

**BES Response to the Report of the BESAC Committee of Visitors (COV) Review of the
Chemical Sciences, Geosciences, and Biosciences (CSGB) Division**

Date of COV: September 8-11, 2020 (virtual)

Date of Response: February 11, 2021

Program Point of Contact: Linda Horton (BES) and Bruce Garrett (CSGB) COV

	COV Major Recommendations	BES Responses
1	<p>While the overall review process is excellent, there is an opportunity to communicate the results of proposal review and the decision making process more fully with PIs. Specifically, while it was evident that most PMs were reaching out to the PIs of declined proposals with offers to communicate verbally about the results, these efforts were not always documented in the Portfolio Analysis and Management System (PAMS). This made it difficult for the COV to ascertain whether this information was being communicated to PIs. The COV therefore encourages CSGB to discuss what information is appropriate to communicate to PIs about funding recommendations and how those communications should be documented in PAMS. This would serve both as a robust internal documentation assisting the ability of the COV to assess the program, and a standardization of the information communicated with PIs.</p>	<p>BES appreciates the need for the COV to be able to understand the type of feedback PIs receive on proposal actions, particularly for declined proposals. This allows the COV to fulfill the charge to “assess the efficacy and quality of the processes used to solicit, review, recommend, and document proposal actions.” BES will develop guidelines for information that will be communicated to PIs about proposal decisions and a standard process for documenting these recommendations in PAMS.</p>
2	<p>In discussions with DOE personnel, it was evident that there are multiple pathways that DOE uses to educate potential PIs about BES funding opportunities, mission, and program information. These include, for example, joint webinars with the National Science Foundation and invited talks by PMs at professional meetings. However, the COV felt there may be opportunities to reach a broader audience of researchers. Thus, the COV recommends that CSGB evaluate their strategy for reaching a broad range of potential PIs and educating them about research opportunities in DOE-BES and the unique mission-driven character of BES research. A suggestion that could improve the effectiveness of outreach activities is to advertise informational webinars on the CSGB web-site next to the funding opportunity announcements.</p>	<p>BES recognizes the benefits of broader outreach to potential PIs, which could increase the diversity of BES-supported researchers. BES will explore and implement mechanisms to enhance outreach and broaden the engagement of the scientific community in mission-driven BES research.</p>
3	<p>In order to maintain a global perspective on new research relevant to their programs and international competitiveness, we encourage continued support of travel for PMs to attend national and international scientific meetings to maintain U.S. and BES prominence in the chemical sciences, geosciences and biosciences.</p>	<p>BES agrees that PM participation in scientific conferences and program reviews, including travel to these events, is critical to maintain the BES programs at the forefront of science. BES received significant increases to travel funds in the past few years, which allowed PMs to attend national and international scientific</p>

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		meetings as well as on-site reviews. BES will continue to support participation of PMs in scientific meetings within the constraints of future travel funds as well as other travel restrictions.
4	While maintaining the depth of individual programs, it is recommended to continue to develop research across Programs and Division boundaries and/or introduce new capabilities. This could be in the form of thematic PI meetings that cross program boundaries, or formalizing the policy of smaller seed grant opportunities for high-risk, high-reward concepts. Another mechanism could be to expand the Early Career program, and to continue to use it to bring new ideas into the respective programs. The COV recognizes that this may require funding decisions above CSGB's level.	BES appreciates the increasing importance of cross-disciplinary research for BES mission-relevant science and the rich research opportunities that exist at the boundaries between BES programs. Large-group research efforts, such as EFRC, Hub and QIS Center awards, exemplify BES multidisciplinary research, while co-funded awards from recent special Funding Opportunity Announcements exemplify research that crosses program and division boundaries. BES strategic planning at the division level will continue to consider research themes at the intersection of multiple programs as well as cross-disciplinary research opportunities identified by roundtables and workshops. BES will also examine additional mechanisms for cross fertilization among disciplines and programs and for support of high-risk, high-reward research.