

Committee of Visitors Report

Nov 5, 2014

COV - International Science and Engineering

- September 16-17, 2014
- Members
 - Luis Echegoyen (UTEP)
 - Eric Hamilton (Pepperdine)
 - Jon Harbor (Purdue)
 - Kay Husbands-Fealing (Minnesota → Georgia Tech)
 - Steve Martin (Iowa State)
 - Steve McLaughlin, Chair (Georgia Tech)
 - Miguel Mora (Texas A&M)
 - Deborah Reinhart (UCF)
 - Sandra Russo (Univ of Florida)
 - Robb Winter (South Dakota School of Mines and Tech)

Report:

Two components

- Review 100 “Jackets”
 - Quality and Effectiveness of ISE’s Use of Merit Review Process
 - Selection of Reviewers
 - Management of ISE
 - Portfolio Review
- Other topics

Recommendations

- Review 100 “Jackets”
 - Quality and Effectiveness of ISE’s Use of Merit Review Process
 - Recommendation 1: *Continue to emphasize strengths and weaknesses under each merit criterion in the panel summary.*
 - Recommendation 2: *Provide greater guidance to PIs and panelists on what constitutes broader impact and how it will be assessed.*
 - Selection of Reviewers
 - No recommendations
 - Management of ISE
 - Portfolio Review
- Other topics

Recommendations

- Review 100 “Jackets”

- Quality and Effectiveness of ISE’s Use of Merit Review Process
- Selection of Reviewers
- Management of ISE

Recommendation 3: Stability in leadership of the ISE is an essential next step and a director of ISE should be selected soon who can provide sustained leadership for a reasonable period moving forward.

Recommendation 4: An ISE retreat should be held as soon as possible and in particular before the next round of 2015 proposals start coming into the ISE. A retreat would be very helpful and informative for the ISE program to identify and discuss immediate next steps.

Recommendation 5: The ISE-AC needs to meet as soon as possible to address the Strategic Framework and this report, perhaps before the ISE retreat so that the AC recommendations could be discussed.

- Portfolio Review

- Other topics

Recommendations

- Review 100 “Jackets”

- Quality and Effectiveness of ISE’s Use of Merit Review Process
- Selection of Reviewers
- Management of ISE
- Portfolio Review

Recommendation 6: ISE staff reductions combined with record increases in the number of ISE proposals have led to a disproportionate increase in the workload of the remaining ISE staff. Additional ISE staff are critically needed to rebalance the workload within the ISE section.

- Other topics

Recommendations

- **Other topics**

The third pillar of ISE's strategic framework addresses global leadership:

“Building innovative capacity through U.S. global **leadership** in scientific excellence, ethics, and management of research”

The COV is focusing on this third pillar because of the following context:

- the COV feels the pillar as communicated is awkward and does not reflect the potential role of ISE in shaping international S&E research investment strategies

- ISE is two years into a new *organizational structure*, and an upcoming review of its effectiveness is expected. The ISE should *continue to* have an SES-level leader.

- the establishment of initiatives like the GRC have positioned NSF and ISE as leaders in framing a number of critical issues worldwide (merit review, open access and integrity, partnerships with national research councils).

- NSF's unique ability to enable, and communicate the importance of S&E research, education and innovation as critical elements aligning with US priorities on the international stage for building prosperity, equality, peace and stability

Recommendations

- **Other topics**

With that backdrop, the COV has concluded

- the current position of NSF's international unit (as the ISE Section, downgraded since the last COV) in the NSF organizational structure does not reflect either NSF or ISE's priorities and strategies and diminishes ISE's ability to implement and serve NSF's international vision and strategy.
- stable leadership is essential. The most common discussion theme among the COV was the need for stable leadership.
- in addition to line leadership of ISE there is an opportunity for that leader to collaborate with NSF's OD on advancing the Nation's goals of building prosperity, equality, peace and stability through strong S&E research and education.

Recommendation 8:

- the organizational position of ISE should be revisited.

Recommendation 9:

- recruit and retain stable executive leadership, which should be an SES-rated position

Recommendation 10:

- **define the role for the new leader to include the collaboration with NSF's OD on science diplomacy.**