



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of
Science

HEP Response to 2010 Committee of Visitors Report

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Report of the 2010 Committee of Visitors Review of HEP

- HEPAP was charged in August 2010 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 third in a series of recurring triennial reviews (2004, 2007)
- The Committee of Visitors (COV) met in Germantown, Maryland October 13-15, 2010. The COV consisted of 24 expert reviewers from across HEP disciplines.
- The Report of the COV was presented to and approved by HEPAP November 18, 2010. The Report contained 22 recommendations.
- HEP's response to the COV recommendations were issued December 17, 2010.
- The 2010 COV Report and Response 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 2010 COV

The Panel should assess:

- The efficacy and quality of the processes used to solicit, review, recommend, monitor, and document application and proposal actions;
- The quality of the resulting portfolio, including the breadth and depth of portfolio elements, its national and international standing, and the progress HEP has made toward its long-term goals
- Are the priorities of the 2008 P5 report being reasonably followed?
- Are the actions of the HEP maintaining the capabilities needed for healthy laboratory and university programs?
- Comments and suggestions for improvements
- Progress made in addressing action items from the previous COV

Period covered by this COV review is FY2007-2009



HEP Response to the Report of the 2010 Committee of Visitors Review of HEP

COV Recommendation

HEP Response

1) Charge HEPAP to convene an expert panel, as called for in the P5 report, to formulate a strategic plan for strengthening and expanding the stewardship role of HEP in accelerator science and technology.

HEP plans to submit a charge on this topic to HEPAP in 2011.

2) Increase the fraction of the total HEP budget devoted to projects.

The HEP strategic plan calls for increased investment in projects. HEP will work to implement this plan.

3) Recruit and hire additional HEP staff.

HEP will fill allocated Federal positions and will seek approval for additional positions needed to carry out office responsibilities.



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COV Recommendation

HEP Response

4) Use comparative review panels on a regular basis.

HEP will implement an appropriate comparative review process of university grants in the Physics Research programs (with the Theory and Non Accelerator Physics programs as top priorities).

5) Develop standard procedures to ensure that feedback to proposers is routinely provided in a timely way and with as much information as possible, including reviews, for both declined and accepted proposals.

HEP will streamline its procedures and show improvement in providing feedback to PIs on submitted proposals in a timely manner.

6) Involve program managers in guiding database development.

SC is developing a database on grant statistics and participants for all SC programs. HEP will provide input in its development to ensure that it will be useful for HEP in the management of its program.



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COV Recommendation

7) Implement an adequate data base of potential reviewers to support the efforts of the program monitors. The monitors should be consulted to provide input to the process.

8) Work with the Office of Science to address the disparity of funding for Early Career Awards between university and national laboratory proposals, taking into account differences in underlying costs.

HEP Response

SC is in the process of developing a new electronic portfolio management system for program managers. HEP will work with SC to ensure that system addresses these needs.

The difference in funding between laboratory and university Early Career Research Program awardees is meant to address differences in dedicated researcher and staff time. As we gain experience with the program, we will work with SC to incorporate lessons learned from past program cycles.



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COV Recommendation

HEP Response

9) Rebalance program manager travel, possibly reducing the number of non-renewal year site visits, to ensure the availability of time and funding for travel to reviews, conferences and other program activities.

HEP will examine last year's travel usage and utilize findings for planning travel in coming years.

10) Establish templates for reviewers to follow which are designed for ready interpretation.

As noted in the COV report, review templates are already in use in some HEP subprograms. HEP will expand their usage across the program.

11) Develop ways to mitigate the delays in funding due to the requirement that MIEs must appear in the budget request.

HEP will look into the limitations imposed by DOE budgeting and project management practices and identify options for initiating MIEs in a more timely way while still being in compliance with DOE policies and practices.



HEP Response to the Report of the 2010 Committee of Visitors Review of HEP

COV Recommendation

HEP Response

12) Ensure that all substantial subfields represented in a theory task proposal are evaluated by qualified reviewers.

HEP will work to ensure that that all substantial subfields represented in theory proposals are reviewed by knowledgeable reviewers.

13) Ensure that proposal declinations are communicated no later than eight months after the proposal deadline. (See also Recommendation 5.)

HEP will set up a calendar and track progress to ensure that decisions are made and communicated within 8 months.

14) Open the eligibility requirements of the theory home institution program so all advanced HEP graduate students have equal opportunity to participate.

HEP disagrees with this recommendation. SC has a graduate student fellowship program that is open to all. The theory home institute program was set up, as the name implies, to address the specific needs of DOE HEP's theory grants.



HEP Response to the Report of the 2010 Committee of Visitors Review of HEP

COV Recommendation

15) Expand the theory home institution graduate student fellowship program to support more students per year.

16) Encourage grant applications from OJI and ECA awardees at the end of their OJI/ECA funding period and maintain an even-handed treatment of applications, regardless whether their university theory group is traditionally NSF or DOE-funded.

HEP Response

Expansion of the home institution graduate student fellowship program will depend upon its merit and performance in the context of other priorities in the theory program. HEP thanks the COV for this input that will be used in making future programmatic decisions.

HEP will continue to encourage grant applications from all eligible PIs. As with all grant proposals received by HEP, new proposals from past OJI/Early Career Research Program winners will be peer reviewed and decisions will be based upon merit, promise and feasibility of the proposed work.



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COV Recommendation

HEP Response

17) Define a transparent method and approval process to facilitate modest funding changes between funding streams in response to evolving circumstances.

Procedures will be updated and communicated to the field.

18) Develop and articulate a more formal methodology and timeline to define short term and long term operational metrics for HEP facilities and a method for adjustment for yearly changes.

HEP will articulate a methodology and timeline for defining operation metrics and these will be communicated to the field.

19) Incorporate into the facility review process the assessment of recommendation responses from previous reviews.

The HEP review procedures memo has been updated to reflect this recommendation. The implementation will be demonstrated in future review reports.



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COV Recommendation

20) Standardize the facility review process to always include a closeout presentation in a form which is immediately useful for the host laboratory or program.

21) Ensure that the HEP triennial program reviews of laboratory programs include reviewers who are well aligned with laboratory missions, roles, and methodologies. Inclusion of university reviewers is valuable, but the committee should not be dominated by them.

HEP Response

The HEP review procedures memo has been updated to reflect the recommendation. The implementation will be demonstrated in future review closeouts.

HEP will work to include reviewers in the triennial reviews of the laboratory program who are familiar with and knowledgeable of the mission, roles and methodologies of laboratories, while at the same time avoiding conflicts of interest.



HEP Response to the Report of the 2010 Committee of Visitors Review of HEP

COV Recommendation

22) Develop more projects to readiness (CD-0, etc.) in order to be able to respond expeditiously to program opportunities.

HEP Response

HEP has developed and obtained CD-0 for projects once it is clear that funding to implement the project has been identified and a clear scientific need has been articulated and reviewed.



Summary

- **Many COV recommendations are being addressed with new or improved processes and procedures**
 - Some already in place
- **Others are still in development, should see progress over the coming months**
 - Happy to brief HEPAP on status as requested
- **One recommendation (on DOE HEP theory grad student fellows program) declined**

