

# DOJ's Scientific Integrity Policy and Professional Development of OJP Scientists



**NIJ**

- The “Holdren memo” (March 2009) aimed to ensure *the highest level of integrity in all aspects of the Executive branch’s involvement with scientific and technological processes*

# Today's Discussion Focuses on Three Key Components

- Scientific integrity and independence
- Professional development of government scientists
- Public communications

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“It is the policy of the Department to implement and uphold the highest standards for ethics and integrity in all scientific, technological, research, and scholarly activities.”

# Scientific Integrity and Independence Are Key to a Scientific Culture

- Scientific research will use the scientific method
- Selection of DOJ scientists will be based on scientific credentials
- Results conveyed accurately while characterizing uncertainty
- Requires establishment of peer review processes



# BJS, NIJ Directors Have Final Authority Over Their Grants

- Two key components of independence include
  - control of the establishment of priorities
  - control of the grant process
- Policy gives discretion on setting of the research agenda and execution (within policy bounds)

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DOJ scientists need “to maintain the highest levels of competency, proficiency, integrity and credibility within their disciplines.”

# Policy Promotes Specific Ways of Developing DOJ Scientists

- Encourage publication of research findings in peer-reviewed scholarly journals
- Encourage presentation of scientific findings at professional meetings
- Allow government scientists to become editors or editorial board members of professional or scholarly journals
- Allow full participation in professional or scholarly societies, committees, task forces and specialized bodies of professional societies, including removing barriers (where appropriate) for service as officers on governing boards of such societies
- Allow government scientists to receive honors and awards for their research and discoveries

# Offers Opportunities and Challenges

- Opportunities
  - Strengthens our scientific workforce
  - Makes OJP a more attractive destination for ambitious criminal justice researchers
  - Scientific research is part of OJP scientists' job descriptions, not only as ancillary activities
- Challenges
  - OJP is below its authorized staffing level
  - "...consistent with federal ethics rules..." has kept many of the barriers in place

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“It is the firm policy of DOJ not to interfere with questions directed to scientific inquiries, but to encourage the free flow of scientific, technological and research information and data analysis”



# Policy Promotes Openness and Transparency Whenever Practicable

- The Policy affirms
  - the goal of open and transparent communication by scientists of scientific research findings
  - that scientific and research personnel should interact directly with the media about their work
  - that scientific work is shielded from political influence
  - a prohibition on Department employees suppressing or altering scientific or research findings
  - BJS and NIJ retain control over the timing and content of their statistical and research reports and related press releases



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