

THE NATIONAL LABORATORY DIRECTORS' COUNCIL

OCTOBER 15, 2020

The National Laboratory Directors' Council (NLDC)

The *National Laboratory Directors' Council (NLDC)* is a self-organized, self-governing body composed of the Laboratory Directors from the seventeen DOE National Laboratories (Table 1). The NLDC advances the effectiveness of the DOE National Laboratory Complex in addressing national needs and provides an interface to DOE on issues and concerns of common interest. The NLDC also provides a forum for presenting the Secretary and DOE senior management with consensus views on matters that affect the laboratories and their ability to contribute to the DOE mission. With its standing working groups, it represents the most senior operational and scientific leadership at the Laboratories and is thus a key mechanism for coordinating across the DOE laboratory complex on matters ranging from scientific directions to operational issues and requirements. In short, in DOE's diverse federated environment, the NLDC is a critical resource available to the Department's senior leadership to inform DOE strategy and policy.

1. Governance

A subset of NLDC members comprise an Executive Committee (EC) that organizes and coordinates the activities of the NLDC. The EC is comprised of four members who collectively represent DOE Mission areas: Science (SC), Energy (E), Nuclear Security (NS), and Environment (EM). The EC members are elected by the full membership to serve two-year terms. Energy and Environment are staggered with Science and Nuclear Security so that each year, two representatives are elected to the Committee. The full NLDC also elects one EC member to serve as Chair for a two-year term. The NLDC has a Secretariat who manages meetings and operations for the NLDC.

2. DOE Interactions

The NLDC holds four strategic retreats per year, two of which include face-to-face meetings with the Secretary in Washington, DC. Attendees may also include the Deputy Secretary, the Under Secretaries or their representatives and other functionaries (e.g., the General Counsel, CFO or Assistant Secretaries) depending on the agenda. The NLDC Secretariat works with DOE on the agendas and briefing materials. Meetings cover a broad range of topics from scientific strategies to operational issues. Over the past year, topics have included COVID-19 and increasing national laboratory response to future crises, technical horizon scanning, and diversity, equity and inclusion. The NLDC, working with DOE, is responsible for educating various stakeholders through events such as the periodic Lab Days on the Hill. The NLDC also sponsors The Oppenheimer Science and Energy Leadership Program (OSELP) intended to prepare the next generation of scientific leaders. The NLDC has also helped to identify

and change policies that impact efficient operations at the Labs and review proposed policy changes through its representation in the Laboratory Operations Board, Cyber Security Council and the DOE Directives Review Board.

Overall, the value of the NLDC lies in its ability to provide guidance on how to integrate across the programs at DOE in order to allow the enterprise to be more than the sum of its parts.

3. Working Groups

To provide insights on specific issues and impacts, and to help work with the various DOE offices on policy implementation, the NLDC has eleven standing Working Groups that represent the spectrum of issues including research, operations, information technology, finance, legal, communications, federal relations, human capital, STEM and environmental health and safety. Similar to the NLDC, an Executive Committee that is representative of the seventeen Laboratories typically governs each working group with annual elections; the complete list of working groups is summarized in Table 2. While the formal interface with DOE is through the NLDC, each working group has routine interactions with DOE counterparts to facilitate discussions and issues resolution. Additionally, two CROs and two COOs serve on the DOE Lab Operations Board which reports to the Secretary's Office of Strategic Planning and Policy.

a. The Chief Research Officers group (NLCRO) advises the NLDC on scientific and programmatic issues, serving as a forum for communication and providing leadership for major scientific activities related to the strategic direction for the laboratories. In the past year, the CRO group and their representatives facilitated the organization of national laboratory capabilities and resources to enable

rapid and coordinated responses to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, served on the Space Coordination Group to provide critical input necessary to advance the nation's future space capabilities and played a pivotal role in the development of the *2020 NLDC Future Science & Technology Opportunities* report. The group has also contributed key input to the State of the National Laboratories report, DOE's Laboratories of the Future Initiative and provided feedback to DOE and the other NL working groups on strategic science and technology issues. Their primary interfaces in DOE are the principal deputies in the various research program offices.

b. The Chief Operations Officers group (NLCOO) advises the NLDC on issues and improvement opportunities related to the management and operation of the National Laboratory infrastructure. The NLCOO evaluates resource impacts of administrative and regulatory requirements to facilitate productive and cost-effective utilization of the DOE laboratory system; promotes practices based upon performance-based management; and shares best practices and lessons learned. The group has meet biweekly through the COVID-19 pandemic to coordinate planning and response activities across the lab complex including research and operations curtailment implementation plans, shared emerging COVID safety protocols (both preventive and in response to confirmed cases), and share best practices and lessons learned for conventional and COVID safety. In response to the pandemic, they led the formation of three working groups around systematic and safe resumption of lab operations and research, bio-screening strategy and family equity issues. They also provide key input to DOE, the NLDC, and other NL working groups on strategic operational issues affecting the lab complex.

c. The Chief Information Officers group (NLCIO) advises the NLDC on issues related to computing, information management and cybersecurity. They provide a forum for communication and coordination of the major activities in information technology, scientific computing, and cybersecurity throughout the National Laboratories. The NLCIO group shared best practices on planning and rapidly shifting to an all-remote work environment to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The NLCIO meets regularly with the DOE CIO, the NNSA CIO, and DOE-SC IT leadership to provide advice on benefits and impacts of Federal policy initiatives. They are closely aligned with the DOE Cyber Council and other councils to advise the Secretary, Undersecretaries and CIO on Department-wide IT Strategy and Policy.

d. The Chief Financial Officers group (NLCFO) advises the NLDC on business, financial and procurement issues and provides an interface to DOE-CFO and DOE-MA organizations in these areas. The Council also serves as a forum for information exchange, best practice sharing, consensus building, and coordination of major initiatives impacting the DOE contractor community in the business, financial and procurement arena. During the past year, the NLCFOs collaborated with DOE-CFO and MA to respond to a number of material and significant challenges presented by the COVID-19 global pandemic. This included developing the appropriate policies for tracking costs as well as ensuring adequate funding strategies were in place. In the regular order of business, the NLCFOs provide guidance and impact analysis on changes to financial and acquisition DOE Orders, Directives, and the CFO's Financial Management Handbook. The community collaborates on the Institutional Cost Report (ICR), a key financial report across the Lab system, providing insight and benchmarking into the cost of doing business.

e. The Chief Communications Officers working group (NLCCO) advises the National Laboratory Directors Council (NLDC) and interacts with Department of Energy communications and public affairs offices on relevant matters across the National Laboratory System (NLS). NLCCO functions include information exchange; consensus building; promotion of best practices and policies; coordination; counsel; and execution of communications-related activities identified by the NLDC, DOE, or NLCCO members for promotion of the scientific missions and value of the NLS. In the past year, the CCO group and their representatives led the communications programs highlighting ways the NLS is addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, and in partnership with the Office of Technology Transitions (OTT), led the facilitation of DOE's InnovationXLab series to expand the commercial impact of the substantial investment in the National Lab innovation portfolio.

f. The General Counsel group (NLGC) advises the NLDC on legal issues serving as a forum for communication and coordination of the major legal issues potentially impacting activities at the laboratories. In the past year, the GC group has meet regularly to share information and best practices around COVID-related issues. The group also invites subject matter experts from other legal areas (such as Employee and Labor Relations) to facilitate the sharing of information and knowledge across the complex. Their primary interface in DOE is with the DOE General Counsel or his representatives, along with the NNSA General Counsel and his representatives.

g. The Environment, Safety and Health Directors group (NLESHD) proactively advises the NLDC on ES&H issues that are common across the DOE Laboratory complex. The group reviews events and shares lessons learned, identifies best practices, recommends policy and regulatory interpretation and provides assistance in evaluating unique hazards and conditions as required. The group serves as a forum to identify the best subject matter experts across the complex on high priority ES&H topics so they can assist as the need arises.

h. The Chief Human Resources Officers group (NLCHRO) determines areas of mutual interest to the Labs, opportunities or critical complex wide issues that would benefit HR leadership and leverage strategic advantage of National Laboratories and by extension, to the benefit of DOE. The purpose of the group is to optimize their collective effectiveness in human capital and talent management across the complex and provide support to the NLDC and DOE in governance and on critical outcomes which will result in more consistent and efficient performance of human resources. Accomplishments include development and execution of recruiting strategies to showcase the National Laboratory Systems as a preferred employer, a joint effort to increase the diversity of staff across all National Laboratories and create an inclusive working environment for all employees.

i. The National Laboratory Technology Transfer (NLTT) provides counsel to the NLDC on technology transfer related matters of interest to the Laboratory Directors. The NLTT undertakes studies and activities as proposed and agreed to by the NLDC. Conclusions and recommendations are submitted to the NLDC for approval or further guidance. In addition, the NLTT provides an interface to the DOE on department-wide efforts to increase the transition of technologies from

the laboratory into commercial practice. Over the past year, the NLTT played a key role in the InnovationXLab Summit series, designed to expand the commercial impact of the investment in the national laboratories. NLTT also engaged with the department on technology transfer regulatory reform, contributing to the design and implementation of the Master Scope of Work which markedly increases the efficiency of partnership agreements. NLTT frequently works in close collaboration with the NLCRO on new and improved approaches to public-private partnerships that foster research as well as the subsequent transfer of the resulting technology to US industry.

j. The Federal Relations (NLFR) meets on an as-needed basis to share information and best practices on issues of mutual interest. Additionally, the NLFR supports the NLDC in execution of Lab Day congressional engagement and messaging. In connection with every national lab day, the NLFR has planned, hosted, and executed ancillary educational staff briefings, one on one meetings, and meet and greets with Members of Congress. These activities have included meetings for teams of Lab Directors with over eighty Members of Congress or staff representing thirty-seven states in connection with Lab day activities.

k. The Laboratory Education Directors' Executive Council (NLED) was established in September 2020 to coordinate cross-complex STEM education activities that advance STEM outreach, K-12, university and workforce development programming related to the DOE lab missions with the goal of achieving inclusion, equity and diversity within the laboratory complex. The NLED established a working group in response to a recommendation by the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board around the development of a portal for lab educational resources.

TABLE 1: NATIONAL LABORATORIES (AS OF OCTOBER 2020)

**DOE LABORATORY
CONTRACTOR**

Ames Laboratory	Iowa State University of Science & Technology
Argonne National Laboratory (ANL)	UChicago Argonne, LLC
Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL)	Brookhaven Science Associates
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL)	University of California
Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (FNAL)	Fermi Research Alliance, LLC
Idaho National Laboratory (INL)	Battelle Energy Alliance, LLC
Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL)	Triad National Security, LLC
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL)	Lawrence Livermore National Security, LLC
National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL)	Government-owned, government-operated
National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)	Alliance for Sustainable Energy, LLC
Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL)	UT-Battelle, LLC
Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL)	Battelle Memorial Institute
Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory (PPPL)	Princeton University
Sandia National Laboratories (SNL)	National Technology and Engineering Solutions of Sandia, LLC
Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL)	Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC
SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory	Stanford University
Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility (TJNAF)	Jefferson Science Associates, LLC

TABLE 2: NLDC WORKING GROUPS (AS OF OCTOBER 2020)

WORKING GROUP
Chief Research Officer (NLCRO)
Chief Operations Officer (NLCOO)
Chief Information Officer (NLCIO)
Chief Financial Officer (NLCFO)
General Counsel (NLGC)
Chief Communications Officer (NLCCO)
Environment Safety and Health Director (NLESHD)
Chief Human Resources Officer (NLCHRO)
Technology Transfer (NLTT)
Federal Relations (NLFR)
Education Directors (NLED)