

# Meeting of the NOAA Science Advisory Board

September 11, 2023

Location: Virtual – GoToWebinar

Presentations for this meeting have been posted on the Science Advisory Board (SAB) website:  
[https://sab.noaa.gov/past-meetings/past-meeting-documents/#Sept11\\_2023](https://sab.noaa.gov/past-meetings/past-meeting-documents/#Sept11_2023)

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## SAB members in attendance:

Mr. Jon Allan, Senior Advisor, Senior Academic and Research Program Officer, School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan; Dr. Ilene Carpenter, Earth Sciences Segment Manager, Hewlett Packard Enterprise; Dr. Robert Grossman, Frederick H. Rawson Distinguished Service Professor in Medicine and Computer Science and Jim and Karen Frank Director, Center for Translational Data Science, University of Chicago; Dr. Ruth Perry, Marine Scientist and Regulatory Policy Specialist, Shell Exploration and Production Company; Dr. Zhaoxia Pu, Professor, Department of Atmospheric Sciences, University of Utah; Dr. Martin Storksdieck, Director, STEM Research Center and Professor, College of Education and School of Public Policy, Oregon State University; Dr. Steve Weisberg, Executive Director, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project; Dr. Anthony Wu, Executive Director, AeroMarine LLC; Dr. Christopher Lenhardt, Domain Scientist, Renaissance Computing Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Mr. Jesse Ausubel, Director, Program for the Human Environment, The Rockefeller University; Dr. Chelle Gentemann, Program Scientist, Transform to Open Science, National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

### **NOAA senior management and Line Office representatives in attendance:**

Dr. Richard Spinrad, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator; Dr. Sarah Kapnick, NOAA Chief Scientist; Dr. Michael Morgan, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction; Dr. Steve Thur, Assistant Administrator, Oceanic and Atmospheric Research; Ms. Janet Coit, Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service; Ms. Nicole LeBoeuf, Assistant Administrator, National Ocean Service; Ms. Rachael Dempsey, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Navigation, Observations, and Positioning, National Ocean Service; Mr. Randall TeBeest, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Programs and Administration, Office of Marine and Aviation Operations; Dr. Doug Howard, Director, Center for Satellite Applications and Research, National Environmental Satellites, Data, and Information Service; Mr. Joe Pica, Deputy Director, National Centers for Environmental Information, National Environmental Satellites, Data, and Information Service; Dr. Terence Lynch, Director, Office of Science Support, Oceanic and Atmospheric Research; Dr. Hendrick Tolman, Director, Environmental Modeling Center, National Weather Service; Ms. Shannon Louie, Director, Cooperative Institute Administration Office; Mr. Jim Herzog, Evaluation and Financial Management, Cooperative Institute Administration Office; LTJG Jeremy Weirich, Director, Ocean Exploration; Ms. Jennifer Lukens, Deputy Director, Ocean Exploration; and Dr. Aurora Elmore, Cooperative Institute Manager, Ocean Exploration.

### **OECI Review Panelists in attendance:**

Mr. Matthew Borbash, Deputy Hydrographer of the Navy (ret.), United States Navy; and Dr. Jyotika Virmani, Executive Director, Schmidt Ocean Institute.

### **Staff for the Science Advisory Board in attendance:**

Ms. Casey Stewart, Executive Director and Designated Federal Officer; Dr. Cynthia Decker, NOAA Scientific Integrity Officer and former Executive Director, NOAA Science Advisory Board; Ms. Karin Bucht; Mr. Joseph Fillingham; Ms. Katherine Longmire; Mr. Andrew Peck; Ms. Viviane Silva; and Ms. Cassandra Blizzard.

### **Opening Statements**

Casey Stewart, Executive Director and Designated Federal Officer  
Martin Storksdieck, Acting SAB Chair

Casey Stewart welcomed the attendees to the meeting and took roll call of the SAB members. She then provided a brief summary from the initial presentation on the Review of the Cooperative Institute for Ocean Exploration (OECI) at the July 2023 SAB Meeting. Specifically, Ms. Stewart reviewed the two action items for revising the report from the July SAB Meeting: 1) strengthen the rationale for funding and move the rationale to the top of the report, and 2) strengthen the recommendation language and provide the updated recommendations to the SAB for review.

For the transmittal memo, the SAB had asked to reiterate the rationalization on funding the OECI for a second cycle and to highlight the unique relationship of the OECI with NOAA's Ocean Exploration and Research (OER). The SAB had also made the following specific requests for the transmittal letter:

- “more closely inspect the mission technology area with respect to the vehicles, mix of vehicles and sensors as well as to allow a process to use pathfinders to explore new areas”
- “note insufficient funding for Task 1 funding overall in the review report – have better planning and integrating processes at the beginning of the review process as well as the outreach as required by the CI Review guidance”

- “provide a recommendation to improve the overall guidance of CI reviews and at least make the reviews more consistent”

Martin Storksdieck added that the meeting objective was to first hear the panel’s responses to the SAB’s requested revisions, then to vote on whether to transmit the report to NOAA.

## **Report on the Review of the Cooperative Institute for Ocean Exploration (OECI)**

Ruth Perry, Shell Renewables and Energy Solutions, SAB Member, and Chair of the Review Team

Ruth Perry gave an overview of the report presented at the July 2023 SAB Meeting, followed by a summary of the revisions made since the SAB Meeting. She reminded the group that the OECI Review Panel had followed the direction of the older CI review guidelines, and that the OECI is only in its fourth year. She also stressed that the panel did not see a satisfactory rating as negative, but simply an acknowledgement of room for improvement. Moreover, the panel felt strongly that the OECI should be funded for a second five-year term. Dr. Perry reviewed the challenges that the OECI had faced in the past four years, including the COVID-19 pandemic and significant turnover in OER and OECI leadership, which forced changes in the OECI’s mission and strategy. Despite these challenges, the panel felt that the OECI was vital to the broader ocean exploration community. For example, the OECI has significant outreach efforts not achieved by OER or other programs. Dr. Perry then reviewed the revisions made to the report since the July SAB Meeting, including adding a section on the justification for continuation of re-funding and strengthening the recommendation language.

### *Discussion*

Steve Weisberg commended Ruth and the panel on the revisions and reiterated the need to reassess the CI review process. Jon Allan seconded Dr. Weisberg and asked if there was a process to address unsatisfactory items and better understand NOAA’s response to the recommendations. Dr. Storksdieck responded this was a good question that should be included in the transmittal letter. Dr. Spinrad seconded this. Dr. Thur noted that it was possible for the agency to include special award conditions with the award renewal and that the OECI would need to accept said conditions as a component of the award.

Jesse Ausubel felt there was confusion on who the recommendations were addressed to and who has the authority to implement the improvements. He asked if the transmittal letter could identify the people responsible for specific recommendations to improve the chance of implementation.

Mr. Allan made a motion to approve the report on OECI. Mr. Ausubel seconded the motion and the report passed without any objections.

### **Public Comment**

One official public comment was received prior to the meeting.

### **Final Comment**

Dr. Spinrad thanked Dr. Perry and the panel for their efforts to improve the report. He agreed with the need to review the CI process.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 11:16 a.m.

## Minutes Certification

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**John R. Kreider, NOAA SAB Chair**

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**Date**