

The Use of Subcommittees of the Business & Operations Advisory Committee of the National Science Foundation

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Overview

- ❖ Fall 2010 Recommendation
- ❖ Follow-Up
- ❖ Interview topics
- ❖ Interview Results & Themes
- ❖ Draft Guidance
- ❖ Guidance (Highlights)





Fall 2010 Committee Recommendation

- ❖ Use the formal subcommittee mechanism to examine specific business matters in more depth and with broader external membership than would normally be on the Committee itself. In the past few years, subcommittees have been successful at examining key business processes.



Follow-up

❖ Spring 2011

- ❖ State of the BOAC with subcommittee (SC) research and best practices
- ❖ Agreed on formulation of 3 new subcommittees; recommended templates for reports

❖ Fall 2011

- ❖ Presented work plan: interview SC staff; draft template; finalize best practices in key areas: members; BOAC treatment of SC reports; and communications btwn BOAC, SC and NSF



Interview Topics

- ❖ Adequacy of guidance to the SC from NSF and whether the charge was observed
- ❖ SC input into NSF's membership decisions
- ❖ Resolving conflicts that may have arisen, and resolving challenges
- ❖ Meeting administration: length of meetings, agendas, meeting technology
- ❖ Adequacy of the information provided from NSF, missing information guidance
- ❖ SC report creation

Interviewed
NSF staff
involved with
Subcommittees
& SC Chairs



Interview Results & Themes

- ❖ Adequate guidance
- ❖ Charges mostly observed except
 - ❖ Time pressure
 - ❖ Communications



Interview Results & Themes

- ❖ NSF made SC membership decisions
 - ❖ SC Chair Input
 - ❖ Use of NSF Organizing Committee
- ❖ Few conflicts – Skilled co-chairs
- ❖ Suggested resolutions:
 - ❖ BOAC Chairs, NSF
 - ❖ Inclusion of minority view in SC Report
 - ❖ Access to NSF OGC



Interview Results & Themes

❖ Meeting administration


- ❖ Met once in person; post meeting conference calls & emails. No problems report creation. Report template wouldn't have worked
- ❖ SC Chairs generally wanted to set meeting agenda
- ❖ Suggested  SC Chair involvement in meeting logistics, i.e. table set up, remote participation
- ❖ Use of NSF Organizing Committee

❖ Adequacy of information – challenges

- ❖ SC access to sensitive and personally identifiable information, and the potential applicability of government standards such as the Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act
- ❖ Access to NSF OGC



Draft Guidance

- ❖ Posted on  Microsoft Office SharePoint
- ❖ Flexibility - Guidance
- ❖ Topics covered
 - ❖ Purpose
 - ❖ Background & Introduction regarding subcommittees
 - ❖ Subcommittee Creation
 - ❖ Subcommittee Membership
 - ❖ Subcommittee Operations & Communication
 - ❖ Report Issuance



Guidelines (Highlights)

- ❖ Creation
 - ❖ Can be created by NSF at a BOAC meeting or in between meetings
 - ❖ SC chair should be named early & included in the finalization of charge
 - ❖ Charge should state if advice sought should be independent
- ❖ Membership
 - ❖ Cognizant NSF staff member or organizing committee; collaboratively to agree on subcommittee membership.
 - ❖ BOAC member as liaison or subcommittee member if possible.
- ❖ Operations & Communications
 - ❖ Open communication btwn SC and NSF as appropriate
 - ❖ Agree early re: underlying data necessary for SC work (access to sensitive and personally identifiable information, Privacy Act, Paperwork Reduction Act)
- ❖ Resolve conflicts by SC chair, inclusion in report. If appropriate NSF/BOAC



Guidelines (Highlights)

- ❖ Subcommittee report
 - ❖ Should contain advice, findings, recommendations; template may not be appropriate
 - ❖ NSF opportunity to correct factual errors, but caution where NSF was seeking independent advice
 - ❖ BOAC chairs may suggest edits
 - ❖ SC submits report to BOAC chairs, not NSF
- ❖ BOAC Responsibilities
 - ❖ Accept SC report, discuss it at duly organized BOAC meeting, and make it publicly available
 - ❖ Provide feedback/comments via NSF DFO cover letter
 - ❖ Forward report to NSF DFOs





Recommendations Sought?



Feedback

Review Guidance

Finalize Guidance before operations phase of IT subcommittee

SC Template?

Subcommittee updates?

Other