THIS PAST JANUARY, KATHY A. WYSZYNSKI joined HHMI as an officer in the recently created position of vice president for human resources. In her new role, Wyszynski oversees all aspects of human resources for the Institute, including human resources strategy, recruitment, benefits and compensation, visa administration, performance management, training and development, and employee relations.

Wyszynski is focused on creating a human resources culture that drives exceptional service in innovative ways, enabling the Institute to continue to attract, sustain, and inspire excellence in its employees. She plans to initiate strategic human resources programs designed to advance scientific excellence, foster engagement, and provide collaborative learning opportunities.

“It is important that we share a common set of values characterized by trust, collaboration, communication, and partnership and that we all take pride in our contributions big or small,” says Wyszynski. “We want our people to feel really good about being a part of HHMI’s successes.”

Before coming to HHMI, Wyszynski spent 10 years in human resources leadership roles in the office of the Chief Administrative Officer of the U.S. House of Representatives. During her tenure at the House, she developed a Human Capital Strategic Plan, a competency-based performance management system, and a professional development program for staff.

Before joining the House, Wyszynski served in multiple roles, including head of human resources at the Henry M. Jackson Foundation (HJF) for the Advancement of Military Medicine.

“Kathy’s combination of strategic human resources leadership experience and time spent working in a laboratory environment make her an ideal addition to the management team,” says Cheryl Moore, HHMI’s executive vice president and chief operating officer. “I’m very pleased to have her join us as we embark on new initiatives to support HHMI employees.”

Looking back on her time spent with HJF and in public service, says Wyszynski, it became clear that one of her key motivators was doing work that matters. “Joining HHMI as vice president for human resources is an opportunity to leverage my previous experience and apply my skills and talents in new ways,” she says. “To help drive the Institute’s extraordinary mission of empowering and supporting the world’s finest scientists and educators is an exciting prospect for me. Coming to HHMI was an easy decision.”

HHMI INITIATED AN OPEN COMPETITION in March aimed at appointing 20 to 30 new investigators. These appointments will enable the Institute to strengthen its community of researchers and bring innovative approaches to the study of biological problems.

“HHMI has a very simple mission,” says HHMI President Robert Tjian. “We find the best original-thinking scientists and give them the resources to follow their instincts in discovering basic biological processes that will lead to better biomedical outcomes.”

The initiative represents an investment of approximately $200 million by HHMI over the next five years. The competition is open to scientists at more than 200 institutions who are involved in basic biomedical research and related areas, from evolutionary biology to patient-oriented research. Eligible researchers must hold a tenured or tenure-track position and have between five and 15 years of experience since appointment as an assistant professor or equivalent position.

The deadline for applications is June 13. A panel of distinguished biomedical researchers will evaluate the candidates’ applications, and all semifinalists will present their research at a scientific symposium at HHMI in April 2013. Finalists will be selected shortly after the symposium. Each new investigator will receive a five-year renewable appointment, worth about $1 million a year.

The HHMI Investigator Program currently supports approximately 340 scientists at more than 70 host institutions in the United States. Seventy-nine, or 23 percent, of these investigators are women. By appointing scientists as HHMI investigators—funding people rather than projects—the Institute provides long-term, flexible support that enables its researchers to pursue their scientific interests wherever they lead.

“We’re betting on the individual, not necessarily on the specific research that they’re conducting today,” says Jack E. Dixon, HHMI’s vice president and chief scientific officer.