "identify and develop life science solutions with potential applications in diagnostics and medical instrumentation." Its scientific advisory board includes John Coleman, Tom Shenk, and Craig Venter. Epstein declined to comment on how long negotiations with Colwell had been underway.

Since Colwell's appointment in August 1998, NSF's budget increased 68% and the average annual grant size grew from \$90,000 to \$142,000. Colwell also was responsible for increases in graduate student stipends, initiatives to support women and minorities in science and engineering, and programs to encourage science and math graduate students to participate in K-12 education.

President Bush [announced](#) that he would appoint [Arden L. Bement, Jr.](#), National Institute of Standards and Technology director since 2001, as acting NSF director. Bement served on the US National Science Board, NSF's governing board, from 1989 to 1995. He also has served as a professor of nuclear materials at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, director of the Office of Materials Science at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and chair of the Commission for Engineering and Technical Studies and the National Materials Advisory Board of the National Research Council.

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5. Arden L. Bement, Jr., [<http://www.nist.gov/director/bios/bement.htm>]