



NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP



July 12, 2016

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Pritzker:

On behalf of the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (NACIE), we are pleased to offer recommendations that aim to improve the operations and outcomes of future iterations of NACIE. Throughout its two initial iterations (2010-2012 and 2014-2016), NACIE has provided recommendations on wide range of innovation and entrepreneurship topics that have included access to capital (which helped lead to the JOBS Act), innovation and entrepreneurship at universities (which was supported by 142 leading U.S. universities), and improvements to increase the commercialization outcomes of the SBIR/STTR Programs.

However, this current iteration of NACIE believes that operational improvements and knowledge transfer between outgoing and incoming members could improve outcomes and member experience of future iterations. Attached hereto are specific recommendations for operational changes for Department of Commerce staff and a mechanism for knowledge transfer among members.

NACIE has made substantive contributions to national innovation and entrepreneurship policies and programs, and this current iteration believes that these changes will enable future Councils to provide their advice and expertise effectively and efficiently.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Michael Burcham
Co-Chair

Dr. James Clements
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NACIE Operational Recommendations

1. ONBOARDING

a. Scope

The Department of Commerce (DOC) should clarify the scope of NACIE's advisory role. NACIE should explore what innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems need to grow—i.e., what's missing in the market—and should make recommendations to the Department of Commerce on how to best support innovation, entrepreneurship, and the transitions—through technology commercialization—from ideas to businesses.

b. Expectations

Onboarding should include clear expectations, especially with respect to attendance and participation. While NACIE's workload is largely self-driven insofar as NACIE both identifies challenges and opportunities and proposes solutions, DOC should include an expected schedule of (quarterly) in-person meetings and provide a rough outline of the cadence of engagement outside of the in-person meetings.

c. Introduction to the U.S. Government

While some members may be familiar with the U.S. Government (USG) and be fluent in Federal policies and programs, others will be engaging with USG for the first time. Granular policy and programmatic information is likely overload for the first meeting, but DOC should provide a high-level overview of USG innovation and entrepreneurship policies and programs, USG primary avenues of support, and current and expected challenges. Additionally, DOC should provide a high-level organizational chart of relevant USG business units and of DOC and other USG staff and a map of USG innovation and entrepreneurship programs.

Additionally, members should be given homework to complete before their onboarding at the first meeting. Ideally, such homework would include both readings and activities, such as visits to DOC or Economic Development Administration (EDA) investments in each member's respective community or region.

d. Group Development

Group development for groups of this size (approximately 30) can take time, but facilitated group development exercises can accelerate that development. DOC, in collaboration with outgoing and incoming NACIE members, should organize or facilitate a design thinking workshop and group development exercises in order to accelerate the storming-forming-norming process.

2. MEMBER RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

a. Selection Factors

DOC should consider the following factors when recruiting and selecting NACIE members:

- influence within candidates' respective ecosystems; and
- diversity across demographic, geographic, sectoral, and other dimensions.

Additionally, DOC should consider members with research and policy advocacy expertise and members from organizations with the authority and funding to run independent pilot projects.

b. Promotion Path

DOC should also consider developing a promotion path within NACIE that moves members into leadership positions (e.g., chair(s), vice chair(s)) within NACIE.

3. COUNCIL STRUCTURE

a. Committees & Workgroups

i. Committee vs. Workgroup Structure

DOC organized NACIE, in its 2014-2016 incarnation, into three committees: innovation, entrepreneurship, and talent development. Because this organization was imposed on NACIE prior to its initial meeting, it resulted in some siloing of members and in a lack of clarity regarding responsibilities among chairs, committees, workgroups, and members. Ultimately, members formed workgroups to move forward specific initiatives. Given NACIE's self-driven workload, DOC should allow NACIE to form these workgroups as necessary without imposing an artificial committee structure prior to NACIE determining its priorities.

ii. Formation

A. Criteria & Focus

DOC and NACIE should collaborate to develop criteria around prioritization and selection of initiatives and thus the formation of workgroups.

B. Goals & Metrics

When forming a workgroup, DOC should ensure that NACIE and the workgroup develop an initial set of goals and desired impacts. While these may change over the course of a given workgroup's lifecycle, they will help to focus that workgroup's efforts. NACIE and the workgroup should include success metrics that enable measurement toward those goals and desired impacts.

4. MANAGEMENT & FACILITATION

a. Communication & Collaboration

i. Internal

In order to increase member engagement and to better facilitate NACIE and workgroup communication, DOC should use or encourage the use of modern communication, videoconferencing, and collaboration platforms (e.g., Slack, Adobe Connect, Google Docs).

ii. External

A. Social Media Guidelines

In order to enable members' outreach for and celebration of NACIE's work, DOC should provide NACIE social media guidelines.

B. Outreach & Press

DOC intermittently will ask members to author blog posts, provide quotes, or otherwise participate in outreach and press activities. DOC should solicit members who are interested in this external communications aspect of NACIE's activities.

b. Responsibilities

i. Chairs

The chair or chairs should provide executive leadership for NACIE by focusing on strategy and prioritization.

ii. Members

NACIE's self-driven workload allows for flexible responsibilities for members. However, members are expected to attend meetings, to participate in ideation exercises, and to lead or contribute to workgroups as appropriate.

iii. Commerce Staff

DOC staff facilitate NACIE's work, provide insight into USG and DOC policies and programs, and assist with identifying USG and other partners, collaborators, and thought leaders for NACIE initiatives.

c. Meetings

i. Design

DOC should design meetings to enable members to ideate and brainstorm. While much of the execution involved in NACIE's development of its advice and recommendations occurs during the time between meetings, the conceptualization that leads to advice and recommendations should occur at the in-person meetings.

ii. Locations

DOC should not only design meeting agendas but also select meeting locations with the above goals in mind. Much of the best ideation and collaboration of the 2014-2016 NACIE occurred in spaces and locations conducive to creative thinking. DOC should schedule at least two meetings in members' or alumni's ecosystems and should schedule additional meetings at the locations of key DOC business units (e.g., the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)).

Additionally, when meetings are in DC, DOC should utilize its local and regional network to highlight the DC innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem and noteworthy updates regarding USG innovation and entrepreneurship policies.

iii. Outside Presenters

DOC should ensure that outside presenters are relevant to NACIE's purpose and work and should be given the following guidelines:

- come with an ask;
- be concise;
- avoid acronyms and insider jargon; and
- include fun facts and exciting updates about the organization or program.

Given the appropriate context, these presenters can help highlight DOC's and USG's priorities, which will in turn help steer NACIE's ideation toward not only timely issues but also initiatives that are budgeted and funded.

iv. Conclusions & Next Steps

Meetings should conclude with a discussion of next steps for both NACIE and DOC, and action items should have clear owners. Follow-ups for individual initiatives should be scheduled as soon as possible after the meeting to allow for the conflicting schedules and priorities of members.

5. OFFBOARDING

DOC and NACIE should develop an offboarding process to wrap up each NACIE term that celebrates successes and solidifies member connections. Each NACIE builds on and creates networks of influential I&E leaders, and DOC should work with members, past and present, to sustain those networks beyond any given term. DOC should facilitate

- a success package that describes the outgoing NACIE's initiatives and impacts;
- an update to NACIE's Wikipedia page;
- an intra-NACIE distribution of up-to-date contact information; and
- an alumni communications group (via Slack, LinkedIn, Facebook, or similar).

Outgoing and past members should be encouraged to serve as a resource for current members and to otherwise remain active members of the NACIE alumni network.

NACIE Knowledge Transfer

1. COUNCIL GENESIS & HISTORY

a. Establishment & Legislation

[NACIE](#) was formed through the [America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010, 15 U.S.C. §3720\(c\) \(Wikipedia\)](#), and is operated by the [Office of Innovation & Entrepreneurship \(OIE\)](#).

NACIE has a broad mandate to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce across the spectrum of innovation and entrepreneurship (I&E) issues, including on

- developing policies to accelerate innovation and advance the commercialization of research and development, including federally funded research and development;
- identifying existing barriers to innovation and commercialization, including access to capital and other resources, and ways to overcome those barriers;
- providing access to relevant data, research, and technical assistance on innovation and commercialization;
- strengthening collaboration on and coordination of policies relating to innovation and commercialization, including those focused on the needs of small businesses and rural communities, within and among the Department of Commerce, other Federal agencies, and appropriate State government agencies and institutions; and
- any other matters as determined by the Secretary of Commerce.

b. Role & Position

NACIE is a citizen research council that explores what innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems need to grow and that makes recommendations to the Department of Commerce on how to best support innovation, entrepreneurship, and the transitions—through technology commercialization—from ideas to businesses.

Domains in which NACIE may focus include

- cutting-edge thought leadership in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship;
- critical analysis of current DOC and USG programs; and
- intra-NACIE collaboration opportunities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS & INITIATIVES

a. Prior & Ongoing Initiatives

The current NACIE has a number of initiatives in varying stages and should brief the new NACIE the statuses of these initiatives, especially with respect to those that are ongoing and on hold:

- inclusion in I&E and in NACIE initiatives;
- standardizing labor market data;
- creating and implementing a community innovation and entrepreneurship playbook;
- improving the commercialization outcomes of the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR);
- creating an encyclopedia of innovation measures;
- free agent talent and systems—the “1099 Economy”;
- TechHire & career accelerators;

- the capital continuum exchanges and access to capital; and
- recommendations for the next NACIE.

Prior to NACIE 3.0's first meeting in October 2016, the current NACIE will create and compile short (maximum two page) executive summaries of each of the above initiatives, and OIE will distribute these to the incoming members for review prior to that meeting.

3. WORKGROUPS

Workgroups drive the completion of most of NACIE's work product. Workgroups will form and reform throughout the tenure of NACIE. Workgroup outputs are presented and reviewed by at quarterly meetings of the full NACIE. While the activities of NACIE may be varied along the way, ultimately it is tasked with providing feedback and recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce. NACIE and its workgroups activities could include:

- convening people for research and discussion;
- engaging other stakeholders in workgroup activities (research, pilots, convenings);
- conducting original research;
- curating resources, developing frameworks, and consolidating best practices;
- piloting projects to get quick data to inform a recommendation;
- writing white papers advocating perspectives that DOC should adopt (and gather and include endorsements);
- participating in government events (e.g., White House Demo Day); and
- networking with each other to identify impactful projects and program outside of NACIE and to otherwise share information.

4. OPERATING NORMS

Each NACIE group should agree on operating norms. While this often comes naturally in time, we recommend the group agrees to this early on in order to accelerate outcomes.

Below are some suggested topics to clarify:

a. Comfort with Candor

Members should be comfortable with conflict, especially given NACIE's makeup of smart, opinionated people from diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Members should not avoid conflict solely out of respect or because of a lack of an agreed-upon operating norm. Debate can generate insights and elicit valuable discussion, and it should be one of NACIE's key tools.

b. Attendance: Meetings & Calls

NACIE and workgroups should establish expectations and general cadences with respect to meetings, calls, and other engagements as early as possible.

c. Communications Platforms

NACIE and workgroups should use or encourage the use of modern communication, videoconferencing, and collaboration platforms (e.g., Slack, Adobe Connect, Google Docs).

d. Social Media Guidelines

NACIE should work with DOC to develop mutually agreed-upon social media practices and guidelines. This includes standard language for bios, LinkedIn profiles, etc., as well as policies on updating other information sources such as Wikipedia.

e. Responsibilities NACIE Chairs

Chairs should provide executive leadership for NACIE, but all members should collaborate to determine the specific responsibilities of the chairs with respect to overall direction and with respect to workgroup activities.

f. Staff Support

Members should identify their staff, if any, that can provide support for communication, project management, etc., especially with respect to workgroups to help to provide structure, move projects forward, hold us accountable, and prioritize.

g. Alumni

Members should engage alumni as advisors on substance and process and as potential hosts for meetings in ecosystems outside the DC area.

h. Design Thinking

Given NACIE's broad, unstructured purview, NACIE and its workgroups should adopt a design thinking approach. Overall, NACIE should address the scope of innovation and entrepreneurship and focus on opportunities for improvement and solutions to problems within this scope.