The U.S. International Trade Commission is an independent, nonpartisan, quasi-judicial federal agency that provides trade expertise to both the legislative and executive branches of government, determines the impact of imports on U.S. industries, and directs actions against certain unfair trade practices, such as patent, trademark, and copyright infringement. USITC analysts and economists investigate and publish reports on U.S. industries and the global trends that affect them. The agency also maintains and publishes the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States.

Commissioners

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ....................................................................................................................... 1
Office of Inspector General Strategic Audit Planning Process ............................... 1
About USITC ..................................................................................................................... 2

USITC Organizational Structure..................................................................................... 2
Office of Administrative Law Judges .............................................................................. 3
Office of General Counsel ........................................................................................... 3
Office of External Relations .......................................................................................... 3
Office of Operations ................................................................................................. 3
Office of the Chief Financial Officer .......................................................................... 4
Office of Administrative Services ............................................................................... 4
Office of the Chief Information Officer .................................................................... 5
Office of Equal Employment Opportunity ............................................................... 5
Office of the Inspector General ................................................................................... 5

USITC Office-Level Organization Chart......................................................................... 6

Strategic Goals and Objectives .................................................................................... 6

Strategic Goal 1: Investigate and Decide: Make Sound, Objective, and Timely
Determinations in Trade Remedy Proceedings............................................................... 6

Strategic Goal 2: Inform: Produce Independent, Objective, and Timely Analysis and
Information on Tariffs, Trade, and Competitiveness...................................................... 8

Management Goals and Objectives ............................................................................. 10

Management Goal: Efficiently and Effectively Advance the Agency’s Mission..... 10

Inspector General Five-Year Strategic Plan
2020-2025
Mandatory Annual Reviews................................................................. 13

1) Annual Financial Statement Audit ................................................ 13
2) Annual Cybersecurity Assessment ............................................... 14
3) Management and Performance Challenges Report ......................... 14
4) Charge Card Risk Assessment Report ......................................... 14
5) Improper Payments and Elimination Act Report ............................ 15
6) Data Act Report .......................................................................... 15
7) *Cybersecurity Act Report... Error! Bookmark not defined.*

External Reviews of the Commission................................................. 15
External Reviews of the Office of Inspector General ............................. 16
Appendix A: Office of Inspector General.......................................... A
Introduction

This strategic plan has been developed by the Office of Inspector General in order to provide a disciplined approach to the work of the office over the next five years. The purpose of this document is to guide the activities of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) that will promote and preserve the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of the programs and operations at the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC or Commission), by focusing on areas that are critical to the Commission’s success.

This document starts by describing the audit planning process, followed by a description of the Commission and its organizational structure. The next section provides the goals, performance measures, and OIG audit strategy for each of the Commission’s strategic operations. It then identifies the Commission’s management goals and OIG audit strategy. The final sections cover audit strategies for management challenges, mandatory audits, and potential external reviews.

As a living document, this plan will adjust and evolve as the priorities, risks, and challenges change at the USITC. The Commission’s Strategic Plan FY 2018-2022 was used as the foundation for the OIG’s planning process. We will review any updated Commission Strategic Plans upon their release to determine potential impacts to the audit strategies outlined in this plan.

Office of Inspector General Strategic Audit Planning Process

We reviewed a variety of agency documents, including but not limited to, the Agency Financial Report, Annual Performance Report, USITC Budget Justification, Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results, Enterprise Risk Management data, and meeting minutes to stay abreast of the state of the Commission.

We also reviewed external documents such as numerous Office of Management and Budget Memoranda, Executive Orders, and reports from the Government Accountability Office to identify government-wide risk trends that may be applicable to the Commission.

In addition, we maintain relationships with a broad group of personnel, including the Chairman, Commissioners, Office Directors, and other stakeholders to discuss and help identify the priorities, challenges, and risks facing the Commission.
About USITC

The USITC is an independent, quasi-judicial federal agency established by Congress with a wide range of trade-related mandates. The mission of the USITC is to:

- Administer U.S. trade remedy laws within its mandate in a fair and objective manner;
- Provide the President, the United States Trade Representative (USTR), and Congress with independent, quality analysis, information, and support on matters relating to tariffs and international trade and competitiveness; and
- Maintain the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States.

The Commission serves the public by implementing U.S. law and supporting the development of sound and informed U.S. trade policy. The USITC investigates the effects of dumped and subsidized imports on domestic industries and conducts global safeguard investigations. The Commission also adjudicates cases involving imports that allegedly infringe on intellectual property rights. Through such proceedings, the agency facilitates a rules-based international trading system. The Commission also serves as a federal resource where trade data and other trade policy-related information are gathered and analyzed. The Commission makes most of its information and analysis available to the public to promote understanding of international trade issues.

USITC Organizational Structure

The USITC is led by six Commissioners who are nominated by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. No more than three Commissioners may be of any one political party. The Commissioners serve overlapping terms of nine years each, with a new term beginning every 18 months.

The President designates a Chairman and Vice Chairman from among the current Commissioners to serve a two-year term. The Chairman and Vice Chairman must be from different political parties, and the Chairman cannot be from the same political party as the preceding Chairman.

The Commission’s FY 2020 budget justification identified 393 current permanent and term staffing for FY2019, with a target of 440 by the end of FY 2020. The staff consists of judges, attorneys, international trade analysts, international economists, investigators, nomenclature analysts, statisticians, and support personnel.
Office of Administrative Law Judges

The Commission’s Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) hold hearings and make initial determinations in investigations under section 337 of the Tariff Act of 1930. These investigations require formal evidentiary hearings in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 551 et seq.). After the Commission has instituted an investigation, the matter is referred to the Office of the ALJs. Each case is assigned by the Chief Administrative Law Judge to one of the Commission’s six ALJs which includes the Chief, and who, after an extensive discovery process, holds a hearing. The judge considers the evidentiary record and the arguments of the parties and makes an initial determination, including findings of fact and conclusions of law, which may be reviewed by the Commission. Temporary relief may be granted in certain cases.

Office of General Counsel

The General Counsel serves as the Commission’s chief legal advisor. The General Counsel and staff attorneys provide legal advice and support to the Commissioners and staff on investigations and research studies, represent the Commission in court and before dispute resolution panels and administrative tribunals, and provide assistance and advice on general administrative matters, including personnel, labor relations, and contract issues.

Office of External Relations

The Office of External Relations develops and maintains liaison between the Commission and its diverse external customers and is the point of contact with the U.S. Trade Representative and other executive branch agencies, Congress, foreign governments, international organizations, the public, and the media. The Commission’s Trade Remedy Assistance Office located within the Officer of External Relations provides information about the benefits and remedies available under U.S. trade laws and assists small businesses seeking relief under those laws.

Office of Operations

The Commission’s core of investigative, industry, economic, nomenclature, and other technical expertise is found within the Office of Operations. There are six offices within the Office of Operations. The six offices, along with a brief description of their primary functions are described below.

- The Office of Economics facilitates investigations under section 332 of the Tariff Act of 1930, section 131 of the Trade Act of 1974, and section 2104 of the Trade Act of 2002. The Office of Economics also provides expert economic analysis for
import injury investigations, as well as other industry and economic analysis products.

- **The Office of Industries** facilitates investigations primarily under section 332 of the Tariff Act of 1930, section 131 of the Trade Act of 1974, and section 2104 of the Trade Act of 2002. The Office of Industries maintains technical expertise related to the performance and global competitiveness of U.S. industries and the impact of international trade on those industries for these studies and import injury investigations.


- **The Office of Tariff Affairs and Trade Agreements** implements the Commission’s responsibilities with respect to the U.S. Harmonized Tariff Schedule and the International Harmonized System.

- **The Office of Unfair Import Investigations** participates in adjudicatory investigations, usually involving patent and trademark infringement, conducted under section 337 of the Tariff Act of 1930, both during the pre-institution phase and as a party to the litigation with no commercial interest in the outcome.

- **The Office of Analysis and Research Services** provides research and investigative support. It comprises the library, editorial, knowledge resources, and statistical services.

**Office of the Chief Financial Officer**

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer compiles the Commission’s annual budget, prepares the appropriation and authorization requests, and closely monitors budget execution. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer also provides support for acquisitions and is responsible for financial reporting. In addition, the Office of Chief Financial Officer manages the Commission’s internal control program in accordance with the Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act. Component offices include the Offices of Budget, Procurement, and Finance.

**Office of Administrative Services**

The Office of Administrative Services provides human resource services, including collective bargaining with union representatives, information and document management, management of work life issues, facilities management services, and is responsible for all Commission physical and personnel security matters. Component offices include the Offices of Human Resources, Security and Support Services, and the Office of the Secretary.
Office of the Chief Information Officer

The Office of the Chief Information Officer provides information technology leadership, a comprehensive services and applications support portfolio, and a sound technology infrastructure to the Commission and its customers. Through its staff and subsidiary offices, the Office of the Chief Information Officer seeks to promote, deliver, and manage the secure and efficient application of technology to the Commission’s business activities. The Office of the Chief Information Officer has five divisions, Cybersecurity, Service Delivery, Systems Engineering, Network Support, and Data Management.

Office of Equal Employment Opportunity

The Office of Equal Employment Opportunity administers the Commission’s affirmative action program. The Director advises the Chairman, the Commission, and USITC managers on all equal employment opportunity issues, manages and coordinates all equal employment activities in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, evaluates the sufficiency of the Agency’s equal employment opportunity programs and recommends improvements or corrections, including remedial and disciplinary action; encourages and promotes diversity outreach; and monitors recruitment activities to assure fairness in agency hiring practices.

Office of the Inspector General

The Office of Inspector General provides audit, evaluation, inspection, and investigative support services covering all Commission programs and strategic operations. The Office of Inspector General activities are planned and conducted based on requirements of laws and regulations, requests from management officials, and allegations received from Commission personnel and other sources.
USITC Office-Level Organization Chart

The chart below provides an illustration of the USITC Office-Level organization structure as revised in October of 2014 and in effect at the time of this update.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Strategic Goal 1: Investigate and Decide: Make Sound, Objective, and Timely Determinations in Trade Remedy Proceedings.

Strategic Objective 1.1:

Reliable Process: Conduct expeditious and sound investigative proceedings.

Performance Goals:

- 1.11: Conclude investigations into alleged section 337 violations within timeframes that are consistent with the Uruguay Round Agreements Act implementing report by FY 2022.
- 1.12: Improve timeliness of section 337 ancillary proceedings by meeting targets or reducing the average length of ancillary proceedings.
1.13: Individual offices complete their portions of section 337 modifications and advisory proceedings under the pilot program within specified timeframes.


1.15: Deliver 100% of import injury investigation determinations and reports by the statutory deadline.

1.16: Develop and implement a process to evaluate and improve agency decision-making based on judicial and NAFTA panel remands during FY 2014.

1.17: Evaluate the paper burden of responding to AD/CVD adequacy phase notices of institution and develop and implement an option to reduce this burden.

OIG Audit Strategy:

- Determine if the Commission has an effective process for measuring timeframes of section 337 modifications and advisory proceedings.
- Determine if the Commission has effective security controls to protect BPI/CBI information received electronically.
- Determine if the Commission follows a standard process for measuring the statutory deadlines for import injury investigations.
- Determine if the Commission’s Title VII questionnaires are designed to elicit the proper collection of information for investigations.
- Determine if the Commission has a process to track the use of its modeling products and services to the number of statutory reports, statutory investigations, technical assistance, and staff research to help quantify the value of their investments.
- Determine if the Commission has a process to document and validate the sources of baseline data used for policy and economic impact modeling.

Strategic Objective 1.2:

Clear Proceedings: Promote transparency and understanding of investigative proceedings.

Performance Goals:

- 1.21 Leverage existing and developing technologies to improve the flow of information to interested parties and the general public.
- 1.22 Post information on import injury investigation webpages within specific timeframes.
1.23 Conduct outreach to bar groups and other stakeholders to ensure they understand Commission capabilities and processes.
1.24 Issue regular feedback surveys to external stakeholders to assess effectiveness and efficiency of processes and procedures. Implement proposed new processes/procedures as appropriate.
1.25 Post documents to EDIS within specified timeframes.
1.26 Post public versions of confidential Section 337 IDs and Commission opinions within specified timeframes.

OIG Audit Strategy:

- Determine if the Commission’s public website has improved the user experience for investigation-related information.
- Determine if the updates to EDIS filing and search capabilities have improved the end user experience.
- Determine if the Commission has a sound methodology to interpret survey results to produce actionable response, recognize trends, and identify emerging risks.
- Determine if the Commission has proper security controls to protect business proprietary and confidential business information in EDIS.
- Determine the accuracy of data used to measure performance.

Strategic Goal 2: Inform: Produce Independent, Objective, and Timely Analysis and Information on Tariffs, Trade, and Competitiveness

Strategic Objective 2.1: Innovation: Improve analysis and information.

Performance Goals:

- 2.11 Identify and prioritize areas to improve capabilities to analyze important new issues in trade and industry competitiveness.
- 2.12 Improved analytical tools and new capabilities are reflected in statutory work products.
- 2.13 Improve processes to identify and correct errors at the prepublication state for HTS files.
- 2.14 Improve the HTS Search function based on ongoing analysis of user search results.

OIG Audit Strategy:

- Determine if the Commission has a process to address risks when there is limited publicly available data.
• Determine if the Commission has a developed standardized analytical approach to respond to specific types of requests.
• Determine if the Commission has a process for ensuring the reliability of analytical tools developed in-house.
• Determine if the Harmonized Tariff Schedule is accurate.
• Determine if the Commission’s updates to the “Search” function in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule has improved user experience.
• Determine if the Commission follows a standard procedure for processing Miscellaneous Tariff Bills.
• Determine if the Commission’s internal controls for processing Miscellaneous Tariff Bills are working effectively.
• Determine if the Commission uses sound methodologies for measuring performance.

Strategic Objective 2.2: Communication: Engage and respond to inform and support decision-making on U.S. trade matters.

Performance Goals:

• 2.21 Engage Commission customers and other U.S. and international experts to enhance agency capabilities in order to provide effective and responsive analysis, data, and nomenclature services.
• 2.22 Improve utility of tariff and trade information for customers and the public by developing and producing digital and interactive Commission products.
• 2.23 Improve timeliness of tariff and customs information provided in response to emails submitted through online help system.
• 2.24 Improve transparency of Commission fact-finding investigations by providing underlying data when appropriate.

OIG Audit Strategy:

• Determine if the Commission has a sound approach for developing interactive products.
• Determine if the Commission has an efficient process to manage emails submitted through the online help system.
• Determine if the Commission uses standard criteria to determine when to provide underlying data in fact-finding investigations.
• Determine if the Commission has a process to identify business needs and functionality requirements prior to developing analytical tools.
Management Goals and Objectives

The Commission has established a Management goal and four management objectives to reflect management priorities for operational effectiveness. The objectives align with the following functional areas: human resources; budget; acquisition; finance; and information technology.

**Management Goal:** Efficiently and Effectively Advance the Agency’s Mission.

**Management Objective M1.1:** People: Attract and develop a skilled, diverse, and flexible workforce.

**Performance Goals:**

- M1.11 Improve employee satisfaction and commitment to the agency as measured by the FEVS by achieving continuous improvement through 2022.
- M1.12 Increase stakeholder satisfaction with the extent to which recruiting efforts bring in the right human capital in an efficient way.
- M1.13 All position descriptions for onboard personnel are reviewed and revised within the last four years to ensure that they are up to date.
- M1.14 Improve stakeholder satisfaction regarding opportunities for professional development to help retain human capital.
- M1.15 Foster an inclusive workplace environment by improving training and development opportunities.

**OIG Audit Strategy:**

The Office of Personnel Management has historically performed external reviews of the Office of Human Resources. The Office of Inspector General may perform additional reviews identified below, which do not duplicate the efforts of the external oversight entities.

- Determine if the Commission’s process for updating position descriptions is efficient.
- Determine if professional development opportunities are improving employee retention.
- Determine if the Commission training and development opportunities have enhanced inclusion in the workplace.
- Determine if the Commission’s process for recruiting and hiring are efficient.
Management Objective M1.2: Money: Ensure good stewardship of taxpayer funds.

Performance Goals:

- M1.21 Provide accurate, timely, insightful, and relevant financial management reports to agency leadership on a monthly basis.
- M1.23 Maintain a robust and effective system of financial management and internal controls to achieve an annual unmodified audit opinion on the agency’s financial statements.
- M1.24 Develop and implement a budget process that broadly increases Commission participation and responsibility at all levels, and that clearly links budget formulation with performance planning.

OIG Audit Strategy:

- Determine if financial management reports provide relevant information to agency leadership to drive the decision-making process.
- Determine if the Commission’s acquisition plan is effectively integrated with the budget execution process.
- Obtain services of an Independent Public Accounting Firm to perform the audit of the Commission’s financial statements.

Management Objective M1.3: Technology: Identify, deliver, and secure reliable enterprise information systems.

Performance Goals:

- M1.31 Improve delivery of IT solutions to better support Commission customers.
- M1.32 Ensure a robust security posture by successfully developing capabilities consistent with government-wide cyber security priorities.
- M1.33 Improve integrity, delivery, and usability of USITC information assets by enabling access to 100% of the Commission’s major datasets using Open Data-compliant machine-readable formats by the end of FY 2022.
M1.34 Utilize cloud services where feasible to reduce infrastructure resource requirements, increase flexibility to scale solutions as needed, and expand solution options for business units.

OIG Audit Strategy:

- Determine if the Commission is effectively securing all devices on the network.
- Determine if the Commission is effectively managing vulnerabilities on the network.
- Determine if the Commission is effectively managing all administrative privileged accounts.
- Determine if the Commission is effectively collecting and analyzing event logs.
- Determine if the Commission effectively manages its hardware and software on ITCNet.
- Determine if the Commission has enabled all major datasets using Open Data-compliant machine-readable formats.
- Determine if the Commission has an effective process for identifying services that can be moved to the cloud.

Management Objective M1.4: Operational Effectiveness: Evaluate and improve processes and communications.

Performance Goals:

- M1.41 Improve the efficiency and timely delivery of Commission products by evaluating and implementing improved processes of the agency.
- M1.42 Maintain an agency portfolio of enterprise risks.
- M1.43 Redesign policies and procedures for managing the system of internal rules and update all content.
- M1.44 Improve 508 compliance of agency information.
- M1.45 Improve resource use, performance management, and internal controls by utilizing business intelligence software to develop and provide Commission managers with useful management reports.
- M1.46 Make continuous improvements to the Commission’s web presence, including use of other evolving technologies (e.g., mobile applications, streaming video, rich internet capabilities) that benefit Commission customers and lead to improvements in user satisfaction.
- M1.47 Monitor and ensure the safety and security of our workplace.

OIG Audit Strategy:
• Determine if the Commission is effectively identifying and automating manual processes.
• Determine if the Commission has an effective process for measuring performance.
• Determine if the Commission has an efficient process to meet 508 compliance.
• Determine if the system of internal rules is periodically reviewed and updated, when necessary.
• Determine if management reports provide relevant information to improve resource use.
• Determine if management reports provide relevant information to improve performance management.
• Determine if the Commission has a sound strategy for improving web presence using evolving technologies.
• Determine if the Commission’s new internet designed has increased user satisfaction.

Mandatory Annual Reviews

1) Annual Financial Statement Audit

The Tax Accountability Act of 2002 requires that the Commission prepare and submit an audited financial statement for each fiscal year covering all accounts and associated activities of each office. In order to comply with these requirements, the Office of Inspector General contracts this work to an independent certified public accounting firm. The contract requires that the audit be conducted in accordance with U.S. generally accepted government auditing standards and these auditing standards require the following reports:

• Financial Statement Audit;
• Report on Internal Control;
• Report on Compliance with Laws and Regulations;
• and if applicable, a Management Letter.

The Office of Inspector General has oversight responsibilities to monitor the work of the independent certified accounting firm. The audit reports are due in November on a schedule set by the Office of Management and Budget. The management letter does not have a set due date but should be issued in a timely manner.
2) **Annual Cybersecurity Assessment**

The Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) requires the Commission to develop, document, and implement an agency-wide program to provide information security to protect the government’s information, operations, and assets. The Commission must report on the effectiveness of its security program annually to the Office of Management and Budget and to Congress. The annual report includes an independent evaluation, performed by the OIG, of the Commission’s establishment and implementation of security programs. The annual report is due in November; the actual date varies by year and is transmitted by the Office of Management and Budget through a policy memorandum.

3) **Management and Performance Challenges Report**

In 1998, members of Congress began annually requesting Inspectors General to identify the most serious management challenges facing their respective agencies. This request was later codified in the Reports Consolidation Act of 2000. The Reports Consolidation Act of 2000 requires the Inspector General to submit a report to be included in Annual Financial Report that summarizes what the Inspector General consider to be the most serious management and performance challenges facing the Commission and assess the progress in addressing those challenges. The Inspector General is required to provide this report to the Chairman 30 days before the due date of the Agency Financial Report.

Since 2009, the Inspector General has identified internal control and information technology as two of the Commission’s biggest management and performance challenges. The audit strategy will be to select a specific function, process, or requirement of the Commission as it relates to internal control or information technology and develop a focused audit objective.

4) **Charge Card Risk Assessment Report**

The Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 requires the Inspector General of each agency to conduct an annual risk assessment of agency purchase cards, travel cards, fleet cards, and convenience checks. The results of the risk assessment will be used to determine the necessary scope, frequency, and number of audits, evaluations, or reviews of these programs.

The Charge Card Abuse Act directs the Inspector General to submit an annual purchase and travel card audit recommendation status report to the Director of OMB 120 days after the end of each fiscal year.
5) **Improper Payments and Elimination Act Report**

The Improper Payments and Recovery Act of 2010 (IPERA), requires agencies to review all programs and activities to identify areas that may be susceptible to significant improper payments. Additionally, it requires the Inspector General to determine if the Commission is in compliance with IPERA and submit a report each fiscal year to the head of the agency, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the Committee on Oversight and Governmental Reform, and the Comptroller General. The report is due within 180 days after publication of the Commission’s Annual Financial Report.

6) **Data Act Report**

The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 requires the Inspector General to submit a report to Congress on the Commission’s implementation and use of data standards. The Inspector General must also review a statistically valid sampling of the spending data submitted to USAspending.gov by the Commission and assess it for completeness, timeliness, quality, and accuracy. A “readiness review” report was due in November 2016, which reported on the Commission’s progress on implementing the requirements. The Inspector General issued the first of three DATA Act reports in November 2017, the second report is expected to be issued in November 2019 and the last required report will be due in November 2021.

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**External Reviews of the Commission**

External reviews are audits, investigations, and evaluations of Commission programs and operations performed by another agency or oversight body. The Inspector General considers this information as part of the planning process to manage OIG resources and not duplicate the efforts of other oversight bodies.

The list below identifies external entities that have historically conducted reviews of the Commission:

- Government Accountability Office;
- Office of Personnel Management;
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; and
- Office of Government Ethics.

The Government Accountability Office’s Strategic Plan 2018-2023 contains a strategic objective and performance goal that may be applicable to the Commission.
Strategic Objective 2.3: Advance and Protect U.S. Foreign Policy and International Economic Interests

Performance Goal 2.3.3: Analyze how international trade programs serve U.S. interests and how the United States can influence world economy.

They intend to monitor and report on agency efforts to “execute programs to advance U.S. trade interests; enforce trade rules; review and revise, where appropriate, key international trade mechanisms, such as the World Trade Organization or the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which is in the process of being updated for the first time in 25 years; maintain U.S. export gains; and increase foreign investment.”

External Reviews of the Office of Inspector General

Government Auditing Standards issued by the Government Accountability Office require Offices of Inspector General to obtain a peer review by an independent audit organization. The Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency assign the reviewers and establish the peer review schedule.

Our office was the subject of a peer review for the period ending September 30, 2018. The peer review report was issued on March 20, 2019. We expect the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency to schedule our next peer review for the period ending September 30, 2021.
Appendix A: Office of Inspector General

Mission Statement: Our mission is to promote and preserve the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of the Commission.

Staffing: The Office of Inspector General has four full-time staffing positions. All four of these positions are currently filled.

Budget: The Office of Inspector General’s annual budget estimate for fiscal year 2020 budget justification was $1,093,875, which includes salary and benefits.

Planning Assumptions:

- Minimal changes to OIG budget over next five years;
- OIG staffing ceiling remains unchanged over next five years;
- OIG will augment staff with intern rotations each year;
- No anticipation of new laws or regulations that would change the mission of USITC over the next five years.
“Thacher’s Calculating Instrument” developed by Edwin Thacher in the late 1870s. It is a cylindrical, rotating slide rule able to quickly perform complex mathematical calculations involving roots and powers quickly. The instrument was used by architects, engineers, and actuaries as a measuring device.
To Promote and Preserve
the Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Integrity of the
U.S. International Trade Commission

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