



Department of Energy
Office of Science
Washington, DC 20585

June 4, 2004

Professor Frederick J. Gilman
Chairman
High Energy Physics Advisory Panel
Carnegie-Mellon University
5000 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

Dear Professor ^{Fred}Gilman:

Thank you for the Committee of Visitors (COV) report transmitted to me by your April 22, 2004, letter. I would like to first express my sincere appreciation to the Committee for their extreme hard work and dedication to the program in conducting this review. It is clear from the comprehensive and thorough report that the Committee did an excellent job of examining the program management aspects of the Office of High Energy Physics (OHEP). I am certainly pleased that the "COV found the overall functioning of the OHEP office to be very professional" and that it was "impressed with the responsible and excellent job that is done in soliciting and evaluating proposals, making grants and monitoring the funded programs."

I appreciate the Committee bringing to my attention the serious shortage of staff and travel funds which is making it difficult for OHEP to conduct its business in a responsible manner. Both Robin Staffin, Associate Director for High Energy Physics, and I are taking these matters very seriously. Robin has been studying staffing issues and will be making recommendations to me in the near future in the framework of an overall staffing plan for the Office. With regard to travel funds, I agree with the Committee as to the importance of site visits in reviewing and monitoring Office of Science programs including those of OHEP. While I will make every effort to provide additional resources for these two purposes; it is important to note that OHEP needs must be considered in the context of overall Office of Science needs and within our Congressional allocation for the separate Program Direction account for salaries, travel, etc.

Another matter of concern to the Committee is the need for a strategic planning function in OHEP. The COV felt that dedicated personnel as well as the use of a modern database to store financial and other HEP data would enable analysis of budget action implications and improve the ability to do long range studies and analysis. I agree with the COV on this recommendation. The Office of Science is now engaged in many long-range planning activities that seek to articulate a clear vision for the future of U.S. science and link that vision to our budget requests and performance milestones. In this context, greater efforts could be made to plan strategically for the HEP program, and modern software tools could be developed and utilized if sufficient staff were available. As



stated above, I will make every effort to meet the needs of the OHEP within the context of overall Office of Science needs.

The COV also pointed out the lack of comparative review between the research programs at the universities and at the laboratories and recommended a "Research Portfolio" review. I agree with this recommendation and believe that such a review would not only lead to improved physics research efforts at the laboratories and universities, but also allow for better management and balancing of the laboratory and university efforts. OHEP has initiated discussions with laboratory management about a uniform approach for peer reviewing of physics research at the laboratories. Once a uniform peer review mechanism is in place for both laboratories and universities, OHEP will conduct a broad review of the overall Research Portfolio.

All of the Committee's concerns, suggestions, and recommendations are addressed in detail in the enclosed document. If the Committee has follow-on questions or wishes to discuss any of the items further, they should not hesitate to call either Robin or me. In about six months, OHEP will provide HEPAP a status report on progress made on the commitments contained in this document.

Again, I would like to express my appreciation to the Committee and especially to Barry Barish for chairing this extraordinary effort. Be assured that the Committee's suggestions and recommendations have been taken seriously by the Office of High Energy Physics and, in many cases, are already being implemented.

Sincerely,



Raymond L. Orbach
Director

Enclosure