

FESAC Panel Report Addressing Policies and Practices Influencing the Dissemination of Research Results

FESAC Panel

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Charge to FESAC from Dr. Brinkman, DOE Office of Science

FESAC panel report responds to a charge from Dr. W. F. Brinkman motivated by the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010.

What are the current policies and practices for disseminating research results in the fields relevant to the Fusion Energy Sciences program? Research results refer to both written research findings (scholarly papers, presentations, reports, etc.) and digital data.

- 1. The criteria for dissemination and who makes this determination*
- 2. How access is provided and controlled*
- 3. Whether access is limited in any way*
- 4. Whether access comes with any additional functionality*
- 5. The version of the written material or data provided*
- 6. Whether peer review is a condition of dissemination*
- 7. The institution, DOE user facility, or other body by which the policy is currently upheld*
- 8. Whether, in addition to dissemination, long-term stewardship is accounted for by the existing policy or practice*

Executive Summary

The policies and practices controlling the dissemination of research results from research sponsored by the Department of Energy Fusion (DOE) Energy Sciences are described herein. Research results are shared with the public in the form of publications, conference presentations, technical reports, computer codes, and digital data. The determination that criteria for disseminating research results are met is made by the individual researcher and his/her research collaborators, and is subject to internal review to varying degrees at the universities and laboratories. Policies governing some aspects of dissemination are defined in DOE policies and orders. The institutions of the researchers define policies and practices effecting dissemination in many cases. Particular attention is given in policies and practice to intellectual property issues associated with copyrights, patents, royalties, and licensing. Formal policies related to dissemination and long-term retention of digital data are incomplete. In developing policy and guidance to the research community with respect to providing access to research results, some consideration should be given to the cost implications and long-term retention issues.

Process

- Charge was transmitted from Office of Science to FESAC Chair M. Greenwald
- FESAC Chair and FES appointed panel chair B. Cohen, and a panel was nominated that is broadly representative of the FES research community (from universities, national laboratories, corporate entities)
- Panel chair developed a survey questionnaire from the charge, contacted the panel, explained the charge, the fact-finding to be done, and how the panel report would be developed.
- All panel members readily agreed to participate, researched the practices and policies governing dissemination of research results at their respective institutions and some nearby, provided input to panel chair who drafted the report, and participated in revisions to the draft report.
- The draft report was iterated within the panel and shared with FESAC and FES in late June.

Outline of Panel Report

- Introduction -- Charge, process, overview and organization of report
- Publications and reports -- policies and practices, internal and external review, classification and export control considerations, intellectual property issues (copyrights, patents, etc.), quality control, means of dissemination
- Conference presentations -- policies and practices, ...
- Digital data -- policies (or lack thereof) and practices, ..., user agreements, longevity and functionality issues
- Software -- policies and practices, ..., intellectual property and licensing issues affecting distribution
- Issues and challenges

Conclusions, Comments, Issues and Challenges

- Policies -- DOE and the home institutions have policies, not necessarily complete (particularly with respect to *digital data*). Finding the policies is not always easy for the researcher, particularly DOE policies.
- Practices
 - The researcher originating the results to be disseminated bears the biggest responsibility for screening the quality, applying policy that affects dissemination, and initiating dissemination.
 - The execution of the practices and how formal policy is applied in disseminating research results are quite nonuniform across the community.
- Practices and policies for the dissemination of research results in the form of peer-reviewed publications are mature and work well. Practices and policies for the dissemination of digital data are less mature, and there are unresolved issues.
- Issues
 - Clarity in DOE policy for dissemination of all categories of results is needed.
 - Sharing digital brings with it issues associated with access, longevity and support for working with the data (software and consulting), and the possibility of unfunded mandates.
 - Freedom of Information Act and possible abusive requests for access