



Office of the Inspector General

Date July 26, 2013

To France Córdova, Chair, Board of Regents

cc John W. McCarter, Chair, Audit & Review Committee, Board of Regents  
Albert Horvath, Under Secretary for Finance and Administration/Chief  
Financial Officer

John K. Lapiana, Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Administration

Patricia Bartlett, Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary

Judith Leonard, General Counsel

From Scott S. Dahl, Inspector General *Scott S. Dahl*

Subject Annual Audit of Travel Expenses of the Board of Regents for Fiscal Year 2012,  
(Audit Number A-13-07)

We have completed our Annual Audit of Travel Expenses of the Board of Regents for fiscal year (FY) 2012. Our objective was to determine whether the travel expenses for those Regents who seek reimbursement for expenses associated with attending Board meetings comply with laws and regulations, and Smithsonian procedures. We also assessed the adequacy of the Smithsonian's procedures governing travel expense reimbursements for the Board of Regents. Based upon our audit of Regents' travel for fiscal year 2012, we determined that the Regents' travel reimbursements complied with laws and regulations, as well as Smithsonian procedures. The report is attached.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The statute that created the Smithsonian allows each member of the Board of Regents to be reimbursed for necessary travel and other actual expenses to attend Board and committee meetings and tasks the Board's Executive Committee with auditing these expenditures. In 2007, the Executive Committee requested that the Office of the Inspector General conduct annual audits of the Regents' travel expenses.

## **BACKGROUND**

### *Regents' Travel Review Process*

Regents generally attend four Board meetings a year, as well as numerous committee meetings and occasional special events. Regents who live outside the Washington D.C. area may travel to attend meetings and events. In most cases, these Regents' employers initially pay for the travel and then seek reimbursement from the Smithsonian for the Regents' lodging, transportation, meals and related expenses.

At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Office of the Regents creates purchase orders for those Regents expected to travel during the year. After the Regents travel, their employers generally submit travel reimbursement requests and supporting documentation to the Smithsonian's Office of the Regents.

The Special Assistant within the Office of the Regents reviews the reimbursement requests to determine if the costs are accurate, supported by documentation, and allowable. The Special Assistant forwards the request to the Special Assistant to the Secretary who also reviews the request and supporting documentation. The Special Assistant to the Secretary approves the request and forwards it to the Office of the Comptroller's Accounts Payable Division for payment.

The Accounts Payable staff reviews the summary memo signed by the Special Assistant to the Secretary with the detail attached. The summary memo states what meeting the Regent attended; describes the charges, including amounts; and states where to send the reimbursement. The staff inputs the invoice into the Smithsonian's accounting system, and the system creates a voucher. The accounting system then generates the payment to the Regent's employer by an electronic fund transfer.

### *OIG Annual Review*

To identify the total population of Regent travelers during the fiscal year, we reviewed minutes of Board of Regents and Committee meetings. We also obtained the general ledger from the Office of the Regents which listed all

reimbursements the Smithsonian made for Regents' travel expenses. We independently examined these records and the supporting source documents.

To evaluate the Smithsonian's procedures for reimbursement of Regents' travel expenses, we reviewed the Board of Regents Charter and Bylaws; the Office of the Regents' Reimbursement of Regents Meeting Expenses Policy; and 20 United States Code Section 44, which addresses the Smithsonian Board of Regents.

We conducted this audit in Washington, D.C., from April 2013 through May 2013, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence we obtained provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions based on our audit objectives.

### **RESULTS OF AUDIT**

During the audit period, October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012, only 3 of the 17 Regents requested reimbursement for travel expenses for 22 trips incurred while attending Board, Committee, or special events, for a total of \$19,526.

We reviewed 100 percent of the reimbursement claims for the 22 trips taken by the Regents and the supporting documentation. We verified the accuracy of the claims and confirmed that all claims were properly approved.

As a result, we found that the travel expenses for the Regents who sought reimbursement for the cost of attending Board of Regents and Committee meetings and occasional special events complied with laws, regulations, and Smithsonian procedures. We did not identify any trips for which the Smithsonian reimbursed the Regents for first-class air or rail fares, and all the Regents seeking reimbursement kept their meals and miscellaneous expenses within required limits. We also concluded that the Smithsonian's procedures governing Regents' reimbursements were adequate.

### **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

Management concurred with the report results and chose not to provide a written response.