

Rita A. Teutonico, Ph.D.

Program Officer, Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences

National Science Foundation

Biography

Dr. Rita Teutonico is a Program Director in the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences at the National Science Foundation (NSF). She is currently beginning her third year as Program Director in the Genes and Genome Systems cluster within the Division. She has been a research scientist and educator for over 20 years. In addition, she has been involved with the ethical, legal, and social implications (ELSI) of technology, especially biotechnology, for a number of years.

For six years (1998 to 2004), Dr. Teutonico has been an Associate Professor in the Department of Integrated Science and Technology, Biotechnology Sector, James Madison University (JMU), Harrisonburg, Virginia. She helped develop the core, integrated curriculum for the major and developed many upper-level biotechnology concentration courses, including the 'ELSI of Biotechnology', the 'Business of Biotechnology', 'Biotechnology and the Environment', and the 'Regulation of Biotechnology.' She is currently on the Bioscience Regulatory Affairs Advisory Committee for the Advanced Academic Programs at Johns Hopkins University, Rockville, Maryland.

She has a doctorate in Cell and Molecular Biology from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and a Master's degree in Food Science from the University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware. She was a postdoctoral research associate for four years (1990 to 1994) at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, where she studied the molecular genetics of stress tolerances in crop plants, such as canola.

Besides her academic experience, Dr. Teutonico also has industry and government work experience. Prior to her position at James Madison University, she worked in the private sector (1994 to 1998), most recently as Vice President of Research at a high-technology consulting firm, Cognitative, Inc., in San Francisco, CA. Before that, she was a Market Research Analyst with Technology Forecasters in Alameda, CA and a Research Scientist at the agricultural biotechnology company, DNA Plant Technology Corporation, in Emeryville, CA. She has been a visiting scientist at NSF for the past two years, while on leave from JMU, and is currently continuing in this NSF position. For the past year at NSF, she has been the Chair of a federal, interagency task force that is charged with surveying the federal research portfolio for agricultural biotechnology risk analysis research. The group meets monthly and helps coordinate activities within the regulatory and research agencies.

Dr. Teutonico's areas of specialization include Plant Cell and Molecular Biology, Plant Breeding and Genetics, Food Biotechnology, Bioethics, Regulation of Agricultural Biotechnology, and Market Research. Dr. Teutonico has published numerous articles in professional journals and presented workshops and seminars at many conferences.

Dr. Teutonico has international research and policy experience, including co-developing and co-directing the JMU Summer Program in Malta, which brings U.S. students to Malta to work with local project sponsors on environmental issues, including beach management and environmental education. She also was a postdoctoral researcher at the agricultural biotechnology unit of Limagrain, Inc., in Cambridge, England, and has presented many papers at international conferences.

Her professional society affiliations include the American Society of Plant Biologists and the Institute of Food Technologists.
