



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of
Science

HEP Initial Response to 2013 Committee of Visitors Report

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Office of Science

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Report of the 2013 Committee of Visitors Review of HEP

- HEPAP was charged in Sept 2013 with conducting an external review to assess the operations, process and procedures of the Office of High Energy Physics (HEP) in the DOE Office of Science, and evaluate the resulting research portfolio.
 - This is the fourth in a series of recurring triennial reviews (2004, 2007, 2010)
- The Committee of Visitors (COV) met in Germantown, Maryland October 9-11, 2013. The COV consisted of 29 expert reviewers from across HEP disciplines.
- The Report of the COV was presented to HEPAP December 6, 2013. The Report contained 34 distinct recommendations.
- HEP will issue a formal response to the COV recommendations within 30 days.
Responses in this talk should be considered preliminary and subject to change.
- Past COV Reports and Responses to the Recommendations can be accessed at http://www.science.doe.gov/SC-2/COV-HEP/HEP_Reviews.htm or http://www.science.doe.gov/hep/panels/reports/hepap_reports.shtml

Charge to the 2013 COV

The Panel should assess:

- The efficacy and quality of the processes used to solicit, review, recommend, and document application and proposal actions, and to monitor active awards, projects and programs;
- Within the boundaries defined by the DOE mission and available funding, comment on how the award process has affected the quality of the portfolio elements and of the resulting portfolio as a whole, including breadth and depth and national and international standing.

Additional subjects specific to HEP were also addressed (see P. Grannis talk)

Period covered by this COV review is FY2010-2012

Material presented to COV has been covered at a high level by M. Procaro

As the COV report notes, it is important to read the recommendations in the context of the full report. In this talk we only provide the summary recommendations and preliminary responses.

HEP Response to the Report of the 2013 Committee of Visitors Review of HEP

COV Recommendation

1) HEP should strive to keep the overall program management coherent, keeping in view the connections and balance among the frontiers, and minimizing the obstacles to well-motivated transfers of funds across frontier boundaries.

2) Continue the comparative reviews. These should be augmented with independent mail-in reviews.

3) Ensure that comparative reviews evaluate a particular proposal in the context of the full program over the full three year cycle within each frontier.

Preliminary HEP Response

We agree with the principle enunciated here, and will work to develop mechanisms to maintain balance among programs and ease funding transfers across program boundaries as consistent with programmatic needs and priorities.

Agreed.

It is difficult to require reviewers to evaluate the “full program” for large umbrella grants (though we currently invite them to do so). We will consider adding appropriate guidance to the FOA and the reviewer instructions to emphasize context of the full program when evaluating proposals.



HEP Response to the Report of the 2013 Committee of Visitors Review of HEP

COV Recommendation

Preliminary HEP Response

4) Ensure that review committees are given appropriate charges, that there are sufficient reviewers of each proposal, and that program manager oversight of reviews is uniform.

Agreed.

5) Modify the FOAs to request that proposals which address topics in several different review panel areas include a discussion of the synergy gained from this broader scope.

Done. Guidance to PIs on preparing a better common narrative in a proposal was included in the FY14 HEP Comparative Review FOA.

6) Institute mechanisms to streamline the movement of PIs moving from one frontier to another. The past record of such PIs should be considered in the reviews.

We will consider appropriate measures to ease transitions of PIs across frontiers. We note it is incumbent upon the PI to provide context and relevant past record of achievement in the proposal

7) HEP should charge the comparative review panelists to collectively discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of proposals so that the program managers can judge the relative rankings of proposals.

This is currently done in all comparative review panels.



HEP Response to the Report of the 2013 Committee of Visitors Review of HEP

COV Recommendation

Preliminary HEP Response

8) Ensure that program manager's comments in grant folders clearly document the reasons for the action taken.

Agreed.

9) Work to further reduce the time between proposal and proponent notification and to provide appropriate redacted review comments that will enable PIs to refine future proposals. Provide information to proponents on their comparative review score and the distribution of scores over all proposals reviewed by a panel.

We will continue to work to reduce the time between proposal deadlines and final decisions and providing redacted reviews. We will consider providing comparative review scores or other indicative measures of a proposal's relative ranking within a given panel for future comparative reviews.

10) Work with the community to leverage and coordinate funding sources for the HEP research program such as university startup packages or other non-DOE funding sources.

HEP will continue to optimize its resources in coordination with other funding providers in order to advance the goals of the HEP research program.



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COV Recommendation

Preliminary HEP Response

11) Further increase in the budget fraction devoted to projects is desirable but should be subject to the recommendations of the 2014 P5 report and budget constraints.

Agreed.

12) Allocate a few dedicated pages in proposals for senior research scientists to describe their activities and critical accomplishments.

We will take this under consideration.

13) Once goals, milestones and costs have been established for small scale experiments, formal HEP project oversight should be kept to a minimum.

We agree with the principle. Formal project oversight should be the minimum necessary to successfully manage and execute the project. Customization of management tools is often needed and should be tailored to the particular requirements of the project.



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COV Recommendation

Preliminary HEP Response

14) HEP should develop a coherent and stable approach to funding detector R&D which embraces the broad range of proposals for new ideas and techniques appropriate to its mission.

Agreed.

15) An additional IPA serving the theory program should be found.

Done. New Theory IPA will join HEP in January.

16) Seek to increase the HEP travel budget

HEP does not control this budget (SC does). Strong arguments will be needed to make the case that HEP has unique and compelling travel requirements.

17) We urge HEP to redouble and improve its communications both with the HEP community and in the wider governmental circles

Agreed. We have a AAAS fellow (M. Cooke) on board helping with P5 and communications issues generally. We will look for other ways to improve HEP communications.



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COV Recommendation

Preliminary HEP Response

18) Undertake a separate review of the balance between the Laboratory and university research programs.

We expect this issue to be taken up by HEPAP.

19) Make previous proposals and levels of support available to reviewers.

We disagree. Previous proposals are generally not considered relevant to the case under review. We find the previous level of support tends to bias the discussion of proposals and their relative ranking, and is contrary to one of the primary purposes of comparative reviews and findings of the 2010 COV: judge the current proposal on its merits, not the past history of the group. If there is a perceived lack of progress in a particular research group, the panel chair can bring that up for discussion at her discretion.



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COV Recommendation

Preliminary HEP Response

20) If there are clear guidelines on COLA for overseas experiments, provide them to the reviewers.

Done. This was covered in the 2014 Energy Frontier panel instructions and we will continue this practice. We will also work with the experiments (e.g., LHC) to understand whether more uniform COLA rates can be developed between the different experiments.

21) The management of the research, operations and upgrade components of the LHC experiments should be closely coordinated.

Agreed. DOE managers of the respective programs meet regularly. One will be assigned responsibility for ensuring coordination.

22) Consider a mechanism for seeking factual clarification of proposal issues from the PIs during the comparative review process.

We disagree. Once proposals are under review we do not contact the PIs for any reason until funding decisions are made. This practice is designed to avoid any unfair advantage that might be gained by PIs who have additional interactions with PMs during proposal reviews. As a practical matter, obtaining timely factual clarifications during the course of a panel review can be difficult. Individual PMs have actively worked in 2014 with the PIs to provide guidance in writing clearer proposals.



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COV Recommendation

Preliminary HEP Response

23) Improve the quality of administrative support.

Agreed. We are working on this.

24) Maintain U.S. science in the lead of the Cosmic Frontier.

Agreed. The integration of the Cosmic Frontier with the other “traditional” HEP experimental areas is one of the signature successes of the US HEP program.

25) Support computation, simulation, and phenomenology that are directly needed for planning, execution, and analysis of Cosmic Frontier Stage III and Stage IV experiments

Agreed. Cosmic Frontier, Theory and Computation PMs are aware of the issues and working to develop mechanisms to appropriately review and support these efforts.

26) HEP should explicitly recognize that a thriving theory program is essential for identifying new directions and opportunities for the field, in addition to supporting the current program.

Agreed.



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COV Recommendation

Preliminary HEP Response

27) Create a new theory postdoc fellowship program, with recipients chosen via national competition and supported for three years at any DOE supported university or lab group of the recipients choosing.

We agree with the importance of postdoc support in the Theory program and will look to develop additional modes of support for these positions.

28) Evaluate the General Accelerator R&D (GARD) program to identify and prioritize components that are central to the evolving HEP mission, after delivery of the 2014 P5 report

Agreed.



HEP Response to the Report of the 2013 Committee of Visitors Review of HEP

COV Suggestion

Preliminary HEP Response

29) Identify goals and areas of mutual and/or complementary accelerator R&D interest jointly with other parts of the Office of Science and other agencies and stakeholders, at the foundation of the Accelerator Stewardship program.

30) Establish procedures to jointly review proposals addressing Accelerator Stewardship goals, including those outside traditional boundaries, at the initiation of the program.

31) Review the progress of the Accelerator Stewardship program periodically (e.g. annually), reporting to HEP, including reviewers representing other parts of the Office of Science, and representing other governmental agency stakeholders. Consider including SciDAC accelerator activities in the periodic reviews.

We agree with the principles put forward here but note that Accelerator Stewardship is intended to be a coordinated SC-wide program managed by HEP, and is (as yet) a proposed new subprogram that has not received Congressional approval, and therefore beyond the scope of the COV charge. We welcome the COV subcommittee's strong interest in the nascent Accelerator R&D Stewardship program and will respond to these Suggestions in an appropriate venue at a later date.

HEP Response to the Report of the 2013 Committee of Visitors Review of HEP

COV Recommendation

Preliminary HEP Response

32) Perform project-style reviews for programs that have significant budgets and extend over multiple years.

Agreed. This has been done on an *ad hoc* basis in the past. We will develop a consistent methodology to review such efforts.

33) Request that the LARP leadership address the recommendations from a compilation of the 2010-2012 LARP reviews.

Agreed.

34) Monitor activities that are transitioning from R&D to full construction (e.g. LARP magnet program) so as to clearly define and track the transition steps

Agreed.



Summary of Responses

- **We agree with most of the HEP COV recommendations and will work to implement them in a timely fashion**
 - We can report back to HEPAP at a future date on how the implementation is proceeding
 - In some cases we would benefit from better definition of what a “successful” or “completed” response would look like
- **A few of the recommendations are outside the purview of the COV**
 - We will undertake review of Accelerator Stewardship program at an appropriate future date and do not intend to provide formal responses to Suggestions #29-31 at this time
- **We disagree with two recommendations (#19, 22)**
 - We do not consider these recommendations beneficial to the HEP review process for reasons discussed above

Thanks

- **We would like to take this opportunity to thank the HEP COV members and particularly the Chair for their hard work and valuable input**
 - Past COVs have helped to make the HEP office function better and strengthened the overall US HEP program
 - We very much appreciate the validation of many elements of the HEP office and their praise for the excellent work of HEP PMs
 - We expect the current round of recommendations will continue to drive this cycle of improvement