



An Overview and Discussion of the Cooperative Institutes Review Process and Review Criteria

Philip L. Hoffman

Director

NOAA Cooperative Institute Program Office

30 July 2014



What I'll be Sharing with you:



- A History of the Cooperative Institute (CI) policy and procedures, including reviews;
- The Current CI Review Process, including:
 - Responsibilities,
 - Criteria;
- A Review Process Comparison with OAR's Lab Reviews and Sea Grant's Program Reviews;
- An overview of CI Review outcomes, including recommendations to NOAA.
- Then We'll Discuss.



CI Policy History

[Review of the Organization and Management of Research in NOAA](#)

A report to the SAB from the Research Review Team; August 6, 2004

- Response to FY-2004 House and Senate Appropriations Committee Report concerns
- Charged to provide findings and recommendations to enhance NOAA research organization and connection to operational activities
- Report establishes operational and organizational principles for guiding research

“NOAA should establish a process by which Joint Institutes and other cooperative arrangements with extramural partners are established and maintained. This process should include approach-specific criteria, and should also define the review processes, the renewal processes, and sunset clauses.”

[The Evaluation of NOAA's Response to the Research Review Report](#)

A report to the SAB from the Research Review Team; September 23, 2005

- Assessment of NOAA's response to the Research Review Report
- NOAA Research Council formed a Cooperative Institutes Committee
 - NOAA Cooperative Institute Policy ([NAO 216-207](#); September 2005)
 - CI Policy handbook (written and maintained by CI Committee)
 - [Handbook updated November 2012](#)



CI Review Process: Responsibilities



NOAA Research Council (R/C): Approves review guidelines and recommendations for renewal and provides general oversight of the CI program

R/C CI Committee: Ensures compliance with the CI NAO and Handbook, proposes major procedures pertaining to NOAA management of CIs and policy implementation. Maintains and approves CI Handbook amendments.

Responsible NOAA Line Office: Manages CI award and reviews

CI Director: Oversees all NOAA-funded CI activities, including submission of proposals and reports, reviews, and management by responsible Line Office

SAB: Official reviewing authority for the CI program, including approvals for science reviewers and making recommendations after the renewal review.



The CI Review Timeline



- Renewal procedure begins at beginning of year four so that review is completed before the end of the 5-year agreement
- Line Office Assistant Administrator (LO AA) sends request to the SAB for review chair
- CI Program selects administrative reviewers
- SAB identifies review panel from recommended lists (LO and CI)
- CI prepares briefing book for reviewers
- Science and Administrative Reviews occur on-site
- Review Panels submit preliminary reports to the LO, sent for CI for technical review
- Final report presented to the SAB
- SAB submits report to the Undersecretary and LO AA
- LO makes recommendation for renewal, conditional renewal, or termination to the Research Council through the CI Committee
- LO sends response to SAB and transmits reports to CI
- LO works with CI to address recommendations and process renewal if appropriate



CI Review Process: Science Review Criteria



The 8 elements for assessment (from 2004 & 5 reviews):

- 1) Quality, creativity, integrity, and credibility
- 2) Timeliness, scale, and scope
- 3) Science connected to the application and operational implementation of policy
- 4) Capacity-building
- 5) Education
- 6) Efficiency
- 7) Social science integration
- 8) Diversity

We've added linkages to NOAA Strategic Plan and business plan from original CI proposal informally.

A set of Standard review questions is answered by CI before review.



CI Science Review Criteria



1. The Science Plan (vision, relation to NGSP, goals and objectives, metrics for progress, scientific themes, partnerships)
2. The Science Review of recent accomplishments
3. Education/Outreach - what is offered and what is planned
4. The Science Management Plan: how ID new opportunities, examples of recent opportunities, strategy for new starts, resource distribution, demographics of employees, HR development, financial health, issues with NOAA, issues with Universities



CI Review Ratings



Review Panel provides overall rating:

Outstanding: The CI has consistently demonstrated superior achievement of all initially agreed goals, as well as evidence of an on-going resource commitment that enhances NOAA's resources to support collaborative research. For outstanding performance, NOAA will renew a CI for up to an additional 5-years at a funding level, pending availability of funding, commensurate with its level of performance.

Satisfactory: CI has achieved some or all of its agreed goals and has demonstrated acceptable performance. Its performance, however, is not considered outstanding and/or the CI's resource commitment provides a limited enhancement of NOAA's resources. NOAA may opt to renew the CI for less than 5-years at a significantly reduced funding level, pending funding availability.

Unsatisfactory: CI has demonstrated a failure to achieve some or all of its agreed goals and its performance is unacceptable and/or the CI has also provided minimal resources to enhance NOAA's resources to conduct collaborative research. NOAA will not renew the award, or for serious problems, will terminate the current CI award.



CI Review Process: Administrative Review



- Similar in approach to Science Reviews (but not a full, legal audit):
 - What works?
 - Why?
 - Are there ways the CI or university can improve?
- Defined questions sent to CI in advance
- Convened with Science Review (normally the day before)
- Chaired by CI Director/ Manager of sponsoring Line Office
- Includes membership from
 - NOAA GMD
 - DoC FALD
 - NOAA FPO @ HQ
 - NOAA FPO in field (if available)
- Results presented to university at end of day
- Committee completes a short formal report, often transmitted to CI with Science Review



A Comparison to OAR Lab Reviews



- Generally similar in-person format, but Lab Reviews have more time for stakeholder feedback, Line Office representative feedback, meetings with students and other scientists.
- Lab Reviews based on Research Areas rather than Review Themes.
- Lab Review Ratings given with respect to *Quality*, *Relevance*, and *Performance* of each Research Area:
 - Outstanding:** Laboratory goes well beyond the Satisfactory level and is Outstanding in all areas.
 - Satisfactory:** In general, Laboratory meets expectations and the criteria for a Satisfactory rating. (Language includes terminology like: often recognized for excellence; some efforts but not consistent; shows linkages; generally has; usually does)
 - Needs Improvement:** Lab does not reach expectations.
- Labs complete a response plan and final report after receiving findings and recommendations from the Review Panel.



Sea Grant Reviews:



A quantitative rating example

- Part of review process includes Performance Review Panel once every 4-years
- “National Focus Areas” (NFA) are defined in the Sea Grant program strategic plan
- Rating scale:
 - Highest performance:** exceeds expectations by an exceptional margin in most areas/aspects (1)
 - Exceeds Expectations** by a substantial margin in some areas/aspects (2)
 - Meets Expectations** in most areas/aspects (3)
 - Below Expectations** in some areas/aspects (4)
 - Unsuccessful** in most areas/aspects (5)
- Overall rating weighted based on proportion of funding resources allocated to that NFA.
Example:
10% resources to Sustainable Coastal Development and rated Highest Performance
+ 90% resources to Healthy Coastal Ecosystems with Exceeds Expectations
$$[10\% * 1] + [90\% * 2] = 1.9$$
- If program receives ≥ 4 , not eligible for merit funding and program placed on probationary status.

Caveat: Sea Grant statutory authorities are different than CIs



CI Review Outcomes



NOAA has an enforceable mechanism for implementing CI Review Recommendations.

e.g. CILAR was renewed pending special award conditions as a direct result of the SAB's "Satisfactory" rating.

However, recommendations to NOAA are less enforced:

Summary of Recommendations to NOAA 2004-2012

Communication

- NOAA needs to be more proactive in engaging with CI's regarding long-term planning and engagement between OAR and its university partners. Examples include co-location, workshops, and information sharing.

Funding

- Increase communication regarding current and future funding.
- Task 1 funding support (NOAA did address and has new Task 1 policy)

Education and Outreach

- NOAA should work with CI's to expand their outreach and education efforts. (e.g. through Sea Grant-CI partnerships)



Discussion



Guiding questions to start our discussion:

- What would the SAB like to see as the outcome of the CI Reviews?
- What structure or format of the CI Reviews would help achieve that outcome?
- What does the SAB envision its role in the CI Review process moving forward?



Questions??