

National Sea Grant College Program Evaluation

(November 13, 2009)

Overview

Early last year we put into motion the new integrated planning, implementation, and evaluation system for Sea Grant described in the November 2008 policy document, “The National Sea Grant College Program Planning, Implementation and Evaluation [PIE] System” (included here as Appendix C). The changes in the way Sea Grant operates were intended to enhance our impact as a national program, maximize efficiency at all levels, and make the best use of our limited resources.

To this point we have been focusing our efforts primarily on the planning aspects of the new PIE system. That effort began with developing the National Plan and has continued through aligning and updating the state program plans. These plans will carry the entire Sea Grant network through FY 2013, covering the 4-year omnibus awards from February 1, 2010 to January 31, 2014. Within the next few months, the planning process will be completed and we will begin the second phase of the PIE system, implementing the programs described in those plans.

As we move ahead, it is important to understand the third aspect of the PIE system, program evaluation. The need for a new evaluation process stems from recommendations made in the National Research Council 2006 Report, “Evaluation of the Sea Grant Program Review Process.” Although the PIE policy document outlined the evaluation process that will eventually be used to assess our success as a network, it did not go into detail. In order to further develop the evaluation, an Evaluation Criteria Working Group was formed with members from the Sea Grant Association (SGA), the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (Advisory Board), and the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO). The charge for this working group was to: (1) develop draft evaluation criteria for the review of state Sea Grant programs objectively; (2) provide guidance on how the NSGO should form an overall rating based on the reviews; (3) provide guidance on how this information may translate into funding for the programs; and, (4) explore how information collected for reviews could be used to support the national and state Sea Grant programs and be shared across the programs to help them learn from each others’ experience.

After careful consideration, the working group offered a series of recommendations that included several options for some aspects of the evaluation process. The report was circulated among the SGA, the Advisory Board, and the NSGO for comment. Based on that report, the comments received, and further discussions with many members of the Sea Grant Network, the evaluation process described below expands on the evaluation section of the PIE policy document to explain how programs will be rated and how those ratings will translate into merit funding.

Principles of Evaluation

The basic principles underlying Sea Grant program evaluation are as follows:

- The primary goal of program evaluation is to ensure excellence throughout the Network
- The evaluation process should encourage collaboration among programs
- Evaluation should be a continuous process
- Each program should be evaluated against its own program plan
- All program activities and resources should be included in the evaluation
- Evaluation should be based on integrated program impacts, not on functional areas
- The evaluation process should be transparent and not burdensome

Evaluation Process

The general outline for the program evaluation process was presented in the November 2008 policy document; what follows builds on that discussion and is intended to offer further detail, primarily on the rating process and the subsequent allocation of funding. There are several related components to program evaluation within Sea Grant:

Annual Reports/Self-Evaluation – Annual reports will be used by programs to evaluate progress against their state program plans, national performance measures, and metrics over a one-year period. These reports will be used by the NSGO and programs to track and report progress. The individual programs' progress in meeting goals set forth in their plans and in producing accomplishments relative to those goals contributes to the Sea Grant network's progress toward meeting national goals set forth in the national plan.

Program Site Review Visits – Once every four years beginning in 2010, a site review team (SRT) will visit each Sea Grant program. Each SRT will be chaired by the NSGO program officer and co-chaired by a member of the Advisory Board with a Sea Grant Director as a review team member. Additional members of the teams may be drawn from the Advisory Board and/or outside experts as needed. The SRT will meet with the program management team, advisory committees, and university administration to review and discuss broad issues related to three of the four evaluation components: 1) program management and organization; 2) stakeholder engagement; and 3) collaborative network activities. The SRT will be provided with a limited and focused set of briefing materials and will prepare a site visit report with findings and recommendations to improve the Sea Grant program's performance. The SRT will not be responsible for providing a rating for the program. Appendix A provides a detailed description of the SRT process.

Performance Review Panel – Every four years, following the completion of all Sea Grant program site visits, a Performance Review Panel (PRP) will conduct a retrospective evaluation of all programs' overall impact on society from both an environmental and a socioeconomic perspective based on each program's four-year plan. Annual reports, combined with a brief four-year summary document prepared by the programs, will provide the basis for the review. PRP working groups will be responsible for providing a separate rating for each program's focus areas. The first PRP will take place in 2011 and will evaluate program performance based on the

progress in meeting the objectives of the 2010-2013 plan. Appendix B provides a detailed description of the PRP process.

NSGO Annual Review – The NSGO will meet in the fall of each year to discuss the progress of each state program relative to its plan, and to identify any aspects of the program that might need improvement. Once every four years, starting in 2011, the scope of the annual review will be expanded to include a full performance evaluation based upon the site visit report, the PRP report and the combined PRP working group ratings, and the state program’s response to those reviews. The process is described fully below in the section on “Rating and Allocation of Funding.”

Recertification – The four-year reviews will also constitute a program recertification process. A successful review will result in recertification of the state program for the next four years. However, if a program receives an *Unsuccessful* rating, the program will be placed on probationary status. During each succeeding NSGO Annual Review, the progress of any program currently on probation in addressing the issues that led to the *Unsuccessful* rating will be assessed by the NSGO. If progress is satisfactory, the program will be allowed to continue on probation until the next four-year review, and if at that time the program receives a *Successful* rating, the program will be considered recertified. However, if progress is still found to be unsatisfactory after two years, or if a program receives a second consecutive *Unsuccessful* rating during the four-year review, the program will be referred to the Advisory Board for consideration of a recommendation for decertification.

National “State of Sea Grant Program” – Once every two years, beginning in 2010, the Advisory Board will provide a review of the “State of the Sea Grant Program.” This review will assess the progress of the Sea Grant Network in addressing the priority areas highlighted in the national plan, analogous to the manner in which state programs will be evaluated in addressing their respective plans. This review will rely extensively on information collected from state program annual reports and the subsequent analysis by the National Focus Teams, and will help inform the national strategic planning process. The national program review is central to the PIE system and will provide an assessment of the overall performance of the entire Sea Grant College Program, including the National Sea Grant Office, in achieving its local, regional, and national objectives while supporting NOAA’s mission.

Rating and Allocation of Funding

One outcome of the program review process will be an overall rating for each state program. Ratings will be assigned by the NSGO based on the evaluations and assessments of the Site Review Team and the Performance Review Panel, and will be used to guide merit funding increases as explained below.

Site Visits

As indicated above, the site visit reviews will focus on 1) program management and organization; 2) stakeholder engagement; and 3) collaborative network activities. After all the site visits have taken place, the NSGO, as part of its annual review, will review the findings and

recommendations included in the site visit reports, and the subsequent response of the programs, if any, and will find those aspects of program management to be either *Successful* or *Unsuccessful*. An *Unsuccessful* rating would result if the SRT identified serious issues with program management that had not been resolved prior to the subsequent annual review. Any program rated as *Unsuccessful* will be given a clear explanation for the rating and will be required to work with its program officer to develop a corrective action plan. A program rated as *Unsuccessful* will be placed on probationary status. Once the problems have been addressed, programs may submit an appeal to change their rating during the next NSGO Annual Review.

Performance Review Panel

The Performance Review Panel (PRP) will assess each program's overall impact on society from both an environmental and a socioeconomic perspective based on its four-year plan. To facilitate the review, PRP members will form five working groups according to their expertise, four with responsibility for one of the four national focus areas and the fifth with responsibility for all other program focus areas. Each of the working groups will evaluate the performance of all the participating programs in their particular focus area based on how well the programs achieved the outcomes, objectives and performance measures stated in their four-year program plans. Programs will thus receive a separate rating for each focus area the program participates in. The rating scale is as follows:

- a. *Highest Performance* – exceeds expectations by an exceptional margin in most areas/aspects (5)
- b. *Exceeds Expectations* by a substantial margin in some areas/aspects (4)
- c. *Successful* (3)
- d. *Below Expectations* (2)
- e. *Unsuccessful* (0)

After each of the four PRP working groups for the national focus areas has concluded its evaluation of program performance relative to the individual plans, they will then be asked to make an additional assessment of the overall performance of all programs within their focus area relative to the level of Sea Grant's federal investment. The intent of this second level of review is to identify for each of the national focus areas those programs with impacts well beyond the norm for their level of federal investment and/or those programs with particularly outstanding scientific or societal contributions on a local, regional, or national level. The *few* programs that are highlighted by this assessment will be rewarded by having one point added to their rating for the respective focus area.

The focus area ratings will then be weighted based on the proportion of funding resources allocated by the program to each of the focus areas and combined to provide an overall performance rating. "Funding resources" includes all NOAA federal, matching, and leveraged funds that are managed by, or within the direct influence of, the Sea Grant Program and used to meet the goals and objectives of the four-year plan. For example, if a program allocated 10% of its resources to the Sustainable Coastal Development (SCD) focus area and was rated *Highest Performance* (5) with an additional bonus point for outstanding scientific impact, and 90% of its

resources to Healthy Coastal Ecosystems (HCE) with a rating of *Exceeds Expectations* (4), it would receive an overall weighted rating of 4.2, calculated as follows:

$$\begin{array}{cc} \text{SCD} & \text{HCE} \\ [10\% * (5+1)] & + [90\% * 4] = (0.6) + (3.6) = 4.2 \end{array}$$

There is no requirement that a program address all four of the national focus areas. Instead, the rating process is intended to emphasize those areas that each program considers most important based on the resources allocated by program management.

If a program receives an overall rating of less than 2, the program will be considered *Unsuccessful* and placed on probationary status.

Allocation of Merit Funds

Merit funding will be allocated based on the overall program rating from the PRP review starting with the 2012 award. Rather than grouping programs into a small number of rating categories and allocating the same funding to each program within the category (as was done with the previous Program Assessment system), the allocation for each individual program will be proportional to its overall rating. For example, if the total merit funding pool was \$10M, and the sum of the individual ratings for all programs happened to be 100, each rating point would be worth approximately \$100,000. The program in the example above with an overall rating of 4.2 would receive approximately \$420,000 and a program with a rating of 2.4 would receive approximately \$240,000.

Any program that is rated as *Unsuccessful* will not be eligible for merit funding.

Appendix A: Site Review Team Procedures Manual (March 2010)

I. Site Review Team Composition and Role

Once every four years, a site review team (SRT) will visit each Sea Grant Program. The SRT will review and discuss broad issues related to: 1) Program Management and Organization; 2) Stakeholder Engagement; and 3) Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities. These three categories encompass Sea Grant's regulations listed under *15CFR918.3: Eligibility, qualifications and responsibility of the Sea Grant College Program*. The SRT will then produce a site visit report. The report will be transmitted to the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) and to the Sea Grant Program. The SRT will not be responsible for rating the Program on any of these three areas, but will report findings from the site visit as outlined in this manual.

SRT Composition

Each SRT will be chaired by the Federal Program Officer (FPO), co-chaired by a member of the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (Advisory Board), and include a Sea Grant Director as a review team member. The SRT co-chair will be selected by the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP) Director in consultation with the Chair of the National Sea Grant Advisory Board. The FPO will then work with the SRT co-chair to select two additional external members, who may include:

- Representatives of appropriate commercial and industrial entities;
- Directors of institutes, centers, and laboratories;
- Leaders of state and federal resource agencies and programs (including NOAA);
- Senior officials of other academic institutions;
- Directors of cooperative extension programs or experiment stations;
- National Sea Grant Advisory Board members; and
- Recognized practitioners in appropriate fields (research, extension, education, communications, etc.).

Working with the co-chair, the FPO should consider including an external member of the SRT to come from the program's region (as long as there are no conflicts of interest). Prior to their final appointment, the potential non-Sea Grant SRT members will be reviewed by the Sea Grant Program to assure there are no conflicts-of-interest. The SRT may also include non-participating observers (such as other Federal Program Officers from the NSGO).

Role of the SRT Chair

The duties and responsibilities of the SRT Chair are as follows:

- A. Working with the co-chair, select and recruit SRT members.
- B. Serve as primary spokesman for the SRT, communicating on the team's behalf to the Sea Grant Program, NSGO, officials of Sea Grant institutions, constituent organizations, and the general public.
- C. Plan the site visit. Consulting with the co-chair and the Director of the Sea Grant Program being reviewed:
 1. Develop the overall management of the site visit;
 2. Formulate an agenda appropriate for the visit; and

3. Approve the public notice of the site visit, drafted and issued by the Program Director.
- D. Brief the SRT concerning the conduct of the visit, and supervise the conduct of the SRT during the review.
- E. Lead the preparation of draft findings and recommendations.
- F. Together with the co-chair, conduct the exit interview with the Program Director and appropriate university officials.
- G. Oversee the preparation, review, and issuance of the final SRT Report.

II. Public Notice of Site Visit

A minimum of thirty days prior to the site visit, the Director of the State Sea Grant Program under review shall draft and issue a public notice that the Program will be reviewed on [X dates] by a SRT convened by the Director of the NSGCP. The notice will invite such persons to email comments on the management aspect of the Program or its work at least one week before the site visit date. Comments should be sent to oar.sg.feedback@noaa.gov.

III. The Site Visit Structure

Sea Grant's regulations describe the characteristics and responsibilities of Sea Grant Institutional and College Programs. The SRT will be particularly interested in those aspects that fit within three broad categories:

- Program Management and Organization (leadership, organization, program team approach, and support),
- Stakeholder Engagement (relevance, advisory services and relationships), and
- Collaborative Network Activities (coordinated planning and cooperative work with other Sea Grant programs and other local, state and federal agencies/organizations).

During the site visit, the SRT will meet with the Sea Grant Program's management team, advisory committees, university administration, stakeholders and others as determined by the Sea Grant Program Director being reviewed.

Programs are encouraged to provide the SRT with an overview of the state Sea Grant Program at the start of the site visit. Following this introduction, the SRT will receive information largely from presentations and structured or unstructured discussions in a relatively informal setting.

The Site Visit Schedule

The site visit should be designed to be completed over a two-day period (e.g., Tuesday/Wednesday), with the first day and a half dedicated to assessing the Program. The last half day is devoted to drafting the site visit report and briefing the program management team and appropriate university officials on the team's conclusions and recommendations.

The Exit Interview

Prior to leaving, the SRT will conduct an exit interview with the Program Director and appropriate university officials to summarize the draft report. The SRT may choose to first brief the Program Director and other staff members, and then brief the university officials.

The Site Visit Report

The draft report produced before the end of the site visit will form the basis for the final site visit report. The FPO is responsible for finalizing the site visit report. The final site visit report will have a section highlighting findings, recommendations, and suggestions as well as any activities the SRT has identified as “best management practices.” A *recommendation* is a formally prescribed course of action for which the Sea Grant Program is accountable. The Sea Grant Program is expected to respond to each recommendation, explaining how it *has* implemented, how it *plans* to implement, or why it *chooses not* to implement each course of action. A *suggestion* is an idea that is presented for consideration. The Sea Grant Program is not accountable for responding to suggestions, but is encouraged to consider implementing those deemed useful and appropriate by program leadership. The best management practices identified by the SRT will be shared with other Sea Grant Programs.

The SRT report will not include a rating for the Program. The report will be finalized and sent to the National Sea Grant College Program Director and to the state Program Director within 45 days of the review.

The Program Response

Once the Program receives the site visit report, they have the option to implement any recommended changes and/or may submit a written response to the NSGCP Director up to three weeks prior to the NSGO Annual Review.

Subsequent Rating by NSGO

The NSGO will review the findings, recommendations and suggestions included in the site visit report, and the subsequent response of the Program, if any. The NSGCP Director, in consultation with NSGO, will deem the Program to be either *Successful* or *Unsuccessful* based on the aspects of a program’s management and organization, stakeholder engagement and collaborative network activities. Any program rated as *Unsuccessful* will be given a clear explanation for the rating and will be required to work with their FPO to develop a corrective action plan.

A program whose management is rated as *Unsuccessful* will be placed on probationary status and will not be eligible for merit funding. Once the problems have been addressed, programs may submit an appeal to change their rating during the next NSGO Annual Review.

IV. Site Visit Review Criteria

This section lists the Site Visit Review criteria, which are the same as those found in Sea Grant’s regulations, and includes a list of questions the SRT may ask the programs.

Program Management and Organization

- **Leadership.** The Sea Grant College Program under review must have created the management organization to carry on a viable and productive Sea Grant Program, and must have the backing of its administration at a sufficiently high level to fulfill its multidisciplinary and multifaceted mandate.
- **Programmed team approach.** The Sea Grant College Program under review must have a programmed team approach to the solution of ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes problems

which includes relevant, high quality, multidisciplinary research with associated educational and advisory services capable of producing identifiable results.

- **Support.** The Sea Grant College Program under review must have the ability to obtain matching funds from non-Federal sources, such as state legislatures, university management, state agencies, business, and industry. A diversity of matching fund sources is encouraged as a sign of program vitality and the ability to meet the Sea Grant requirement that funds for the general programs be matched with at least one non-Federal dollar for every two Federal dollars.

Questions the SRT may consider

- Is the Program an intellectual and practical leader in ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes science, engineering, education, and advisory service in its state and region?
- Has the Program created the necessary management organization to carry on a viable and productive Sea Grant Program, and does the Program have backing of its administration at a sufficiently high level to fulfill its multidisciplinary and multifaceted mandate?
- Does the Program have a programmed team approach to solving ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes problems, which includes relevant, high quality, multidisciplinary research with associated educational and advisory services capable of producing identifiable results?
- Does the Program have the ability to obtain matching funds from non-Federal sources, such as state legislatures, university management, state agencies, business, and industry?
- Does the Program demonstrate the ability to continue the pursuit of excellence and sustain the following?
 - (i) leadership in ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes activities including coordinated planning and cooperative work with local, state, regional, and Federal agencies, other Sea Grant Programs, and non-Sea Grant universities;
 - (ii) effective management framework and application of institutional resources to the achievement of Sea Grant objectives;
 - (iii) long-term plans for research, education, training, and advisory services consistent with Sea Grant goals and objectives;
 - (iv) furtherance of the Sea Grant concept and the full development of its potential within the institution and the state;
 - (v) adequate and stable matching financial support for the Program from non-Federal sources; and
 - (vi) effective system to control the quality of its Sea Grant Programs
- Did the Program implement recommendations from the previous review?
- Does the program input usable information into the National Information Management System (NIMS) in a timely manner?
- Are publications sent to the library on a regular basis (several times per year)? Does the number of publications at the library match the number in NIMS?
- Is the Director sufficiently engaged with the Program?
- Is the host university sufficiently engaged with the Program?
- Is there an active advisory board?
- Does the advisory board contribute to the strategic plan?
- How much contact do advisory board members have with constituents of the Program?
- How often does the advisory board meet?
- How much opportunity exists for new membership (turnover)?
- Does the Program use its 4-year plan to guide its management and decision-making?
- Do RFPs reflect the objectives in the 4-year plan? Are RFPs effectively circulated to units of other institutions with relevant expertise?

- Is there ongoing interaction between the Sea Grant Program and representatives of other relevant research and education institutions within the state?
- Is there an overall balance of research, extension, and education within the Program and are the Program's functional areas integrated?
- Is the Program transparent (as to what gets funded)?
- Are peer reviews adequate and well designed with clearly identified criteria?
- Are results of funded projects appropriately measured and assessed?
- Are the Program's practices or projects promising and worth sharing?

Stakeholder Engagement

- **Extension/Advisory services.** The Sea Grant College Program under review must have a strong program through which information, techniques, and research results from any reliable source, domestic or international, may be communicated to and utilized by user communities. In addition to the educational and information dissemination role, the advisory service program must aid in the identification and communication of user communities' research and educational needs.
- **Relevance.** The Sea Grant College Program under review must be relevant to local, state, regional, or National opportunities and problems in the ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes environment. Important factors in evaluating relevance are the need for marine resource emphasis and the extent to which capabilities have been developed to be responsive to that need.
- **Relationships.** The Sea Grant College Program under review must have close ties with Federal agencies, state agencies and administrations, local authorities, business and industry, and other educational institutions. These ties are: (i) To ensure the relevance of its programmed activities, (ii) to give assistance to the broadest possible audience, (iii) to involve a broad pool of talent in providing this assistance (including universities and other administrative entities outside the Sea Grant College), and (iv) to assist others in developing research and management competence. The extent and quality of an institution's relationships are critical factors in evaluating the institutional/college program.

Questions the SRT may consider

- Does the Program have a system by which information, techniques and research results from any reliable source, domestic or international, are communicated to, and utilized by, user communities?
- In addition to the educational and information dissemination role, does extension help in the identification and communication of user communities' research and educational needs?
- Is the Program relevant to local, State, regional, or National opportunities and problems in the ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes environment?
- Does the Program have close ties with Federal agencies, State agencies and administrations, local authorities, business and industry, and other educational institutions? Do these ties:
 - (i) ensure the relevance of its programmed activities,
 - (ii) give assistance to the broadest possible audience,
 - (iii) involve a broad pool of talent in providing assistance, and
 - (iv) assist others in developing research and management competence?
- Is there coordination/cooperation with other Federal, State and local agencies in the state/region/nation?
- How has the Program chosen and developed partnerships?
 - How many and what quality of partnerships exist (including those with other NOAA programs)?

- How many, if any, new partnerships have been formed?
- Are appropriate stakeholders informed of Program results?
- Do stakeholders support the Program?
- Is the Program a trusted and immediate point of contact for information on ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes issues?

Collaborative Network Activities

- **Collaboration.** Provide leadership in ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes activities including coordinated planning and cooperative work with local, state, regional, and Federal agencies, other Sea Grant Programs, and non-Sea Grant universities.

Questions the SRT may consider

- Does the Program contribute to the cohesiveness of the Sea Grant network?
- Is there effective communication and collaboration between the Program and other Sea Grant Programs and with the National Sea Grant Office?
- Does the Program participate or lead activities that support the overall network?
- Does the Program lead or participate in regional activities? National? Does this participation make effective use of Sea Grant network capabilities?
- Does the Program support/assist other NOAA programs? Other Federal programs?

V. Site Visit Materials

Background Materials (Provided by the NSGO)

The NSGO will provide the following background materials to the SRT at least four weeks prior to the site visit:

1. Most recent site review report
2. Sea Grant Program's response to the last site review report
3. Sea Grant Program's most recent annual report (program introduction (if available), metrics and impacts)
4. Other material deemed to be relevant by the SRT chair

Program Briefing Book Materials (Provided by the Sea Grant Program)

The Sea Grant Program will provide the SRT with a limited and focused set of briefing materials and an agenda at least four weeks prior to the site visit. The briefing materials should include the Program's four-year plan (strategic/implementation plan) and a program site visit briefing book no longer than 20 pages. The briefing book should include a description of the Program Management and Organization (including leadership, organization, programmed team approach, and support), Stakeholder Engagement (including relevance, extension/advisory services, and relationships) and a description of the Program's Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities. At a minimum, the following list of items must be included for each broad category in the briefing book:

A. Program Management and Organization

Leadership

- Management Team composition and brief description of their responsibilities
- Percentage time Director and staff devote to SG (FTEs)

- Advisory Boards membership and function (expertise, meeting schedule, recommendations)
- Setting of the Program within the university or consortium organization and reporting structure (organization chart)

Recruiting Talent

- Brief description of the process used to develop RFP priorities
- Brief description of the review process including composition of review panels
- Number of pre-proposals and full proposals submitted, and institutions represented / institutions available in state
- New vs. continuing projects and Principle Investigators
- Recruitment of PI's/institutions
- Success in national competitions
- Regional/Multi-program projects

Funding

- Distribution of funds (research, extension, education, communications, program development, administration)
- Leveraged funding (funding that is managed by, or within the direct influence of, the Sea Grant Program) from partners (NOAA, other Federal, State, and local)
- National Strategic Investments

Stakeholder Engagement

- Leadership by staff on boards and committees
- Partnerships
- List of important stakeholders and how the Program involves its stakeholders

B. Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities

List of activities/projects the Program is collaborating on with other Sea Grant or NOAA partners

C. Program changes resulting from previous review

Appendix B
Site review team's
Review of the
XXXXX Sea Grant College Program
Dates of Review

Chair, Federal Program Officer

Date

Co-Chair, National Sea Grant Advisory Board Member

Date



INTRODUCTION

The Site review team (SRT) review of the xxxx Sea Grant (XSG) Program took place from *enter SRT visit dates*.

The SRT members included:

Name (Chair, NSGO Program Officer)	Name (Co-Chair, Advisory Board Member)
Affiliation	Affiliation
City, State	City, State
Name	Name
Affiliation	Affiliation
City, State	City, State

Prior to the beginning of the SRT visit, and in conformance with National Sea Grant Office and College Program guidelines, the xxxx Sea Grant issued a public notice of the upcoming SRT visit by inviting interested parties to send written comments to the SRT Chair. The public notice was distributed by means of xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. The SRT Chair received xxx letters in response to the public notice. (*Characterize the letters e.g., “Most of the letters were highly supportive of the xxxx Program. A few letters raised issues, which were either covered in the course of the review or were deemed to be minor in consequence.”*)

The SRT review took place (*describe the SRT location venues: campuses, site visit locations, etc.*)

During the review, the SRT met with (*brief description, e.g., identify stakeholders, university administrators, researchers, management staff, etc.*). The SRT also benefited from poster sessions (*e.g., name specific topics, or with researchers, extension staff, and graduate students*).

The report of the SRT follows the guidelines of the Site Review Team Procedures Manual. The SRT reviewed and discussed broad issues related to the xxxx Sea Grant Program’s: 1) Organization and Management of the Program; 2) Stakeholder Engagement; and 3) Collaborative Network Activities. Within each of these areas, the SRT report presents the findings and recommendations of the SRT.

I. ORGANIZING AND MANAGING THE PROGRAM

Based on the criteria descriptions and considered questions, in this section, please explain how the Program addresses each of the following:

- Leadership
- Organization
- Programmed team approach
- Support

II. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Based on the criteria descriptions and the considered questions, in this section, please explain how the Program addresses each of the following:

- Extension/Advisory Service
- Relevance
- Relationships

III. COLLABORATIVE NETWORK/NOAA ACTIVITIES

IV. FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS and SUGGESTIONS

NOTE: The SRT may not have any recommendations or suggestions.

Findings

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-
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-

Recommendations (items the Program must consider)

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Suggestions (ideas the Program may want to consider)

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V. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

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SRT AGENDA

Appendix C: Performance Review Panel Procedures Manual

I. Performance Review Panel (PRP) Composition and Role

The Performance Review Panel (PRP) plays an important role in the overall evaluation process for each Sea Grant program. Once each four years, the PRP carries out a retrospective evaluation of each program's planned outcomes and overall impact on society from both an environmental and a socioeconomic perspective. Based on this evaluation, the PRP provides an assessment of the program's success in achieving its four-year state plan and in meeting the objectives of the National Sea Grant College Program.

The PRP will be appointed by the NSGCP Director, and he/she may seek nominations for members from the Sea Grant Network. The PRP will be comprised of 16-20 individuals including members drawn from the National Sea Grant Advisory Board as experts in their field. The remainder of the panel members will be drawn from senior-level academia, government and industry. PRP Meetings may take place at NOAA headquarters in Silver Spring, MD or at appropriate locations nationwide as determined by the NSGCP Director.

II. PRP Structure

The 31 Sea Grant programs will be evaluated over a one-week period. To facilitate the review, PRP members will form five working groups according to their expertise, four with responsibility for one of the four national focus areas and the fifth with responsibility for all other program focus areas. For each of the focus areas, the PRP working groups will review each program individually, and will evaluate the program against the goals, strategies, objectives, outcomes and performance measures articulated in the state plan. The PRP will also review the program metrics and other components of the annual report as well as the program summary.

Each panel member will be expected to review the annual reports and the program summary for every program with activities within their focus area and be prepared to discuss them during the review sessions. In addition, each panelist will be assigned as the primary, secondary or tertiary reviewer for a subset of programs. The primary reviewer will be responsible for leading the discussion on each program with substantive input from secondary and tertiary panelists. NSGO Program Officers will be available to answer any questions during the discussion of their respective programs.

The PRP working groups will assign an overall rating by majority vote for each program that participates in their focus area. The rating scale is as follows:

- a. *Highest Performance* – exceeds expectations by an exceptional margin in most areas/aspects (5)
- b. *Exceeds Expectations* by a substantial margin in some areas/aspects (4)
- c. *Successful* (3)
- d. *Below Expectations* (2)
- e. *Unsuccessful* (0)

After each of the four PRP working groups for the national focus areas has concluded its evaluation of program performance relative to the individual plans, they will then be asked to

make an additional assessment of the overall performance of all programs within their focus area relative to the level of Sea Grant’s federal investment. The intent of this second level of review is to identify for each of the national focus areas those programs with impacts well beyond the norm for their level of federal investment and/or those programs with particularly outstanding scientific or societal contributions on a local, regional, or national level. The *few* programs that are highlighted by this assessment will be rewarded by having one point added to their rating for the respective focus area.

The focus area ratings will then be weighted based on the proportion of funding resources allocated by the program to each of the focus areas and combined to provide an overall performance rating. “Funding resources” includes all NOAA federal, matching, and leveraged funds that are managed by, or within the direct influence of, the Sea Grant Program and used to meet the goals and objectives of the four-year plan. For example, if a program allocated 10% of its resources to the Sustainable Coastal Development (SCD) focus area and was rated *Highest Performance* (5) with an additional bonus point for outstanding scientific impact, and 90% of its resources to Healthy Coastal Ecosystems (HCE) with a rating of *Exceeds Expectations* (4), it would receive an overall weighted rating of 4.2, calculated as follows:

$$\begin{array}{cc} \text{SCD} & \text{HCE} \\ [10\% * (5+1)] & + [90\% * 4] = (0.6) + (3.6) = 4.2 \end{array}$$

There is no requirement that a program address all four of the national focus areas. Instead, the rating process is intended to emphasize those areas that each program considers most important based on the resources allocated by program management.

Once discussions are completed, the primary reviewer for each program will prepare a report that includes an explanation for the rating, the program’s weaknesses and strengths, recommendations for improvement, and best practices employed by the program.

III. PRP Materials

The PRP evaluation will be based on the program annual reports derived from the National Information Management System (NIMS) and each program will have the option of supplementing that information with a brief summary of the major accomplishments and impacts (which could include outstanding research results) that resulted from their four-year award. The annual reports will include program impacts, accomplishments and success stories related to achieving their planned goals, strategies, objectives, outcomes and performance measures, as well as annual program metrics.

As stated above, the emphasis for this review will be placed on the achievement of planned outcomes. However within the confines of the annual report format, programs will be able to describe how they have responded to state, regional and national priorities as well as emerging opportunities and unanticipated needs.

IV. After the PRP

Upon the completion of the review process, all scores will be provided to the NSGCP Director who will collate them and generate a final rating for each program. The summary rating and

written PRP Summary will be conveyed to each program director. The program director will have an opportunity to submit a memorandum to the NSGO responding to the findings in the PRP report. This information will be used as part of the NSGO annual review.

Appendix D: The National Sea Grant College Program Planning, Implementation and Evaluation System

(November 2008)

[Note: This document has been revised to be consistent with the 2008 Sea Grant Reauthorization as follows: 1) The National Sea Grant Review Panel is now the National Sea Grant Advisory Board; and 2) The National “State of Sea Grant Program” Review will now occur every two years starting in 2010 rather than every four years starting in 2012. In addition, the timeline at the end of the document has been adjusted to reflect the changes that have occurred during the planning phase.]

About Sea Grant

A partnership between universities and the federal government’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Sea Grant College Program directs federal resources to pressing problems in local communities. For more than 40 years, the National Sea Grant College program has worked to create and maintain a healthy coastal environment and economy. The Sea Grant network includes more than 30 programs based at top universities in every coastal and Great Lakes state, Puerto Rico, and Guam. The programs of the Sea Grant network work together to help citizens understand, conserve, and better utilize America’s coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes resources. By drawing on the experience of more than 3,000 scientists, engineers, public outreach experts, educators, and students from more than 300 institutions, Sea Grant is able to make an impact at local and state levels, and serve as a powerful national force for change.

Sea Grant invests in high-priority research, addressing issues such as population growth and development in coastal communities; preparation and response to hurricanes, coastal storms, and tsunamis; understanding our interactions with the marine environment; fish and shellfish farming; seafood safety; and, fisheries management. The results of this research are shared with the public through Sea Grant’s integrated outreach program, which brings together the collective expertise of on-the-ground extension agents, educators, and communications specialists. The goal is to ensure that vital research results are shared with those who need it most and in ways that are timely, relevant, and meaningful.

The National Sea Grant College Program has developed a new five-year strategic plan, which is attached, in conjunction with an enhanced Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation system, which is described below, by which the Sea Grant programs will be evaluated. Both the plan and the new evaluation model respond to recommendations made by the National Research Council (NRC). Background on the NRC report is detailed below.

Background

In 1994, the NRC reviewed the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP). In its *Review of the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program* report, the NRC recommended several actions, including systematic, periodic reviews of each Sea Grant program. In response to the NRC, NSGCP developed the

program review and evaluation process used to review the Sea Grant programs by an external Program Assessment Team every four years since 1998.

The National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2002 (P.L. 107–299) directed NOAA to contract with the NRC a second time to review the evaluation process and make recommendations to improve its effectiveness.

The resulting NRC report, *Evaluation of the Sea Grant Review Process* (2006), included a total of 24 recommendations in the following categories: strategic planning; evaluation; periodic assessment and performance criteria; program assessment teams and site visits; and, improving program cohesion, coordination, and oversight.

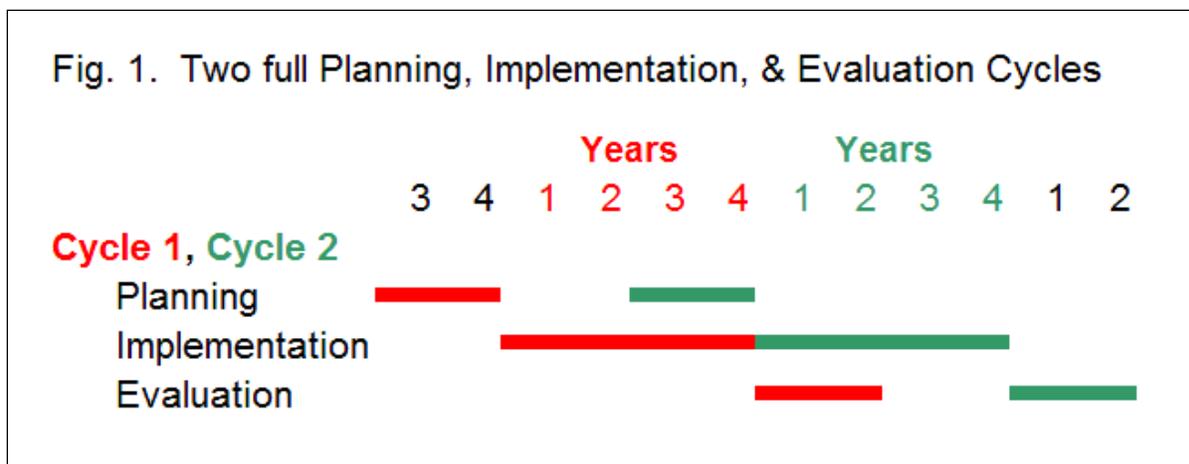
In order to address the NRC recommendations, the Director of the NSGCP sought advice from two sources: a Response Integration Team (RIT) and the National Sea Grant Review Panel (Review Panel). The RIT was comprised of representatives from the state Sea Grant programs and the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO), and was formed specifically to address the NRC recommendations and to provide guidance to the Director. The Review Panel [now the National Sea Grant Advisory Board] is a Federal Advisory Committee comprised of 15 individuals who advise the NSGCP Director on scientific and administrative policy. Following careful deliberation, each group produced a report; the RIT report was entitled, *An Enhanced and Integrated Strategic Planning and Program Assessment Strategy for the National Sea Grant College Program* and the Review Panels' report was entitled, *A Comprehensive Program Evaluation (COPE) Model for the National Sea Grant College Program*.

Here, we present a new, integrated model for strategic planning, implementation and evaluation that was developed based on the recommendations of the NRC along with those outlined in the RIT and Panel reports. The integrated planning and evaluation system outlined here is consistent with needs articulated by Congress, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and NOAA. It extends NOAA's Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution System to the program level and ensures that Sea Grant's activities will support NOAA's mission as well as meeting local, state, and regional needs. As the implementation process begins, there will be a transition period which is discussed in the appendix of this document.

An Integrated Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (PIE) System

The NSGCP places a premium on careful planning and rigorous evaluation at both the state program level and the national level to ensure that the program has both localized and broader impacts. Better integration of planning, implementation, and evaluation activities will maximize Sea Grant's efficiency and effectiveness at both levels and make the best use of limited resources.

The PIE system begins with rigorous strategic planning at both the national and state levels that lasts two years. The plans are then implemented with coordinated and collaborative research, outreach and education activities at the state level for four years. Once the activities are completed, there is an evaluation of the success of those efforts in meeting the objectives set forth in the strategic/implementation plans. The complete cycle, including planning, implementation, and evaluation will take eight years to complete (Fig. 1).



Sections I, II, and III, below, describe each component of the integrated PIE system—Planning, Implementation and Evaluation.

I. Planning

National Strategic/Implementation Plans (every four years): Every four years, the NSGCP will develop a new national strategic plan (the 2009-2013 national plan accompanies this document). Sea Grant’s national plan will be done in concert with the development of strategic plans for the state programs in order to ensure that the state strategic plans reflect national priorities. Likewise, stakeholder input collected for state Sea Grant planning efforts will be included with other relevant local and regional plans to inform the national planning process. NOAA’s strategic plan and NOAA’s 5-year Research Plan will provide the national framework for Sea Grant’s planning effort together with the Ocean Research Priorities Plan (and its successors). Sea Grant’s national plan will identify a limited set of priorities that will help NOAA to achieve its strategic outcomes and will serve as the foci for Sea Grant’s next four-year implementation cycle. Once the national strategic plan is completed, an implementation plan will be developed to provide more detail for each of the national priority areas and show how Sea Grant will work with other NOAA programs and local, regional, and national partners to achieve its mission.

Individual Sea Grant Program Strategic/Implementation Plans (every four years): The national strategic and implementation plans will serve as the basis for the states to complete the development of their four-year strategic plans. The state plans will include metrics and performance measures that align with and support national measures and metrics for the national priority areas. Since each state has its own unique set of local and regional stakeholders, partners and priorities, the individual program plans will not necessarily address all of the national priority areas; and, the plans may include additional emphases as appropriate. State plans will be developed with the federal program officer and reviewed and approved by the NSGO, in consultation with the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (Advisory Board). Sea Grant programs will use their plans to guide and inform requests for proposals. In addition, these plans will be used as the basis for subsequent program evaluation. With the understanding that these plans are living documents, programs may make changes to their plans, subject to approval by the federal program officer, so the changes are documented for eventual evaluation purposes.

II. Implementation

Sea Grant programs will consider the local, regional, and national priorities identified during the planning process as they implement their research, outreach and education activities. Each program will retain the authority to implement its program as it sees fit in order to achieve optimal results.

The PIE system and subsequent changes to program implementation will make it easier for programs to plan and act on a regional and national scale. For instance, project competitions, omnibus grant applications and awards will be synchronized to facilitate collaborative efforts among programs. There will be a common format for annual reports so that accomplishments of individual projects and state programs can more easily be synthesized into national impacts.

III. Evaluation

Goal: Sea Grant's program evaluation process will show how its research, outreach and education capabilities have local, regional and national impacts. Program evaluation also provides the opportunity to discover means by which the state programs, and in turn the National Program, can improve. The performance of state programs will be evaluated according to the priorities set forth in the national plan and the individual state plans, and programs will be held accountable for meeting the metrics and performance measures established in those plans. Evaluation will be a continual process, both internal and external, and will involve all facets of the Sea Grant network. Programs will be evaluated in three general areas: 1) on their approach to management; 2) on the scope and success of their engagement with stakeholders; and, 3) on the impact their program has on society from both an environmental and a socioeconomic perspective. Evaluation is based on the metrics and performance measures established in the national plan and reflected in their state plans, but the process is also intended to recognize that unplanned or rapid-response activities may also have significant impact.

The Office of Management and Budget, the Advisory Board and other entities have recommended that the Sea Grant programs be recertified on a reasonable and regular schedule. The PIE system will serve as the recertification process for the programs.

Annual Reports/Self-Evaluation: Annual reports will be used by programs to evaluate progress against their strategic plans, national performance measures, and metrics over a one-year period. These reports will be used by the NSGO and programs to track and report progress. The individual programs' progress in meeting goals set forth in their plans and in producing accomplishments relative to those goals contributes to the Sea Grant network's progress toward meeting national goals set forth in the national strategic and implementation plan.

Site Visits (every four years, beginning in FY2010): Once every four years, a review team will visit each Sea Grant program. The review teams will be chaired by the NSGO program officer and co-chaired by a member of the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (Advisory Board) with a Sea Grant Director as a review team member. Additional members of the teams may be drawn from the Advisory Board and/or outside experts as needed. The review team will meet with the program management team, advisory

committees, and university administration to review and discuss broad issues related to two of the three evaluation components: 1) program management and organization; and, 2) stakeholder engagement. The team will be provided with a limited and focused set of briefing materials. The team will prepare a site visit report with findings and recommendations to improve the Sea Grant program's performance but will not be responsible for rating the program.

Performance Review Panel (every four years, beginning in FY2011): Every four years, following the completion of all Sea Grant program site visits, a Performance Review Panel (PRP) will conduct a retrospective evaluation of the impact of the programs relative to their four-year strategic plans. The PRP will evaluate the programs' overall impact on society from both an environmental and a socioeconomic perspective. Annual reports, combined with a brief four-year summary document prepared by the programs, will provide the basis for the review. The PRP will be composed of 15 members with approximately half of the members drawn from the Advisory Board and the remainder drawn from senior-level academia, government, and industry.

State Program Response Memorandum (once every four years): State programs will have the opportunity to submit a memorandum to the NSGO responding to findings in both the site visit and PRP reports. This information will be used as part of the NSGO fall review.

Annual NSGO Fall Review (beginning in FY 2009): The NSGO will meet in the fall of each year to discuss the progress of each state program relative to its plan, and to identify potential areas for improvement.

Once every four years, starting in 2011, the fall review will be expanded to include a performance evaluation and rating of all programs based upon the PRP Reports, the site visit reports, and the state programs' response memoranda. Programs will have the opportunity to appeal their rating two years later during the NSGO fall review by submitting a report to the NSGO of actions taken to improve the program since the previous four-year review.

Topical Assistance Team (TAT) Reviews (optional): At any time, programs and the NSGO may agree to conduct a TAT, which is an ad hoc program review of limited scope. The purpose of TAT reviews is for program improvement, either to address issues identified by previous reviews or to help the program identify and respond to new opportunities.

Recertification: The four-year reviews will constitute a recertification process. A successful review will result in recertification of a state program. If a program receives an unsuccessful rating, the program will be placed on a probationary period for at least two years. During the fall review of the second probationary year, the NSGO will assess the program's progress in addressing the issues that led to the unsuccessful rating based on the appeal issued by the state Sea Grant program in question. If the program has made satisfactory progress, the program will be allowed to continue on probation for the remaining two years. If the program then receives a successful rating during the next four-year review, the program will be recertified. However, if progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory after two years, or if a program receives a second consecutive unsuccessful rating during the four-year review, the program will be referred to the Advisory Board for consideration of a recommendation for decertification.

National “State of Sea Grant Program” Review (once every two years, beginning in 2010): Once every two years, the Advisory Board will provide a review of the “State of the Sea Grant Program.” This review will assess the progress of the Sea Grant College Program in addressing the priority areas highlighted in the national plan, analogous to the manner in which state programs will be evaluated in addressing their respective plans. This review will rely extensively on information collected from state program reports and reviews, and will give an analysis that will help inform the subsequent national strategic planning process. This national program review is central to the PIE system and will provide an assessment of the overall performance of the entire Sea Grant College Program, including the National Sea Grant Office, in achieving its local, regional, and national objectives while supporting NOAA’s mission.

Fig. 2 Transition and first full Planning, Implementation, & Evaluation Cycle

