

Public Information about the 2014 FESAC Strategic Planning (SP) Panel: Strategy

At the 9-10 April 2014 FESAC meeting, the DOE Office of Science (SC) issued a charge to Fusion Energy Sciences (FES) Advisory Committee (FESAC) to assess continuing and potential new priorities within four budget scenarios for DOE-FES's formulation of its ten-year strategic plan for the fusion energy sciences program. The text of the charge letter and the FES presentation concerning the charge are posted on the FESAC web page (<http://science.energy.gov/fes/fesac/reports/>).

This is an extremely important charge in the eyes of the Office of Science and for the fusion community, with high visibility to policymakers and to our own universities and national laboratories. FESAC has a responsibility to address the charge seriously, carefully, and precisely. A FESAC panel, consisting of FESAC members and outside experts, has been appointed to address the charge, write a report, and submit it to FESAC. FESAC will meet in September to review the panel's report. FESAC may decide to ask for revisions in the report before approving the report for submission to the Office of Science. The due date for FESAC approval and submission is October 1.

FESAC is strongly committed to having the panel gather information openly and process it in an unbiased and independent manner that minimizes conflict of interest issues while providing the best technical advice for the charge. To this end, the panel will vigorously solicit input from the community. The tentative plan is to hold two in-person panel meetings in the usual Washington, DC area, one in the first week in June and one in the second week in July, each incorporating three days of short presentations by the public, at which experts, current and prospective stakeholders, and relevant individual, cross-agency, cross-discipline, or international partners will have an opportunity to interact with the panel. White papers will be encouraged in order to augment and expand upon the verbal input. The panel will have a web site and our community organizations will be mobilized to broadcast instructions for submitting these white papers and linking to reference information. Specific dates and locations for the two meetings will be publicized and the input will be gathered before the middle of July.

The composition of the panel is designed to ensure credibility of the final product beyond that of the open-input process. The guiding principle was to set up a panel that can deliberate in a free and unencumbered manner. Thus, the criteria that is being used in the selection of the panel membership include (a) scientific expertise, (b) demonstrated scientific leadership, (c) experience of having led scientific/programmatic change, and (d) absence of strong affiliation with institutions that host major fusion facilities. The reason for this last criterion is to minimize institutional conflict of interest with respect to recommendations that could directly affect the future funding level for a panel member's institution of employment.

I, as the FESAC Chair, have been asked to chair the panel due to the high importance of this charge. Here we are following a procedure that has been used by at least one other DOE-SC program office federal advisory committee. When the panel presents its report to FESAC, I will momentarily step down as chair of FESAC and have another FESAC member serve as chair pro tem during that part of the meeting.

The composition of the panel and its schedule of meetings will be announced soon. On behalf of the FESAC and the panel, we look forward to interacting with the community and receiving your thoughtful and informed input.

Mark Koepke, Professor, West Virginia University
FESAC Chair
FESAC SP Panel Chair