# POSITION DESCRIPTION

**director of the office of science and technology policy, executive office of the president**

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Commerce, Science and Transportation |
| Agency Mission | The mission of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) is threefold: first, to provide the president and his senior staff with accurate, relevant and timely scientific and technical advice on all matters of consequence; second, to ensure that the policies of the executive branch are informed by sound science; and third, to ensure that the scientific and technical work of the executive branch is properly coordinated so as to provide the greatest benefit to society. |
| Position Overview | The primary function of the director is to provide, within the Executive Office of the President, advice on the scientific, engineering and technological aspects of issues that require attention at the highest levels of government. (42 U.S.C. § 6613) |
| Compensation | Level II $179,700 (5 U.S.C. § 5313)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | President of the United States  |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | OSTP has historically varied quite significantly in size based on the goals of the Administration. During the Obama administration, it has grown to approximately 120 full time employees including employees of the Executive Office of the President, detailees, fellows and others. Historically there have been 4 Senate-confirmed Associate Directors reporting to the Director: for science, technology, national security and international affairs and energy and the environment. The role of Chief Technology Officer was added during the Obama administration. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Provide the president and his senior staff with accurate, relevant and timely scientific and technical advice on all matters of scientific and technological consequence.
* Ensure that the policies of the executive branch are informed by sound science.
* Ensure that the scientific and technical work of the executive branch is properly coordinated, providing the greatest benefit to society.
* Serve as both assistant to the president for science and technology (the president’s key scientific advisor) and director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy.
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * PhD in natural sciences and/or engineering
* Strong scientific and technical background in a broad range of disciplines
* National recognition and respect as a leader in the science, engineering and academic communities
* Knowledge of the federal government and global science and technology policy
* Understanding and expertise in scientific and technological areas that have been designated as areas of priority for the president’s science policy
* Strong connections to the science and technology community
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| Competencies | * High level of intelligence and an analytical mind
* Good communication skills; ability to discuss complex issues in a way that is accessible to non-experts
* Strong leadership and management skills
* Political acumen
* Ability to learn how to achieve objectives and leverage the various levers of government to get things done (e.g., legislative, budgetary, via executive order)
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| John Paul Holdren (2009-2017): Teresa and John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University; Director of Science, Technology and Public Policy at Harvard’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs; Director, Woods Hole Research Center; Science Advisor on PCAST, President Clinton; Professor, University of California at Berkeley; Dr. Holdren’s work has focused on the causes and consequences of global environmental change, energy technologies and policies, reduction of dangers of nuclear weapons and materials and science and technology policy; he was trained in aeronautics, astronautics and plasma physics |
| John H. Marburger III (2001-2009): America physicist, specializing in theoretical physics of nonlinear optics and quantum optics; Co-Founder, Center for Laser Studies, University of Southern California; Director, Brookhaven National Laboratory; President, Stony Brook University; Chair, NYS Commission on the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant |
| Neal Francis Lane (1998-2001): American physicist; Director, National Science Foundation; Provost, Rice University; Chancellor, University of Colorado; Dr. Lane has written extensively on theoretical physics and technology policy for the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy |

# Endnotes

This position description was created with the help of Heidrick & Struggles, a global executive search firm.

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)