

Dr. Nils Petersen

Nils Petersen is the Director General of the National Institute for Nanotechnology, joining the National Research Council in 2004 after three years as Vice-President (Research) at the University of Western Ontario.

Dr. Petersen received his B.Sc. Honours in Chemistry from The University of Western Ontario in 1972. He went on to receive his PhD in Chemistry from the California Institute of Technology in 1978. After positions at Cornell University and Washington University Medical School, he returned to The University of Western Ontario's Department of Chemistry as a faculty member in 1981. He was Chair of the department from 1995 to 1999. From 1993 to 1995, he was Associate Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies; from 1999 to 2000 he served as Associate Vice-President (Research) and Acting Vice-President (Research).

Dr. Petersen is a Fellow of the Chemical Institute of Canada.

Dr. Petersen currently serves as a member of several boards of not-for-profit organizations including the Canadian Light Source (CLS), the Canadian Microsystems Corporation (CMC), the California Nanosystems Institute (CNSI), the Institute for Genetics of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (IG-CIHR) and the NRC Institute for Microstructural Sciences (NRC-IMS).

Dr. Petersen's current research in membrane biophysical chemistry focuses on intermolecular interactions in biological membranes, particularly the study of the dynamics and distribution of molecules within the membrane; on the function of lung surfactants in healthy and diseased lungs and on characterization of nanoparticles and their interaction with cell surfaces. Dr. Petersen continues his academic pursuits as a Professor of Chemistry at the University of Alberta.