Dr. Patricia M. Dehmer

Acting Director, Office of Science
U.S. Department of Energy

Patricia M. Dehmer has been the Acting Director for the Office of Science since April 2013. She is the Deputy Director for Science Programs in the Office of Science at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). In this capacity, Dr. Dehmer is the senior career science official in the Office of Science, which is third largest Federal sponsor of basic research in the United States, the primary supporter of the physical sciences in the U.S., and one of the premier science organizations in the world.

As Deputy Director for Science Programs, Dr. Dehmer provides scientific and management oversight for the six science programs of the Office of Science (basic energy sciences, biological and environmental research, fusion energy sciences, advanced scientific computing research, high energy physics, and nuclear physics), for workforce development for teachers and scientists, and for construction project assessment. The Office of Science supports research at 300 colleges and universities nationwide, at DOE laboratories, and at other private institutions.

From 1995 to 2007, Dr. Dehmer served as the Director of the Office of Basic Energy Sciences (BES) in the Office of Science. Under her leadership, the BES budget more than doubled in size to $1.2B annually. She built a world-leading portfolio of work in condensed matter and materials physics, chemistry, and biosciences. A five-year effort to relate fundamental research in these disciplines to real-world problems in energy – including problems in fossil energy and carbon dioxide sequestration, nuclear energy, renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy transmission and storage, and the mitigation of environmental impacts of energy use – facilitated greater integration of basic and applied research across DOE.

During this period, Dr. Dehmer also was responsible for the planning, design, and construction phases of more than a dozen major construction projects totaling $3 billion. Notable among these were the $1.4 B Spallation Neutron Source at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, five Nanoscale Science Research Centers totaling more than $300M, the total reconstruction of the Stanford Synchrotron Radiation Lightsource at the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory (SLAC), and the start of two new facilities for x-ray scattering – the Linac Coherent Light Source at SLAC, which is the world's first hard x-ray free electron laser, and the National Synchrotron Light Source II at Brookhaven National Laboratory, which will provide the highest spatial resolution of any synchrotron light source in the world.

Dr. Dehmer began her scientific career as a postdoctoral fellow at Argonne National Laboratory in 1972. She joined the staff of the Laboratory as an Assistant Scientist in 1975 and became a Senior Scientist in 1985. In 1992, the Laboratory established a new scientific rank that recognizes sustained outstanding scientific and engineering research, and Dr. Dehmer was among the 1% of the Laboratory's technical staff promoted to that rank, now called Argonne Distinguished Fellow, in that first year.

Dr. Dehmer's research in atomic, molecular, optical, and chemical physics resulted in more than 125 peer-reviewed scientific articles. Her studies of the interactions of electronic and atomic motion in molecules provided fundamental understanding of energy transfer, molecular rearrangement, and chemical reactivity.

Dr. Dehmer is a fellow of the American Physical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. For the 15 years prior to assuming her position as Director of BES, she served in dozens of elected and appointed positions in scientific and professional societies and on review boards. Dr. Dehmer was awarded the Meritorious Presidential Rank Award in 2000 and 2008 and the Distinguished Presidential Rank Award in 2003.

Dr. Dehmer received the Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from the University of Illinois in 1967 and the Ph.D. degree in Chemical Physics from the University of Chicago in 1972.