The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

Secretarial Policy Statement on Scientific Integrity

INTRODUCTION

Science and technology are the foundation of all Department of Energy (DOE) activities, so it is essential that we be committed to developing and maintaining a culture that fosters the highest levels of scientific integrity. The credibility of the research the Department supports and conducts, the decisions we make, and the information we disseminate rest upon our collective integrity. As a result, a culture of integrity must permeate all elements of the Department's organization. Scientific integrity is not simply expressed in the day-to-day practices of DOE leadership and employees; it is given force in the Department's policies, directives, and manuals. This Secretarial policy statement is intended to enhance our culture by establishing a unified framework for scientific integrity. This policy applies to all DOE Federal employees. This policy will be reviewed annually.

I. FOUNDATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

The Department's mission relies on objective, reliable, accurate, and accessible scientific and technical information. DOE is committed to ensuring a culture of scientific integrity.

a) Political officials will not suppress or alter scientific or technological findings.
b) DOE will select and retain candidates for scientific positions in DOE based on their scientific and technological knowledge, credentials, experience, and integrity.
c) DOE will ensure that data and research used to support policy decisions are of high scientific and technical quality and objectivity. Scientific and technical objectivity will be supported through independent peer review by qualified experts, where feasible and appropriate, and consistent with law.
d) DOE civil servants are bound by federal restrictions against conflicts of interest. As with federal civil servants generally, DOE federal employees in covered positions file financial disclosure reports annually and are provided annual training on conflict of interest rules and other federal ethics requirements.
e) Whistleblowers will be provided with appropriate protections under law and Departmental policy.
f) DOE will facilitate the free flow of scientific and technological information, consistent with standards for treatment of classified, sensitive, private, and proprietary information. Transparency and accessibility of scientific and technological information support the continued

advancement of a sound science and technology base to help guide and inform the nation's critical public policy decisions; advance the national, economic, and energy security of the U.S.; facilitate the accomplishment of DOE mission objectives; and maximize the public value of such efforts.

g) Consistent with the Administration's Open Government Initiative, the Department will use its website and the resources of its Office of Scientific and Technical Information to help make research findings more widely available to the public.
h) Scientific and technological findings will be communicated by including a clear explication of underlying assumptions; accurate contextualization of uncertainties; and a description of the probabilities associated with both optimistic and pessimistic projections, including best-case and worst-case scenarios where appropriate.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

The Department is committed to communications policies that promote and maximize, to the extent practicable, openness and transparency with the media and the American people while ensuring full compliance with limits on disclosure of classified, sensitive, private, and proprietary information. Consistent with those limits Department policy supports the free flow of unclassified scientific information, within the scientific community and between scientists and the public.

In accordance with these principles, the Department is committed to ensuring that scientists employed directly as Federal employees at Department-owned-and-operated laboratories for the specific purpose of conducting research may speak to the media and the public about scientific and technological matters based on their official work, with appropriate coordination with their immediate supervisor and their public affairs office. In no circumstance may public affairs officers ask or direct Federal scientists to alter scientific findings. Organizational elements shall develop mechanisms to resolve disputes that arise from decisions to proceed or not to proceed with proposed interviews or other public information-related activities.

III. USE OF FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Department is committed to ensuring the integrity of its policy on scientific and technical Federal Advisory Committees (FACs).[1]

a) The recruitment process for new DOE FAC members will be as transparent as practicable.
b) Professional biographical information for appointed committee members will be available on the FAC's website, subject to Privacy Act and other statutory/regulatory considerations.
c) The selection of members to serve on a scientific or technical FAC will be based on expertise, knowledge, and contribution to the relevant subject area.

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[1] Peer-review committees convened solely for the purpose of reviewing research proposals to provide input on intra- or extramural funding decisions are not covered by this recommendation.

d) Except when prohibited by law, all Conflict of Interest waivers granted to committee members will be publicly available.
e) Except when explicitly stated in a prior agreement between an agency and a FAC, all reports, recommendations, and products produced by FACs will be treated as solely the finding of such committees rather than of the U.S. Government, and thus are not subject to intra- or inter-agency revision.

IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF GOVERNMENT SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS

The Department is committed to promoting and facilitating, as permitted by law, the professional development of Federal scientists and engineers.

a) Scientists employed directly as Federal employees at Department-owned-and-operated laboratories for the specific purpose of conducting research are encouraged to publish research findings in peer-reviewed, professional, or scholarly journals and to present findings at professional meetings, subject to prior approval by their supervisor; may become editors or editorial board members of professional or scholarly journals and may fully participate in professional or scholarly societies, committees, task forces and other specialized bodies of professional societies; and to accept honors and awards for their research accomplishments, consistent with applicable Federal ethics statutes and regulations.
b) The Department is committed to ensuring that its program managers remain up to date in their professional knowledge and development. Program managers are therefore permitted to participate in scientific meetings, professional and scholarly societies, committees, task forces, and other specialized bodies of professional societies, subject to prior written approval by their supervisor and consistent with applicable statutory/regulatory considerations.

Nothing in this policy is to be construed as contradicting or superseding existing Departmental orders or directives.

Steven Chu

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Secretary of Energy

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Date