

Charge Letter to the Review Committee

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee for NCAR's Weather and Climate Impact Assessment Science Strategic Initiative. We are very aware that service on an evaluation committee requires a significant commitment of your time. Each of NCAR's initiatives represents a strategic investment of our programmatic funds in scientific directions that are new to us or require a consolidation of effort, yet are closely related to our core mission to enhance our understanding of the atmosphere and related systems. Your work on the Advisory Committee will guide us as we make decisions about the future of these investments. We seek to optimize the productivity of each initiative and ensure close coordination with the external research community. Your Advisory Committee will also help us identify new emphases and offer suggestions regarding how NCAR can best support your initiative.

I have asked Linda Mearns, the leader of this strategic initiative, to convene your committee at NCAR this summer, on August 3rd, 2004. Part of this meeting will include an opportunity for Tim Killeen or me to meet with the council. We will appoint a chair prior to the meeting. The focus of the meeting will be a review of the initiative's status, achievements and progress. As a follow up to the meeting of your committee, the chair will be asked to prepare and submit a written report to me. All written reports will generate a written response from me.

We hope you will address the following questions, among others:

1. Scientific quality and merit are among the most important requirements of our initiative program. Is the initiative scientifically sound? Can you evaluate the quality of the science developed so far? Are hypotheses clearly outlined and testable? Are the tests and approach adequate?
2. We have asked the initiatives to articulate clear, measurable goals. Can you identify their top three goals? How does the team set priorities? Are subsidiary goals clearly outlined? Are they measurable? Are they attainable?
3. The initiatives are an opportunity to cut across disciplinary and institutional boundaries, and interaction with the university community will be especially critical to our success. Does the initiative take advantage of collaborative opportunities with other NCAR programs and with external organizations? Can you identify opportunities we are missing?
4. Besides scientific goals, our initiatives should be relevant to national and international needs. Does the initiative address clear societal needs? If so, are the specific scientific goals in line with those needs? If not, can the science be modified to address those needs?
5. The management of the initiative will be an element of its success. Do you understand the management structure? Is the relation among program elements obvious? Do the program elements seem adequate to address the initiative's scientific and societal goals?
6. We expect that at least some initiatives will show enough promise to become permanent parts of NCAR's portfolio. Should the initiative become part of NCAR's base program? Does the initiative have the potential to generate outside funding? If so, can you suggest potential funding agencies?

7. Your frank evaluation will be an important element in our allocations of scarce resources. Does the committee have any suggestions for changes in focus, organization, or scientific approach? What have we missed? What, if anything, should we drop? Does the committee perceive particular strengths and/or weaknesses in the initiative's activities that should be brought to the attention of NCAR management?

Thanks again for agreeing to help set the direction of this important program.

Sincerely,

Larry Winter