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Placement Report for the IEEE-USA State Department Fellowship

January 2012

I began my appointment as an IEEE-USA State Department Fellow on Tuesday January 3 in the Bureau of Oceans, International Environment and Scientific Affairs, Environment Directorate, OES/ENV.

What was helpful in the placement process was the initial listing of Offices interested in having a Fellow on staff and the AAAS Orientation Program. Also helpful was the introduction to previous Fellows during panel discussions as well as current Fellows. The opportunity for informal interaction and feedback at the receptions during the AAAS training was invaluable. Following the AAAS Orientation Program I spoke with Lawrence Lin from the Office of the Scientific Advisor to the Secretary. He provided a listing of openings with job descriptions and arranged for interviews as required.

What was difficult in the placement process was trying to identify activities and set up interviews in time for placement in January. Offices (other than Congress) with potential openings appeared to concentrate on Fall starts since their placement was more time critical. Most AAAS Fellows had already identified their assignments by the Orientation Program in September. As a January start, I took two short trips to DC following the AAAS Orientation to interview for potential positions as arranged for by Dr. Lin. I think it would be advantageous, both for the Fellows and the IEEE, to synchronize placement with the AAAS interview process, which begins around May. Even though the IEEE start date is later I think Fellows can be identified and chosen from candidates in time for this to occur.

My focus during interviews was to identify opportunities, which were both personally interesting and sufficiently well defined so as to allow for concrete and effective accomplishments to be achieved during the Fellowship period. I chose to join OES/ENV working in the office for Sustainability and Multilateral Affairs. My portfolio involves supporting the UN Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June of 2012 (RIO +20). My responsibilities are to interface with the Private Sector and Academia to solicit their active participation in the Conference and to develop the US National Report.