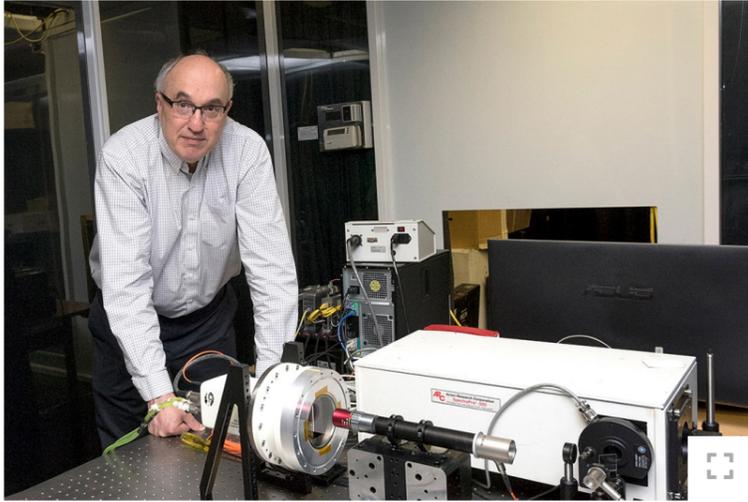


January 24, 2020 by [Luke Auburn](#) [Follow @lukeauburn](#)

RIT professor Zoran Ninkov tapped to support NSF as a program director

Zoran Ninkov will provide National Science Foundation with expertise in astronomy instrumentation and other fields



A. Sue Weisler

Professor Zoran Ninkov of RIT's Chester F. Carlson Center for Imaging Science will temporarily join the NSF in January as a program manager through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) program.

The National Science Foundation is bringing in a Rochester Institute of Technology professor with expertise in imaging and astrophysics to help the government agency evaluate future research opportunities.

Professor Zoran Ninkov of RIT's Chester F. Carlson Center for Imaging Science has temporarily joined the agency this year as a program manager through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) program. Ninkov is an expert in astronomy instrumentation and has conducted research in the development and understanding of improved detector arrays, the detection of extrasolar planets, and the fabrication of multi-object spectroscopy instruments using Micro Electro Mechanical Systems (MEMS). He joins the Division of Astronomical Sciences within the NSF's Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences.

The IPA program allows non-governmental subject matter experts to be assigned to federal agencies for up to four years to further goals and objectives of both institutions. Ninkov will help the NSF evaluate research proposals for various programs, providing management input as they make decisions on funding.

Ninkov said his broad knowledge of instrumentation over a range of spectral bands will help him evaluate the feasibility of proposed studies. He sees the assignment as a learning opportunity that will help him and his RIT colleagues better navigate the NSF proposal process and, more importantly, it provides him a chance to give back to the scientific community.

"I've had a lot of people who have done this sort of work for me over the years," said Ninkov. "I wouldn't be in the position I am without good reviewers and people allocating funding. I wouldn't have been able to build a program like I have at RIT without that, so I think to do it and give back is worthwhile."

Ninkov's one-year assignment at the Alexandria, Va.-based agency began in January and may be extended at the request of NSF for up to three years. He will step away from teaching during this period but continue to advise students.