National Science Foundation 4201 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22230



June 29, 2006

Dr. Gary S. May Professor and Steve W. Chaddick School Chair School of Electrical & Computer Engineering Georgia Institute of Technology Atlanta, GA 30332-0250

I have attached a diversity report and a response to the recommendations in the CTS COV report that was prepared by Geoffrey Prentice, the Acting Director of the Division of Chemical and Transport Systems (CTS) held March 6-7, 2006. I concur with this document and adopt it as the official response of the Directorate for Engineering.

I wish to express my appreciation to the individuals who participated in the COV review. This process is critical to the management of the Directorate and will help to guide our future decision-making.

Sincerely,

Richard O. Buckius Acting Assistant Director for Engineering

Attachments



2006COVCoreQuestions FINAL 24M...



COVf Diversity 6-28.doc (48 KB...



COVf 2006 sponse to COV 6-28



COVf Charge letter.doc (39 KB)...



COVf Bios.doc (30 KB)



COVf Agenda 3-7-06.doc (32 KB)..



COVf Members for 2006.doc (28 ...



COVf ius-Bement.doc (32



Memorandum

To: Richard O. Buckius, Acting Assistant Director for Engineering

From: Geoffrey Prentice, Interim Division Director Chemical and Transport Systems

Date: June 20, 2006

cc: 2006 CTSCommittee of Visitors

Michael Reischman, Deputy Assistant Director for Engineering

Marshall Lih, Acting Division Director for Bioengineering and Environmental Systems

Saundra Woodard, Administrative Officer

CTS Program Directors

Nichelle Coward, Center Manager

Re: Response to Recommendations of the 2006 CTS Committee of Visitors

The Chemical and Transport Systems (CTS) Committee of Visitors (COV) review was conducted March 6-7, 2006. The report of this COV was transmitted to Dr. Gary May, Chair of the Engineering Advisory Committee (ENG AdComm) on March 21, 2006. This response is based on the report accepted by the Engineering Advisory Committee on May 4, 2006, when Dr. Hank Foley, the Chair of the 2006 CTS COV and member of the ENG AdComm, gave the report. The report was accepted without additional comment by the Engineering Advisory Committee.

This COV review covered CTS's core programs, considering actions and active awards during FY 03-05. These core programs are:

- Chemical Reaction Processes
- Fluid and Particle Processes
- Interfacial, Transport, and Separation Processes
- Thermal Systems

The Division is pleased with the overall assessment of its performance and progress in meeting the Foundation's goals.

Responses to the COV's Recommendations on Performance for Fiscal Years 2003-2005:

These responses focus on specific concerns made in the COV report. The 2006 COV's recommendations fall into three sections that follow the COV report template and the Division's responses are identified by the sub-sections in the COV's report:

Division of Chemical and Transport Systems Responses to COV Report of 2006

PART A. RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE INTEGRITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE PROGRAM'S PROCESSES AND MANAGEMENT

A.1.2 Concern about reviewing multidisciplinary proposals in panels and consistency of reviewing resubmitted proposals

Comments: The COV recommended utilizing a combination of panel and ad hoc review to assure that viewpoints of experts in important aspects of each proposal are considered. The COV also recommended considering the NIH model of retaining rotating groups of reviewers over a three-year period. Combining ad hoc reviews with panel review has the potential to cover proposal topics more effectively. On the other hand, the drawbacks of ad hoc review include reduced efficiency (on average about half of ad hoc reviewers return evaluations in a timely fashion) and possible delay waiting for reviews from ad hoc reviewers. The NIH model would preserve institutional memory in reviewing resubmitted proposals. ENG does not have a culture of NIH-style review, and CTS would need to find reviewers willing to commit to the three-year cycle. Currently, some CTS program directors maintain continuity in the review process by inviting a fraction of the same reviewers on panels held in the same FY. Also, some PDs request ad hoc reviews to supplement panel review on specific proposals where expertise is lacking.

Division Response: CTS moved to panel review in FY04 as suggested by the 2003 COV in an effort to increase efficiency in reviewing the rapidly increasing number of proposals. Because of workload issues, combined ad hoc and panel review will probably not be feasible in the near future. Recruiting CTS panelists for a three-year commitment will be a challenge. We will consider these modes of review in programs where program directors are willing to try one or both review modes on a voluntary basis.

A.1.4 Concern about the variability of reviewer evaluation of the broader impact criterion

Comments: It has been NSF policy to avoid specific weighting of the review criteria. Reviewers are able to consider a rating based on their concept of the overall merit of the proposal.

Division Response: CTS program directors discuss review criteria prior to the panel review process. This ongoing education process is helping the community understand the motivation of the broader impact criterion.

A.2.1 Concern that some reviewers are not addressing the broader impact criterion or they are addressing it by stating only obvious aspects such as training students

Comments: Several of the CAREER proposals examined by the COV did not adequately cover the integration and research and education.

Division Response: This will continue to be an ongoing educational process to emphasize educational impacts in CAREER proposals and the more general broader impacts in all proposals. Special written guidelines have been available to reviewers of CAREER proposals on the FastLane login page.

A.2.4 There is a need to find mechanisms to reduce the number of proposals submitted

Comments: From FY02 to FY05 the number of competitive proposals more than doubled in CTS to over 1400 submissions. The increase in proposal pressure has been noted in all Engineering Directorate (ENG) divisions, but the most rapid increase has occurred in CTS. In part, this rapid increase may have resulted from a changeover from ad hoc review to panel review for unsolicited proposals in FY04. Some divisions have taken steps to discourage proposal submissions by mechanisms such as reducing the number of submission windows and discouraging applicants from submitting multiple proposals.

Divison Response: ENG has considered several steps to reduce proposal pressure. In particular, the number of initiatives in ENG has been reduced, and new initiatives are carefully evaluated by ENG so that unnecessary proposal generation is discouraged. CTS has continued to limit initiatives originated by CTS to interagency activities. Projected data from FY06 proposal submissions to date indicate that the number of unsolicited proposals in CTS will decline.

A.3.3 Concern regarding the representation of underrepresented groups in review panels

Comments: The COV noted that CTS was able to obtain geographic and gender balance in panels, but the fraction of reviewers from ethnic minorities appeared to be low. Several factors may influence the statistics regarding the number of minority reviewers. NSF relies on self-reported data submitted on a voluntary basis. Typically, the fraction of reviewers that report their ethnicity is about the same as the fraction that does not submit any information; consequently, the data we have are subject to some uncertainty. If we examine the data of CTS grant applicants as an indicator of minority presence, we find that applications from minorities are typically 5-10% of total grant applications. Because the numbers are small, the fraction of minority applicants can vary significantly from year to year. ENG is currently recruiting a Director of Diversity to increase diversity in all ENG activities.

Division Response: There is an ongoing effort to recruit minority reviewers, and panels generally include representatives from minority groups. CTS has sponsored a continuing series of minority workshops—another one is scheduled for July 2006--and reviewers are recruited from this group. CTS has created an interactive web-based form to allow potential new reviewers, including minority reviewers, to indicate their interest in reviewing CTS proposals. We have asked the NSF reviewer database managers to improve the system to allow PDs to more easily identify minority reviewers.

A.4.2 Concern about average award size

Comments: The annual median award size has decreased in the FY 03-05 period but has remained in the \$80,000 - \$90,000 range. This has resulted in a reduction of summer support, postponement in equipment purchase or reduction in the number of graduate students. A recent ENG study on FY05 proposals shows that ENG declines more proposal than it funds with average ratings of Very Good or higher. Doubling the CTS budget would permit us to roughly double the success rate to about 25%.

Division Response: There are obvious tradeoffs among the funding factors: success rate, duration, outyear commitments, and total award size. Initiatives constrain funding for unsolicited proposals, and recent budget reductions and new policies to reduce outyear commitments have further constrained budgets. The PD response has been to maintain a relatively high level of starts for young faculty, especially for CAREER proposals, and to reduce PI budgets on unsolicited awards to retain key research projects.

A.4.3 Concern regarding the funding of high-risk proposals

Comments: The funding of proposals in the categories specifically labeled high risk is relatively modest. Typically, annual funding for CTS SGERs is about \$1 million, and the CTS annual funding for Nanoscale Exploratory Research (NER) proposals is also about \$1 million. The degree of risk inherent in proposals in other categories is difficult to quantify; however, panelists tend to be critical of proposals that lack sufficient novelty or are regarded as straightforward extensions of previously performed work.

Division Response: CTS PDs believe that their portfolios contain relatively high levels of risk and that little "safe" research is funded. In addition to the \$2 million provided in the SGER and NER categories, an additional \$22 million will be provided for all ENG divisions in EFRI for high-risk multidisciplinary proposals in selected areas.

A.4.4 Concern regarding the percentage of multidisciplinary proposals

Comments: The COV recommended gathering statistics on this category. CTS invests over \$10 million in Nanoscale Interdisciplinary Research Team (NIRT) proposals each year. These \$1-2 million awards are made to teams of at least three PIs/co-PIs, and panelists are asked to evaluate the multidisciplinary nature of the proposal as a review criterion. ENG has statistics on the fraction of proposals with multiple investigators as one indicator of multidisciplinary work; that fraction has increased from about 20% to 50% over the past 20 years.

Division Response: CTS will develop statistics on multidisciplinary work that we support. The EFRI program is also expected to add to the portfolio of multidisciplinary work.

A.4.5 Concern regarding the lack of data on funding for centers, groups and individual awards

Comments: CTS contributes directly to several Nanoscale Science and Engineering Centers (NSECs), and CTS manages two ERCs and one STC; however, funding for Engineering Research Centers (ERCs) and is provided by EEC. Most awards for groups of three or more are funded through the NIRT mechanism.

Division Response: CTS will develop more detailed statistics on the breakdown of funding for centers, groups, and individuals. CTS is not particularly active in multidisciplinary, group proposals outside of the initiatives. Within the initiatives, group proposals were funded in the Sensors Initiative and through the NIRT mechanism. EFRI will also increase the portfolio of group awards in the selected topical areas.

A.4.8 Concern that the portfolio does not have sufficient representation from non-Ph.D-granting institutions.

Comments: As noted in the report, non-Ph.D. institutions are generally at a disadvantage when competing for awards with larger institutions having a more comprehensive research infrastructure. It is NSF policy to be inclusive, and several programs specifically favor smaller, less research intensive universities. There is a special competition for smaller institutions in the Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) initiative, where success rates have recently been around 40%.

Division Response: The specific program for PI-initiated proposals at smaller institutions is the Research at Undergraduate Institutions (RUI) solicitation. CTS typically receives a small number of proposals (about 10) each year. Although no new programs are anticipated, CTS PDs explain the RUI program goals to panel members.

A.4.10 Concern that there is no standard mechanism for co-review and co-funding of multidisciplinary proposals, especially those involving other directorates.

Comments: Much of the willingness to co-review proposals is dependent on the trust developed at the individual PD level through personal interactions. Some divisions maintain a separate account to co-fund multidisciplinary proposals with other directorates; this mechanism offers a clear incentive for PDs to initiate contacts with PDs in other directorates.

Division Response: This issue is recognized at all levels at the Foundation. The MPS Directorate has been active in establishing special accounts to co-fund multidisciplinary work, and they have been active in developing new PD training materials to include the role of PDs in cooperating on multidisciplinary proposals. In times of budget constraints, fencing additional funds for this purpose is not a good option for CTS. With the addition of six new rotators this year, additional mentoring on this issue will be helpful.

A.4.11 Concern that underrepresented groups are included in the portfolio

Comments: Success rates for women and minorities are comparable to those in the overall portfolio; however, the fraction of awards for underrepresented groups is relatively small.

Division Response: The challenge is to increase number of applications, which CTS does, in part, through sponsorship of minority faculty workshops. In addition, CTS continues to sponsor workshops for women. CTS PDs also participate in minority workshops managed by the

CAREER Coordinating Committee. One CTS PD is active on the Women's Initiative Committee of AIChE.

PART C. Responses to Recommendations on OTHER TOPICS

C.3 Concern that the policy of limiting submissions by institution suppresses the best ideas and is unfair to applicants at large research institutions

Comments: Limitations on submissions by institution have been instituted in several initiatives such as NIRT and MRI. These limitations are intended to maintain a reasonable success rate and to avoid overworking the review community and PDs. The primary drawbacks are: 1) applicants at large research institutions are put at a disadvantage over those at smaller institutions, where the internal competition is less intense, 2) the internal review process may not use the same criteria as NSF uses, and 3) work in areas receiving media attention may be favored over excellent work in areas of less prominence.

Division Response: Limitation on submissions by institution has met the goals (reasonable success rates and workload) of that mechanism for NIRT and MRI. A similar limitation for CTS unsolicited proposals has not been given serious consideration as a mechanism to increase success rates. The PD workload issue is being addressed, in part, through the addition of two new positions in the merged division, Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental, and Transport Systems (CBET).

C.5 Comments on improvements for the COV process

Comments: The COV report contains five suggestions for improving the COV process: 1) Reviewing suggestions from the previous COV at the beginning of the COV meeting, 2) Explaining the function of management in considering and implementing suggestions in the COV report, 3) Reducing the number and scope of PD and DD presentations to allow more time for one-on-one interactions between CTS staff and COV members, 4) Increasing the number of jackets examined from 9 to 12 and including more declined proposals, and 5) Providing relevant statistical data for each question requiring data before the meeting so that COV members can request refinements, if necessary, early in the process.

Division Response: These are all excellent suggestions that will be implemented in the next COV, subject to agreement by the COV.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Directorate for Engineering 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Room 505 Arlington, Virginia 22230



TO: Richard Buckius

Acting AD/ENG

FROM: Geoffrey Prentice

Interim DD CTS

DATE: June 20, 2006

SUBJECT: Report on Diversity, Independence, Balance, and Resolution of Conflicts

for the CTS COV

This is my report to you on the diversity, independence, balance, and resolution of conflicts of the Committee of Visitors (COV) for the Division of Chemical and Transport Systems (CTS) held during March 6-7, 2006.

The COV, which was assembled to review the CTS Division, and whose report was presented to the Engineering Advisory Committee on May 4, 2006, consisted of nine persons, of whom seven are male and two are female. One of the members of the committee is African-American.

Eight of the COV members are from academia and one is from industry. The Chair of the COV is a chemical engineer. The members represent all the relevant areas of engineering design, processing, and manufacturing. All invited COV members attended the meeting.

The chair of the COV is a member of the Engineering AdComm and an associate vice president for research. All the committee members from academia are full professors, two of whom are deans and one is dean emeritus. The industry member is a principal research associate.

Five COV members (Helble, McGee, Robeson, Adrian, and Kim) have neither been applicants to CTS in the past five years nor served as ENG Advisory Committee members. Most COV members are familiar with CTS from having served on the ENG Advisory Committee or review panels, or are former or current grantees. None had proposals pending with CTS during the COV meeting. A conflict of interest briefing was held on the first day of the COV meeting. All COV members were required to complete

the NSF Conflict of Interest form. All academic members of the COV were barred from seeing proposals from their home institutions, and all noted conflicts were resolved by barring members from seeing specific proposals with which they had conflicts. No real or apparent conflicts arose during the course of the meeting.

xc: 2006 COV Member Bios

January 9, 2006

TO: The Chemical and Transport Systems (CTS) Committee of Visitors (COV)

SUBJECT: Charge to the COV

FROM: Interim Assistant Director for Engineering

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Committee of Visitors (COV) for the Division of Chemical and Transport Systems of the Engineering Directorate of the National Science Foundation (NSF). By NSF policy, programs that award grants or cooperative agreements are reviewed at three-year intervals by a COV. The COV is an ad hoc subcommittee of the Advisory Committee for the Directorate for Engineering. The purpose of the COV is to assess program-level technical and managerial matters pertaining to program decisions.

The COV is charged to address:

- The integrity, efficacy, and quality of the processes used to solicit, review, recommend and document proposal actions and monitor active projects;
- The quality and significance of the results of the Division's programmatic investments;
- The degree to which the award process supports the long-range goals and core strategies of the NSF as described in the NSF FY 2001-2006 Strategic Plan (September 30, 2000) that addresses the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). These documents and other background on GPRA may be found at http://www.nsf.gov/od/gpra/start.htm. A framework for addressing this issue will be provided at the time of the COV meeting;
- Ways to implement the reorganization to fully realize its potential
- The Division's balance, priorities, and future directions; and,
- Any other issues you think are relevant to the review.

The CTS COV shall use the enclosed Core Questions and Report Template in preparing its report.

Decisions to award or decline grant proposals are based on the informed judgment of program officers and division directors following merit review. Systematic examination of proposal files by qualified external parties provides an independent mechanism of monitoring and evaluating the quality and pertinence of proposal decisions. This examination is part of the job of the COV.

The review will assess the operations of the programs of the Chemical and Transport Systems years 2003, 2004, 2005. The COV will examine a sample of files for both awarded and declined proposals in each program. The Division of Chemical and Transport Systems is organized into eight programs: (1) Catalysis and Biocatalysis; (2) Process and Reaction Engineering; (3) Thermal Transport and Thermal Processing; (4) Combustion and Plasma Systems; (5) Interfacial, Transport and Thermodynamics; (6) Separation and Purification Processes; (7) Particulate and Multiphase Processes; (8) Fluid Dynamics and Hydraulics.

The meeting of the Division of Chemical and Transport Systems COV will take place on Monday and Tuesday, March 6 - 7, at the National Science Foundation located at 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia. The COV will convene at 8:00 am on Monday in Room 330, and will adjourn about 4:00 pm on Tuesday.

The COV should transmit its report, addressing the charge to Dr. Garie May, Chair of the Engineering Advisory Committee, for its review within two weeks of the COV meeting. Dr. May will forward the report to me with any comments that the Engineering Advisory Committee may have. In accordance with NSF policy, I will provide a response setting forth any actions to be taken on each suggestion of recommendation. Both the COV report and my response will be forwarded to the Director of the NSF.

Richard O. Buckius

Enclosure

- (1) Core Questions
- (2) Report Template

Cc: Dr. Garie May

Biographical Sketches CTS COV

Henry Foley of Penn State is Associate Vice President for Research and Director of Strategic Initiatives. Effective July 1, 2006, he will become Interim Dean of the College of Information Sciences and Technology. He was Walter L. Robb Chair, Head of Chemical Engineering. Prior to coming to Penn State in 2000, Foley was a professor of chemical engineering and director of the Center for Catalytic Science and Technology at the University of Delaware. His areas of research include nanoporous carbon materials for catalysis and separation, reaction engineering, adsorption, and kinetics. Foley has received numerous awards and honors including the National Science Foundation Presidential Young Investigator Award. He received a B.S. in chemistry from Providence College in 1977 and a Ph.D. in physical chemistry from Penn State in 1982.

Linda Broadbelt is Professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering at Northwestern University. She received her B.S. in chemical engineering from The Ohio State University and graduated *summa cum laude*. She completed her Ph.D. in chemical engineering at the University of Delaware where she was a Du Pont Teaching Fellow in Engineering. At Northwestern, she was appointed the Donald and June Brewer Junior Professor from 1994-1996. Her research and teaching interests are in the areas of multiscale modeling, complex kinetics modeling, environmental catalysis, novel biochemical pathways, and polymerization/depolymerization kinetics. One main research emphasis is computer generation of complex reaction mechanisms, and application areas include biochemical pathways, silicon nanoparticle production, and tropospheric ozone formation.

Pamela Eibeck is Dean of Engineering at Texas Tech University. She arrived at Texas Tech in May of 2004 with broad administrative experience at Northern Arizona University that includes having served as Chair of Mechanical Engineering, Interim Dean of the College of Engineering and Technology and Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Studies. Prior to her appointment at NAU, Dr. Eibeck was a tenured faculty member in Mechanical Engineering at the University of California at Berkeley (1985 – 1995). During her tenure she developed an experimental program in convective heat transfer with a focus on vortical flows and electronics cooling. She served on the Board of Directors of the NSF SYNTHESIS Coalition and was an Associate Editor for the Journal of Engineering Education. Dr. Eibeck graduated from Stanford University with a Bachelor of Science degree (1979), Master of Science (1981) and doctorate degree (1986) in Mechanical Engineering. Over the course of her career, Dr. Eibeck's research interests have been in the fields of heat transfer and advancing innovation in engineering education.

Joseph J. Helble, Dean and Professor of Engineering, received his B.S. in chemical engineering from Lehigh University and his Ph.D. in chemical engineering from MIT. From 1987-1995, he worked as a research scientist at Physical Sciences, Inc., and served as a fellow with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He then joined the faculty at the University of Connecticut as Associate Professor of both Chemical and

Environmental Engineering. He was later promoted to full professor, and also served first as Graduate Program Chair and then as Chemical Engineering Department Head. Before joining Thayer School, Helble was named the 2004-2005 Roger Revelle Fellow by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). This honor allowed him to spend the 2004-2005 academic year addressing technology and environmental policy initiatives in the U.S. Senate.

Henry McGee was founding dean of engineering and led the joint VCU/Virginia Tech project to bring quality engineering education to the metro Richmond area. Dr. McGee was educated in chemical engineering and in theoretical chemistry at Georgia Tech and the University of Wisconsin. His professional work in teaching and in research over the intervening years has reflected his dual interest in both science and engineering. He is a scientist, an engineer, a teacher, an administrator and a small businessman. He was on the faculty of Virginia Tech for 23 years, including ten years as head of the Department of Chemical Engineering. Immediately before coming to VCU, Dr. McGee was appointed to a three-year term as a division director in CTS at the NSF. While at NSF, he created a new research program on environmentally conscious manufacturing. His most recent book, "Molecular Engineering," appeared in 1991.

Lloyd M. Robeson has distinguished himself as one of the foremost leaders in cutting-edge polymer research leading to significant technical developments. After receiving his doctorate in chemical engineering in 1967 from the University of Maryland, he worked for Union Carbide Corporation where he conducted extensive research with polymer blends and composites, thermoplastics and biomedical applications. Since 1986, he has worked at Air Products and Chemicals, Inc., as the principal research associate in Corporate Science and Technology. His scientific accomplishments include structure-property correlations for impact polystyrene, block copolymers, and membrane permeability and he has added to the knowledge in membrane science, environment stress failure, and dynamic mechanical characterization. In 2001, Robeson was elected to the National Academy of Engineering for significant and technology contributions in polymer blends and engineering polymers. Robeson received his B.S. in chemical engineering from Purdue University in 1964.

Sangtae "Sang" Kim is the Donald W. Feddersen Distinguished Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Distinguished Professor of Chemical Engineering at Purdue University. He was the inaugural director of the Division of Shared Cyberinfrastructure in the National Science Foundation's Computer and Information Science and Engineering Directorate. Until October 2003, Sang served as vice president and information officer of Lilly Research Laboratories. From 1997 to 2000, Sang served as vice president for R&D IT at the Parke-Davis Pharmaceutical Research division of Warner-Lambert Company. From 1983 to 1997, Sang was a faculty member in the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he held a distinguished professorship chair. His computational insights into "hydrodynamic steering" played an influential role in 1994-95 in the development of fluidic self assembly, the novel process employed today for manufacturing of ultra low-cost radio frequency identification (RFID) tags. His research accomplishments include a Presidential Young Investigator

award from NSF in 1985. A native of Seoul, but a product of the "K-11" public schools of Montreal, Sang received concurrent BSc and MSc degrees (1979) from Caltech and a PhD (1983) from Princeton.

Levi Thompson earned his B.ChE. from the University of Delaware, and M.S.E. degrees in Chemical Engineering and Nuclear Engineering, and a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Michigan. After working for two years at KMS Fusion, he joined the faculty of the Department of Chemical Engineering. From 2001 to 2005, he served as Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education. He is presently Director of the Michigan-Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (MI-LSAMP). Professor Thompson has distinguished himself in research in the areas of nanostructured nitrides and carbides, micro-reactor and fuel cell systems, and fuel processing catalysts. He is also co-founder, with his wife Maria, of T/J Technologies, Consulting Editor for the AIChE Journal, and was a member of the Advisory Committee for the NSF Engineering Directorate.