

The charge for a Committee of Visitors

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on behalf of

Fusion Energy Sciences



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of Science

Presented to FESAC
April 10, 2014

<http://science.energy.gov/fes>



- **What**—A panel to assess the efficacy and quality of the processes used to solicit, review, recommend, monitor, and document funding actions and to assess the quality of the resulting portfolio
 - The national and international standings of the programs' sub-elements are part of the evaluation of the breadth and depth of the portfolio
- **Who**—Each COV panel is composed of a group of recognized scientists and research program leaders with broad expertise in the designated program areas
- **When**—Each program element must be reviewed once every three years
- **Why**—To ensure quality and fairness and to help foster improvements
- **Where**—A two- to three-day visit to DOE Germantown to review documents and meet with DOE program managers



Further information about COVs

- The Director of the Office of Science charges the relevant advisory committees to assemble COVs to assess the Office of Science programs on a regular basis.
- Every program element must be reviewed by a COV at least once every three years.
- The portfolio under review by a COV generally includes all actions – both awards and declinations – for universities, national laboratories, and industry administered by the program for a set period of time, usually three years
- The COV prepares a report, which is presented to the full Federal Advisory Committee at a public meeting. The Federal Advisory Committee reviews and may make modifications to the report prior to acceptance. Following acceptance, the report is transmitted to the Director of the Office of Science and released publicly.
- The Associate Director of the Office of Science in charge of the program element under review provides a response to the review within 30 days of the acceptance of the report by the Federal Advisory Committee.

Further information about the operation of COVs:

http://science.energy.gov/~media/sc-2/pdf/presentations/guidance_for_doe_sc_cov_reviews_v1.pdf



- **The panel should consider and provide evaluation of:**
 - The efficiency and quality of the processes used by FES to solicit, review, recommend, monitor, and document awards and declinations for universities, national laboratories, and industry
 - The breadth, depth, and quality of the resulting program portfolio, and providing an evaluation of the program's national and international standing
 - FES's management of its portfolio of line item construction and Major Items of Equipment projects, including the U.S. Contributions to ITER project
- **Please note:**
 - Assessment of FES projects' performance, including contractor and Federal Project Director management of projects, is performed by periodic SC Independent Project Reviews, and is not a part of this COV



- **Period for evaluation**
 - The last COV activity evaluated the FES program through FY 2009.
 - Accordingly, in this assessment the COV should review the entire FES program for activities during FY 2010, FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013.
- **Action items**
 - The panel should also comment on FES's progress in addressing action items from the previous COV review.



Date of report	Scope	COV chair	Date of FES response
March 2004	Theory and Computation	William Nevins	May 20, 2004
April 2005	Innovative Confinement, General Plasma Physics, and Inertial Confinement	Jeffrey Freidberg	April 26, 2005
May 2006	Tokamak Research and Enabling Technologies	Kathryn McCarthy	June 12, 2006
April 2010	FES program (excluding MIE projects)	Rulon Linford	December 15, 2010

Past COV reports and associated FES responses are posted at:

<http://science.energy.gov/fes/fesac/fes-cov/>



FES Response to the FESAC Committee of Visitors Review of the Fusion Energy Sciences Program

Date of COV Visit to Germantown, Maryland: August 17-19, 2009

Date of Response: December 15, 2010

Program Point of Contact: Ed Synakowski (301-903-4941)

Excerpt from FES response

COV Recommendation	Program Response
II. Selected Findings and Recommendations	
A. Efficacy and Quality of the Program's Processes	
<u>1. Processes to solicit and review proposals and applications, to recommend award or declination of funds, and</u>	
a. Use peer review consistently across all program elements to ensure quality, balance, and credibility.	FES agrees with this recommendation and will implement it, recognizing that different types of proposals are likely to require variations in review processes.
b. Employ carefully designed solicitations to respond to the needs within every program element.	FES agrees with this recommendation and will endeavor to make future solicitations as well designed and clear as possible.
c. Ensure that all solicitations are properly focused with clear expectations and criteria.	See the answer to previous recommendation.
d. Document the reasons for a selection or a declination in every folder.	FES agrees with this recommendation. FES program managers prepare a report that describes the overall process and the rationale behind the funding recommendations for each solicitation. FES will ensure that a copy of the report is placed in every folder.
e. Implement uniform and effective rebuttal procedures.	While FES currently uses a rebuttal process for most solicitations, this will be phased out, to ensure consistency of process across the Office of Science. Also, rebuttals will not be included in the new Office of Science grants management system.



- **Membership**
 - The COV panel should be composed of recognized scientists and research group leaders with broad expertise relevant to the fusion program.
- **Conflict of interest**
 - Panel members should be familiar with FES research programs; however, a significant fraction of the COV members should not be involved in research that is being funded by FES.
 - Each panel member will be requested to sign a Conflict of Interest statement and a Confidentiality statement.



- **Report**

- The results of this COV assessment should be documented in a report that clearly articulates findings, comments, and recommendations.
- FESAC should submit a report on the COV activity by January 2015.

- **Value**

- COV reviews conducted in this manner have proven highly valuable to the Office of Science in maintaining a high standard of excellence in program execution.

FES point of contact: Dr. Sam Barish



Details on past FESAC COV reports

Date	Scope	Members	COV report	Recommendations	FES response
2004	Theory & Comp	15	12 pp	5	2 pp
2005	ICC, GPS, Inertial Conf	14	12 pp	9	10 pp
2006	Tokamaks & Tech	8	7 pp	7	3 pp
2010	FES program	17 (5 groups)	42 pp	95	20 pp

Some recent BESAC COV reports

Date	Scope	Members	COV report	Recommendations	FES response
2011	Division of Chemical Sciences, Geosciences, & Biosciences	38	55 pp	3	1 page
2012	Division of Materials Science & Engineering	33	38 pp	7	2 pp
2013	Division of Scientific User Facilities	17	29 pp	84	11 pp
2013	EFRC & JCAP	19	32 pp	2	1 page

Each BESAC COV meeting at GTN typically lasts 2-1/2 days