GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE
“Congressional Watchdog”

- One of 7 agencies under legislative branch
- Main Job: Investigate how taxpayer money is spent
- The GAO does this by:
  - Auditing federal agencies
  - Investigate allegations of illegal activity
  - Report how well programs meet objectives
  - Perform policy analysis for Congress
  - Issue legal decisions and opinions
Financial Info

- Budget: $553.1 million
- Support over 3000 full time staff
- Work results in ~$50 billion US dollars saved
- Return on investment for GAO spending: ~$100 for every dollar spent
History

• Founded in 1921 as the General Accounting Office (name changed in 2004)
• Wartime spending had driven up federal debt and needed another way to keep track of it
• Made to be independent of executive branch
• Mainly checked legitimacy of government spending before WWII
• Drastically increased the amount of audits during Roosevelt’s tenure
History

- After WWII – GAO changed its role in government – evaluated general fiscal efficiency rather than all financial transactions
- 1952 – established regional field offices
- 1960s & 1970s – opened offices in Europe and Far East
- 1974 – Congress expands GAO evaluation role → GAO started to hire experts in various fields
- 1986 – Team assembled to look into criminal accusations
Comptroller General

- Head of the GAO
- Works in non-partisan and non-ideological manner with Congress and external parties
- Appointed by President of United States with the advice and consent of the Senate for 15 year term
  - Congress usually presents list of candidates prepared by bipartisan, bicameral congressional commission
- Current Comptroller General: Gene L. Dodaro
  - 40 year GAO career preceding appointment
  - 9 years as Chief Operating Officer
Mission Teams

- Acquisition & Sourcing Management
- **Applied Research and Methods**
  - Defense Capabilities and Management
  - Education, Workforce, and Income Security
  - Financial Management Assurance
  - Financial Markets and Community Investments
- Forensic Audits and Investigative Service
- Health Care
- Homeland Security and Justice
- International Affairs and Trade
- Information Technology
- Natural Resources and Environment
- Physical Infrastructure
- Strategic Issues
Applied Research and Methods

- Provide technical support to GAO and Congress
- Economics
- Design, Methods, and Analysis
- Evaluation Methods and Issues

*Center for Science Technology and Engineering*
Center for Science Technology and Engineering: Technology Assessments

• Balanced reports on new technologies – their impact on society and how to regulate them
• Headed by Chief Scientist – Tim Persons and Chief Technologist - Nabajyoti Barkakati
• One of the main sources Congress has for sound scientific research and data
My Project – Sustainable Chemical Manufacturing

• Investigating sustainable chemistry in the product lifecycle
• Information gathering part of project
• Consulting with industry & federal agencies
Two Main Components in Internship

Insight into Chemical Manufacturing

Insight into Political Process
Questions?