

**Basic Energy Sciences (BES) Response to the Report of the Basic Energy Sciences Advisory Committee  
Committee of Visitors (COV) Review of the BES Materials Sciences and Engineering (MSE) Division**

Date of COV: March 10 – 12, 2015

Date of Response: August 4, 2015

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	<b>COV General Recommendation/Finding</b>	<b>BES Response</b>
1	The BES Advisory Committee will soon release its update to the 2007 Grand Challenges report, which will include several transformative opportunities critical to both fundamental and use-inspired science. The COV believes that increased funding would be highly appropriate to address these, and that the core programs reviewed here can play a critical role in executing these opportunities.	BES agrees with this recommendation and considers the transformative research opportunities identified in the report to be compelling priorities for the annual budget request.
2	The COV's highest and most urgent priority is a substantial increase in travel funding for BES program managers, not only because of the precipitous drop in recent years, but because of the need to support the markedly broader scope of DMSE programs and missions.	BES agrees that travel is crucial for the management of BES grants and laboratory programs and for the program staff to maintain awareness of the technical directions in their fields. Following discussions of draft COV report, the Office of Science (SC) evaluated travel budgets across the different program offices and provided extra travel funding to BES for FY 2015. These funds enabled additional conference travel and site visits by BES program managers. BES will continue to work with SC management to justify further increases of travel funding commensurate with program management needs.
3	We encourage continued use of the white paper process in the core programs. The evolving PAMS platform should not interrupt the interactive, individualized nature of feedback process now in place.	BES is committed to the continued use of white papers and feedback to facilitate development of proposals with sound programmatic fit. The use of PAMS for white papers (aka preproposals) will be evaluated carefully to ensure continued strong interactions between the program managers and the principal investigators.
4	The assembled research highlights – both PowerPoint and web format – provide a valuable synopsis of the research portfolio and communicate its value to a broader audience across science and society. Describing and disseminating research advances as highlights should continue to be a high priority for both the PI's and the program managers. Support	BES agrees that communication of the impact and value of our research is important and appreciates the positive comments about the value of web highlights. Following the COV recommendations, BES has taken steps to strengthen staffing with skill sets suitable for developing research highlights for the web and for presentations. BES is committed to

	should be provided for the special skills mix required for BES to facilitate the development of effective research highlight write-ups.	continuing evaluation of mechanisms to improve our communication strategies.
5	The biennial meetings for principal investigators and program managers are very beneficial and should be continued.	BES agrees that principal investigators' meetings are important and plans to continue support for these meetings, including posting of the summary documentation on the web as part of our communication strategy.
6	While growing and receding research emphases are shared with the community in several ways, the COV recommends systematizing this process. The website and individual FOAs are quite different but important venues, both appropriate to share areas of new emphasis and de-emphasis of topics within the context of a much broader portfolio.	BES appreciates the need to provide clear communication to the research community on the evolution of supported research directions. We plan to evaluate the information on the website to improve the clarity of this messaging, to continue the practice of careful preparation of funding opportunity announcements, and to provide/reference the availability of this information in all community briefings on the program.
7	It is important to maintain a balance between the three EPSCoR funding modes: implementation grants, lab partnership grants, and early career awards. A strong portfolio has been built up in recent years for the implementation grants and Early Career awards. It is important now to reinvigorate the lab partnership part of the portfolio to take advantage of excellent capabilities and senior staff mentoring at the national laboratories to support development of early career scientists into future leading senior investigators.	BES agrees that the balance of program modalities improves the impact of the EPSCoR program. Pending Congressional appropriations, BES will consider focusing the next funding opportunity announcement for EPSCoR on national laboratory partnership grants, taking advantage of the strengths and core competencies of national laboratories as noted by the COV.