



FASEB

Federation of American Societies
for Experimental Biology

Representing Over 110,000 Researchers

6120 Executive Blvd., Suite 230, Rockville, MD 20852 | faseb.org

December 14, 2023

RE: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking –Federal Management Regulation; Federal Advisory Committee Management (FMR Case 2022-01)

Submitted electronically via regulations.gov, Docket No. 2022-0015, Sequence No. 1

Dear Ms. Kowalski,

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) regarding the General Services Administration (GSA) proposed revisions to the Federal Management Regulation on Federal Advisory Committee Management ([41 CFR Part 102-3](#)). As a coalition of 26 scientific societies representing over 110,000 scientists, FASEB has long recognized the critical role of advisory committees in federal decision-making. We appreciate GSA's efforts to align regulations with broader administrative and legislative goals while increasing diversity, equity, accessibility, inclusion (DEAI), and transparency throughout committee procedures. These clarifications will enhance advisory committees' ability to provide advice that is objective, diverse, and open to the public—central tenets of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

FASEB's comments focus on proposed changes to advisory committee membership and management, charter amendments, and public engagement. However, we also support the agency's intended formatting changes such as moving appendices to the GSA website and simplifying language throughout the regulation, as this will improve user readability.

§ 102-3.60 – What procedures are required to establish, renew, reestablish, or merge a discretionary advisory committee?

FASEB concurs with GSA's proposed expansion of this section that provides clearer instructions and alignment with [existing agency guidance](#) on how agencies can attain balanced advisory committee memberships through Membership Balance Plans. Ensuring the composition of advisory committees is representative of the diversity seen in the broader community will not only enhance the performance of advisory committees but also help cultivate relationships with stakeholders that may not have direct access to or knowledge of federal agency activities.

Including a new "Outreach" subsection urging agencies to conduct broad outreach to stakeholders with valuable perspectives when seeking membership nominees is laudable. As a federation, we recognize the balance of appropriate outreach measures and sufficient response times for effective stakeholder engagement. We are optimistic that the proposed changes will better equip federal advisory committees to collect meaningful feedback that reflects the views and experiences of the general population.

§ 102-3.65 - What are the public notification requirements for discretionary advisory committees?

Timely access to advisory committee procedures is an essential element of FACA. FASEB appreciates the proposed changes to Part 102-3.65, as they provide additional details that will enhance public transparency and DEAI. For example, creating notices in plain language and making them available in multiple languages fosters inclusivity.

FASEB commends GSA for updating the regulatory language in accordance with the [2022](#) and [2023](#) Administrative Conference of the United States recommendations, particularly with respect to communication methods. Using multiple strategies beyond the *Federal Register* to reach stakeholders—including social media and website updates—will improve public awareness. Importantly, we appreciate highlighting how professional groups can facilitate improved public notification, as entities like FASEB can be a huge asset to expanding the government’s reach.

In preparing the final rule, we encourage addressing the needs of stakeholders with limited resources to further strengthen equity and public accountability. These stakeholders often lack awareness of the regulatory process and face obstacles when trying to participate, including challenging deadlines and poor formatting of information requests—many of which are highlighted in FASEB’s [previous comments](#) and a [recent memo](#) from the Office of Management and Budget on broadening public participation.

§102-3.80 – How are charter amendments accomplished?

FASEB concurs with consolidating charter amendments into a singular process and requiring agencies to post an announcement and copy of amendments either in the *Federal Register* or committee website. Together, these changes will enhance advisory committee efficiency by reducing administrative burden and strengthening public transparency.

§ 102-3.95 – What principles apply to the management of advisory committees?

Inclusivity, accessibility, and openness are essential to effective committee management. FASEB applauds GSA’s revisions that will ensure that as meetings are planned and recommendations are drafted, the voices of those who will be most impacted are actively considered. We specifically appreciate the focus on accessibility, including adequate virtual meeting capabilities and communication channels that cater to individuals with limited English proficiency. By elevating the needs of individuals with disabilities, advisory committees are empowered to create a culture where all stakeholders can thrive.

Sincerely,



Mary-Ann Bjornsti, PhD
FASEB President