

The Brookhaven Council is a group of tenured scientists elected by the scientific staff that advises and makes recommendations to the Director about the Laboratory policies affecting the scientific staff. The Council is particularly concerned with the maintenance of an atmosphere conducive to excellence in scientific research at BNL. The Council is also represented on the Laboratory's newly established Internal Communications and Involvement Working Group. This Commentary is a summary of the activities of 2004-2005 Brookhaven Council.

Meetings with the Director

The full Council met with Dr. Chaudhari three times over the past year. The prominent subjects of discussion at these meetings: the process for evaluating candidates for tenure appointments and the development of an enhanced safety culture at the Laboratory. In addition to these meetings, the Chair and Secretary of the Council met with the Director following the Council's monthly meetings to review topics that were discussed at the meetings and were of concern for the scientific staff.

Tenure Cases

The most important activity of the Council is to perform a comprehensive review of the tenure cases that are recommended to the Director by the Department Chair through the cognizant Associate Laboratory Directors. As a guideline for the tenure review, a successful candidate for tenure at BNL will have achievements and/or have demonstrated leadership and creativity in their scientific or technical field equivalent to the scientists who achieve similar recognition at the best research organizations and institutes worldwide. This year seven cases were evaluated by the Council over a five month period. The Council provided a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of each case and the results of a secret ballot vote. The Director is particularly interested in having the overall tenure evaluation process be transparent and fair and these notions were the subject of several discussions with him.

Ombudsmen

Another important responsibility of the Council is to review termination of any scientific staff appointments for reasons of financial exigency or major program change. One case was referred to the Council this year where a scientific staff member with a continuing appointment was recommended for termination for reasons of financial exigency. The Council determined that the case had been handled properly by the Laboratory management and reported this finding to the Director. The Council emphasized to Laboratory management that it is important to involve the Council in any such reviews in a timely manner, as specified in Laboratory procedures.

Council Meetings with BNL Management

In addition to the meetings held with the Director, the Council invited several BNL managers to individually visit the Council to discuss topics of interest to the scientific staff. Peg Bogosian, Manager of the Office of Intellectual Property & Sponsored Research highlighted the rather low revenues at the Laboratory from work for others (non-DOE). In subsequent discussions with the Director, he indicated his desire to remedy this situation. Interim Deputy Director Peter Bond shared his thoughts on tenure, on structure of scientific staff positions, and on safety courses at the Laboratory. Mike Holland, DOE's Site Manager for BNL provided a DOE perspective on

future challenges and funding. Fiscal Services Division Head Mark Israel presented policies and practices for conference expenses. The Manager of the Diversity Office, Shirley Kendall, discussed how to obtain more diversity within the scientific staff. A discussion of information services resources and plans were discussed with Mary Petersen, Head of the Information Services Division. Challenges and improvements to safety at BNL were discussed with Jim Tarpinian, ALD for Environment, Safety, Health, & Quality.

Establishment of Emeritus Position

The Council recommended to the Director the establishment of an Emeritus Position. The title could be conferred upon retired staff that held the rank of tenured or continuing scientist/engineer during active service to the Laboratory. It should be based on scientific accomplishments and should be reserved for those scientists or engineers who wish to continue doing research, writing, or instrument development after retirement. Laboratory management now has this recommendation by the Council under consideration.

LDRD

Four members of the Council participated in evaluating LDRD applications, with one representative from each directorate: HE/NP, BES, Life Sciences, and EENS. Next year there will be five Council participants because of the creation of the Light Sources Directorate. Also, the Council will not have direct votes on future LDRD applications and will serve only in an advisory capacity. This change was the subject of much discussion within the Council and is believed by some to be ill-advised.

Goldhaber Fellows

The Council has a subcommittee that serves on the Selection Committee of the Goldhaber fellows. This year three Council members participated in the selection process that led to the awarding of three fellowships.

Council Representation

The Council periodically reviews its representation from various departments and divisions. This year the Council determined that the Physics Department was under-represented. Consequently, beginning with the 2005-2006 Council, there will be one additional representative from the Physics Department. This will bring the total Council membership to seventeen. Because of recent re-organization at the Laboratory, further realignments on the Council may be considered.

Your Involvement in BNL Council

The BNL Council tries to identify issues that are important to the scientific staff. It is important that the scientific staff bring items of concern to the BNL Council. To learn more about the BNL Council, or to identify your department or division representatives, please see link: <http://www.bnl.gov/bnlweb/Admin/council.asp>

Robert A. Bari
Chair
BNL Council (2004-2005)