Report of the External Review Committee of the Institute of Behavioral Science  
University of Colorado, Boulder  
February 25-27, 2013  

By  
Karen S. Cook, Stanford University  
Marvin Krohn, University of Florida  

I. Introduction  

The external review committee spent two and half days at the University of Colorado at Boulder to review the Institute of Behavioral Science (IBS). Committee members were provided with a large number of documents to review prior to arriving at Boulder. These documents included a very thorough self-study of the Institute of Behavioral Science prepared by the IBS Self Study Committee, the response to the unit self-study produced by the two members of the Internal Review Committee, who served as liaisons to ARPAC for IBS. Institute directors Marie Banich (ICS) and John Hewitt (IBG) served this function and they met with the external review team over dinner. In addition to these reports the external review team was provided a copy of the 2003 report on IBS and an extensive set of appendices covering all aspects of IBS. The material included separate self-studies produced by each program or center within the institute. In addition, procedural and policy documents were included that defined the nature of the review process and its anticipated outcomes.

During the visit we were able to meet with representatives of all of the groups within IBS including rostered faculty, affiliated faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, professional research associates, as well as staff in a variety of roles including technical support and program administration. In addition, we met with representatives of the CU Boulder administration and the ARPAC. We had meetings with Jeff Cox, the Associate Vice Chancellor, Stein Sture, the Vice Chancellor for Research, Bill Kaempfer, Vice Provost, and several others from the College of Arts and Sciences as well as ARPAC. Our visit ran very smoothly and we wish to thank all of those who organized the review and provided us with the opportunity to meet with so many constituents of IBS. We begin with a brief overview of our findings and recommendations before commenting in greater detail on the specific programs and centers in the institute. The bottom line is that IBS is a great resource for the University of Colorado Boulder and that further investment in the institute over the next decade will only strengthen its value to the university and the state of Colorado.

A. General overview

The Institute of Behavioral Science at CU Boulder has become one of the premier social science and policy institutes in the nation. It has grown markedly since its early beginning over 50 years ago under the steady and strong leadership of psychologist, Richard Jessor, whose commitment to the
development of this interdisciplinary institute is remarkable. He has helped to sustain the institute not only with his leadership but also with his generous commitment of time and resources well beyond expectations. Like many of the social science institutes at the nation’s top research universities IBS has been built around the strengths of the specific faculty and departments that have been engaged in the activities of the institute.

No two behavioral science or social science institutes are alike for this reason, but most have been highly significant in fostering interdisciplinary programs and research projects that link faculty across subfields in the various disciplines. IBS stands out for its engagement in translational research, taking social and behavioral science findings and applying them in various local, state and community contexts in efforts to solve existing social problems. This is a very strong aspect of the institute and particularly noteworthy in the case of the nationally recognized problem behavior group and the hazards center, among other programs within IBS.

In 2003 the external review team concluded that IBS had been a “central and indispensable component of the high national/international reputation of the social/behavioral sciences at the University and its standing among the major public universities in America.” In 2013 we conclude that IBS has certainly fulfilled this promise and is now poised to have even greater impact and visibility given its strong programs and its emphasis on translating research into action.

B. General recommendation

In general we recommend that IBS be supported by the university in its efforts to manage several key transitions in leadership within the institute and to add the staff and faculty resources needed to maintain and increase its effectiveness and its ability to fulfill its potential. The fairly modest requests for additional rostered faculty and the staff needed to support them are entirely justified in the current internal documentation provided to us. We came away from our visit highly impressed with the depth of commitment of the IBS faculty, its leaders, emeritus support faculty, research associates, staff and graduate students. Members of the institute have shown through past performance that they are able to maximize the use of university resources to bring in an impressive amount of grant funding, leveraging university commitments highly effectively. We provide more detailed recommendations after reviewing each of the constituent centers and programs within the institute, but we view support for the renewal of leadership of the institute and several of its key programs as the most important immediate contribution the university could make to the future of IBS.

II. Current Status of IBS

Since the last review the most major change is evident when you arrive at the institute. The beautiful new building, which now houses the institute, was opened two years ago. It is a tremendous accomplishment and a great facility. Fulfilling the dream of the founding leaders, the centers and programs formerly housed in a variety of smaller buildings and houses across campus and in the vicinity of campus are now located in one place. Propinquity alone has led to a number of new initiatives within the institute and is likely to continue to provide the resources and intellectual climate needed to foster
high quality interdisciplinary and translational work. IBS is viewed as a major asset to those who work there and as a magnet for graduate students who want mentored research experiences of high quality. It has also proven to be a major asset in the recruitment not only of graduate students and research associates, but also in attracting (and retaining) some of the best faculty in the social and behavioral sciences. We met a number of young faculty members who indicated that IBS was one of the reasons they came to the University of Colorado at Boulder (and, in some cases, why they had turned down offers to go elsewhere.) The administration of the university should view this as just one of the many reasons, and an important one, for supporting IBS and making sure that it has the resources needed to meet the challenges it faces in the coming years.

A. IBS Accomplishments

IBS has continued to grow and to expand its research enterprise and to extend its efforts to solve critical social problems since the last review a decade ago. In the next section we will highlight just a few of these accomplishments, given that the self-study reports produced by each group are very thorough and provide detailed accounts of the program and center activities.

B. Program Reviews

1. Problem Behavior and Positive Youth Development Program

The Problem Behavior and Positive Youth Development Program (hereafter the Problem Behavior Program) remains one of the premier research programs of its kind in the country. Although the emphasis has shifted from longitudinal research on the causes and correlates of crime and delinquency to an examination, implementation and evaluation of prevention and treatment programs, the program continues to generate much external funding and make significant contributions to knowledge about problem behaviors. The Program’s work in prevention and treatment implementation is well within the thrust of the IBS mission of doing research that has the potential to directly impact citizens at the local, national and even international level. The Program appears to be staffed at all levels by a group of very dedicated and hardworking researchers who continue to display a unique loyalty to the institute and this particular program.

While the Problem Behavior Program has clearly had much success since its inception, there are significant challenges that it faces in maintaining that success. Most importantly, it is imperative that the University complete a successful search for a new director of the Problem Behavior Program. This same recommendation was made in the 2003 external evaluation. Since that time a new director was hired (Terence Thornberry) but left after a relatively brief tenure in that position. The institute has made overtures to other prominent researchers in the discipline but has not been able to attract anyone. To maintain the visibility of the program the new director should be someone of national prominence who has been successful in obtaining external funding, and who, ideally, has experience both in research on the causes and correlates of crime and delinquency and research in the implementation and evaluation of prevention and treatment programs.
A person who meets the qualifications outlined above will be much in demand by other universities or institutes. Hence, the University of Colorado will need to provide sufficient resources both in terms of salary and additional support staff to attract a highly qualified person. The internal report specified the need for both an Associate Program Director (.25 FTE) and increased support for the Director of CSPV (.50 FTE level). Given the level of program activity, these appear to be reasonable requests that may facilitate the hiring of a new Director. Their additional request of an assistant professor line would also be an attractive part of a recruitment package for a new director.

There appeared to be a general consensus that the Problem Behavior Program was relatively insular and had not been effective in fulfilling the transdisciplinary charge of the institute. To some extent this may be due to the nature of the work they are doing. With the exception of the Health and Society program, which is relatively new, there is no natural partner for the Problem Behavior Program within the institute. Additionally, much of the current work of this program requires substantial off-site work, which may impede cross-fertilization within the institute.

Their internal report recognizes the need for more transdisciplinary work and, in part, that is why they hope they can make an inroad to the psychology program with the hiring of an assistant professor. While we concur that this would be a step in the right direction, we also would encourage them to explore other options, particularly with Education. The Center’s heavy involvement in school systems and evaluation of school related programs would seem to suggest that they would benefit from the expertise that scholars in education could contribute.

The Problem Behavior Program is very healthy at least for the near future. The transition that was made in the past decade to more applied funding opportunities rather than the longitudinal research grants which are more difficult to fund in the current climate, has positioned the program well. However, of the $21,578,444 in grants that the Problem Behavior area received between 2002-2012, approximately 17 million were awarded to scholars who are either close to retirement or have left the Institute and may or may not maintain affiliate status. The situation is much the same for the grants awarded to the CSPV. It is imperative that new leadership be recruited as quickly as possible.

2. **Health and Society Program**

The Health and Society Program was formed subsequent to the 2003 external review and thus constitutes a relatively new research program within IBS. The mission of this program is to advance understanding of the determinants of health from a variety of perspectives with special emphasis on social and economic disparities in health both within the United States and worldwide. It is in a strategic position to be a bridge across programs within the IBS since many of the specific foci of other programs have implications for health related issues.

The bridging function of the Health and Society Program is already evident in the way it has been structured and its ongoing research agenda. Structurally, there are five core faculty members and a number of associate faculty members whose primary affiliations are in other IBS research programs. This structure has the potential of encouraging and facilitating inter-program collaboration reflecting the transdisciplinary nature of the Health and Society Program. Ongoing research by core faculty in the
program has clear overlaps with the Problem Behavior Program and the Population Program. We can easily visualize how ties between the Environment and Society and the Institutions Programs could be established in the near future.

Other than the Director of the Health and Society Program, who is retiring in 2013, the core faculty are at the beginning stages of their careers, with three being assistant professors and the fourth having just been tenured in 2012. Their success in the acquisition of external funds and in generating publications in refereed outlets is impressive and bodes well for the future success of this program.

The hiring of a new director for this program is critical for its continued success. It is fortunate that there is a plan to have Jason Boardman, currently an affiliate in the Population Program, take over the leadership of the Health and Society Program. In addition to his demonstrated success in obtaining external funds, his interest in genetic-based research provides a link to the Institute of Behavioral Genetics. His plans for establishing a community data baseline of information on individuals and communities which researchers who are interested in a myriad of issues could tap, is an exciting possibility that would serve to link researchers from different disciplines as well as link the different programs within IBS. We encourage the University to provide the necessary incentives for a successful hire of Dr. Boardman as the Director of Health and Society Program.

Although the core faculty in the program represent diverse disciplinary fields, a potential concern is, with the retirement of the current director, there will be no psychologist among them. Given the nature of the work in the field of health and society it is important to recruit either a health psychologist or a developmental psychologist to IBS.

Overall the Health and Society Program has a very good record of external funding and contributions of knowledge to the field. With both national and international research agendas, it is well positioned to make further contributions. These efforts will be enhanced with the successful recruitment of Jason Boardman to the directorship and the addition of a health or developmental psychologist to its core faculty.

3. Institutions Program

The Institutions program is relatively new, with Lee Alston from Economics as the director. Currently, there are a number of faculty from economics, political science, sociology and geography affiliated with the program and the director is engaged in producing a large multi-institution grant proposal to the National Science Foundation to develop a coordinated effort to study governance issues with respect to natural resources, building on the Nobel-prize winning work of Elinor Ostrom and her long-standing workshop on institutional mechanisms to foster collective action at Indiana University.

A significant new activity is housed in the Center for the Governance of Natural Resources, a program recently developed by Krister Andersson, Lee Alston, and Terry McCabe, and reportedly an important feature of a major effort to retain Andersson at the University of Colorado. This center will focus on the human dimensions of the management of natural resources, particularly the nature of institutional arrangements that foster coordination and effective governance. This program connects
expertise in political science, economics and geography with that of anthropology and sociology in the Environment and Society program. It is a good example of the benefits of the co-location of these programs within IBS. Given that the building is new, more synergistic activity can be expected in the future if it is incentivized in the right way and communication can be improved to facilitate interconnections and transdisciplinary work. Additional faculty with institutional expertise in a relevant discipline would add depth to this center and provide for possible rotation of the leadership position.

While this program is relatively new it will be important to provide the infrastructure needed to assist faculty involved in obtaining external funding for their research and supporting the workshop and other activities that help create bridges among the faculty in various departments (including Law) that can be engaged in building this program. It would also be important to engage these faculty members in any larger conversations being conducted in the university about the creation of a new school that will focus on the environment and sustainability.

4. Population Program

The University of Colorado Population Center (CUPC) and related programs have been a long-standing success of IBS. The research productivity is very high and brings visibility to the institute and to the social sciences at Colorado. Jane Menken was brought to the University of Colorado from the University of Pennsylvania to join the population program at IBS and is now IBS Director. Building on previous efforts she has helped to make the IBS population program one of the best in the country. Rick Rogers is currently director of the Population Program and Fred Pampel, a research professor, is now the director of the CU Population Center, funded by the NICHD. This program is one of the huge success stories of the institute since there are only a small number of centers funded by the NIH and the competition for center grants is quite intense. Other funded centers are at prestigious universities such as Brown, Penn, Michigan, Chicago, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Washington and Princeton, among a handful of others.

The CUPC has received a number of significant grants to support its growth and its move to become the key bio-demography center with an emphasis on gene-environment interactions as well. Continuation of these activities will be hampered if senior faculty are not recruited into the program over the next few years to facilitate research activities and build the program to ensure continued support from NICHD. The center plans to expand its efforts to connect to additional affiliated faculty, enhance its ties to federal labs such as NCAR, building significant ties to the Environment and Society program within IBS. There is a natural link between population studies and research on the environment. Additional efforts to enhance these linkages will broaden the transdisciplinary focus of the institute creating new ties between two of the strongest centers within IBS.

Another very interesting set of activities of the population program is the work being done related to HIV/AIDS in South Africa and child health in Bangladesh. Maintaining and extending these international efforts selectively will also help to maintain and to build the reputation of the CUPC. The current affiliations of the CUPC with faculty across the nation and in various countries are impressive. In addition, the graduate curriculum and Certificate of Population Studies is a very significant component
of the institute’s contribution to graduate education. Former students have been quite successful in subsequent career placements.

Two key needs besides faculty renewal (and retention) are additional, more competitive support for graduate students who work in this area and resources to expand the infrastructure for the program (and related research in various departments and schools at the university) to support the development of a Regional Data Center (U.S. Census Bureau). The latter would solidify the role of the CUPC as a major resource for population studies in the middle part of the country. Most of the RDCs are currently in the northeast or on the west coast. Such a facility would also be useful for faculty across the university and local labs in the vicinity of CU, providing direct access to census data and linked databases from other federal agencies such as those on health and social services. An RDC would enhance the capacity of CU. researchers to access the data required to obtain new sources of external funding. The Population Program is clearly a core strength of IBS worthy of additional institutional resources. It takes years to develop a program of this stature. It should be viewed as a very important asset to the University.

5. Environment and Society Program

The Environment and Society Program’s (E & S) current research agenda addresses 1) the use, management, and governance of natural resources and the environment as well as 2) how populations perceive and respond to environmental risk and the effects of that response on the resilience of communities. These are central issues in both national and international dialogues of how the environment affects society. Both components of the research program of the Environment and Society Program are engaging in well-funded research efforts that are making significant contributions to our understanding of how humans affect and are affected by environmental issues. The program has flourished in spite of experiencing significant turnover in leadership over the past 15 years. Most recently, Lee Alston, who was appointed Director in 2005, stepped down to direct the newly formed Institutions program and Terry McCabe assumed the directorship of the Environment and Society Program.

The Natural Hazards Center is a vital component of the E & S program. It serves to disseminate information on hazards mitigation and disaster preparedness, response and recovery and to conduct research on the impact on the risk of disasters and responses to them that enhance the resilience of communities. The Center serves as a clearinghouse on natural hazards research applications and houses a library containing a substantial number of items relevant to this issue. The new building has greatly facilitated the housing of these materials and the ability of the Center to disseminate them efficiently.

In addition to the Natural Hazards Center, a new Center on the Governance of Natural Resources has been created. The new Center is intended to foster research involving both the E & S Program and the Institutions Program. Although it is too early to evaluate the success of the new center in fulfilling its mission, we view its formation in a positive light.

Overall, the E & S Program is operating very well. The research and dissemination activities are well funded with external grants. The program has important ties with both the Population Program and the Institutions Program. Most importantly, its mission lends itself to a transdisciplinary research
program, which it has vigorously pursued. The program’s link to vital concerns at the local, national and international levels fits extremely well within the overall mission of the Institute and of the Flagship 2030 Strategic Plan of addressing global issues.

There was concern raised over campus discussions regarding the formation of the School of the Environment and Sustainability. If these talks move forward, the IBS and specifically the leadership in the E & S and Institutions Programs need to be involved to determine how plans for the School might affect the status of IBS and its programs.

III. Concerns

Our overall assessment of the Institute of Behavioral Science and its constituent programs and centers, is highly positive. IBS is clearly among the premier research institutes. It has maintained that status for a number of years by attracting highly qualified people at all levels and by creatively adapting to the ever-changing external funding climate. Having said that we do have some concerns we feel need to be addressed to allow the institute to continue to maintain such a high level of functioning.

A. Recruitment of Directors: Of critical importance for the continued growth of IBS is the transition of leadership in the Problem Behavior, Population, Health and Society Programs, and most importantly the Directorship of IBS.

1. Problem Behavior Director

As noted above in the review of the problem behavior and youth development program, efforts to replace the current director have failed over time and remain a key matter of concern for IBS. The 2003 report also signaled that this recruitment was extremely important. A decade later it is even more imperative that the university and the institute work to redesign the program to be attractive to new leadership and provide the necessary resources including staff and faculty support to enable a successful search in the next few years. Perhaps once a new IBS director is identified that person could help design a plan for making a faculty appointment to build on the existing strengths of this program. It has a long history with programs such as Blueprints that are nationally acclaimed. Protecting past investments in this program is important to the future of IBS. Connecting more closely with psychology, sociology, and education (and possibly public health) is a great idea for future directions.

2. CU Population Center Director

It is critical that a new director be identified in the next few years to assume leadership of the Population Center. Having recently been successful in obtaining external funding, locating an academic leader for this position will not only secure the existing status of the Population Program, but also allow CU Boulder to further develop its place among the population programs in the nation. To have successfully competed for a center grant is high praise for the current leadership and faculty involved. Hiring a highly qualified demographer to lead this program into the future should be a top priority, once
the new IBS director is appointed. It is even plausible, that like Jane Menken, the new IBS director might be a well-known demographer who could help lead this effort. There are many qualified demographers in the nation who might relish the opportunity to take over the directorship of this center.

Engagement with the departments of sociology and economics would be important in this recruitment, since this recruitment could also represent a significant opportunity to bring in to either of these departments a “star” who would add to departmental quality as well. There is some lead time for this recruitment given that Jane Menken will not step down as the IBS director for two years and that she will remain active as a demographer once she has stepped down from her current post. She is an extremely effective leader and would be very helpful in both the search for a new population center director and during the transition in leadership. As a member of the National Academy of Science and former President of the Population Association of America (PAA) she is well connected with demographers at the major population centers in the U.S. Fred Pampel, a research professor at IBS, has been very important in leading the population center recently and his assistance with renewal of the center grant will be important. However, he has announced that he will become emeritus within the next few years, so finding new leadership will be critical to preserve the tremendous success that has been achieved over the past decade.

3. Health and Society Program Director

Given the pending retirement of Richard Jessor, a new director of the Health and Society Program will need to be recruited. Current plans are to elevate Professor Jason Boardman to that position. His involvement in IBS, successful record of funded research and unique combination of research interests suggest that he would be an excellent successor.

4. IBS Directorship

In addition, to concern for leadership transitions forthcoming in the Population Center and the Problem Behavior Program, a top priority should be the replacement of Jane Menken as the Director of IBS. Since her arrival she has been a superb leader within IBS, but she has announced that she will be stepping down from this position effective June 2015. As noted in the internal review documents, a search for her replacement has recently been approved and we urge the university to make this an important priority search in the next year and a half. It would be important to identify potential faculty leaders who would be willing to take on the directorship and to begin to negotiate the type of package that would be required to be successful in this recruitment. In addition, since it will involve departmental decision-making as well as institute involvement, coordination of the search and recruitment visits will take time. It is our recommendation that this process begin this academic year.

B. Other faculty positions - In addition to the directorships outlined above, programs within IBS are in need of additional faculty positions.

The internal review report clearly and thoughtfully identifies ways in which new faculty brought into IBS will aid in the renewal of several programs through senior appointments as well as promotions
from within the university, in addition to new junior faculty appointments (often shared with departments). We support these suggested additions and hope that the departments engaged in these joint searches will view these recruitments as significant opportunities for increasing the linkages between fields, supporting the exciting interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work of IBS. Leadership from the administration can help provide resources for successful recruitments as well as reduce bureaucratic hurdles that might interfere with effective collaboration across units.

C. Staffing

We were very impressed with all of the staff we met during our visit, so much so that we wish we could have taken some of them home with us. In general they are extremely hardworking, effective and strongly committed to the various missions of IBS. A more complete staffing evaluation should be conducted to figure out where new staff should be enlisted to relieve some of the stress that comes with long hours and in some cases, lots of travel away from home to facilitate the work of the centers, particularly the problem behavior intervention programs.

A shared staffing model for central services seems to be working well, but some of those providing services to a broad range of faculty, students and research staff seem overwhelmed with demands on their time. This is not good in the long run for either morale or for staff retention. We also picked up concerns over salaries, primarily over the lack of raises over an extended time period and interest in being better informed in some corners of the institute about the broader range of activities within IBS given that the programs and centers are now co-located. It is as if everyone is too busy (understandably) to take the time for informal conversation and the kind of community building events that benefit everyone. We even heard a few comments about graduate students and postdoctoral fellows wanting further connections with one another to explore common interests and possible collaborations. Finally, the professional research staff appear to need small amounts of bridge funding or minimal salary assistance to provide them the time needed for grant preparation and other activities required to be successful in obtaining new funding, activities that they are not allowed to charge to their ongoing projects.

D. Relationship with departments

As noted in the previous review one area in which improvements could be made is in the relations between the institute and the social science departments that participate in its programs, or could. We would like to emphasize that relations with the relevant social science departments have clearly improved and that a larger number of faculty from those departments are either directly engaged in IBS programs or serve as affiliated faculty. The extent of the involvement of departments and the support of IBS varies with changes in the leadership of the departments. Currently, with a few exceptions, relations with the departments are fairly positive. We met with several department chairs during our visit and they were supportive of the many contributions of IBS to the university and to their own programs, particularly the research support, infrastructure for grant administration, computing help, and aid to graduate students who serve as research assistants. Improvements in relations might be facilitated by
annual meetings with the chairs and with some clarity in two areas of potential contention: (1) teaching loads and buy-out policy, and (2) the distribution of indirect cost funds (a policy which should be reviewed on a regular basis by the university administration to ensure positive incentive effects).

E. **External public relations**

It appears from all of our conversations with various constituents in the institute that there is not enough support for external communications and public relations efforts. There are limited activities focused on this effort, but both the university and trustees are losing out by not publicizing a very useful set of activities that would raise the profile not only of IBS and the related departments, centers and institutes, but would also help educate citizens of the state (and the nation in some cases) concerning the many contributions being made by the faculty and staff at IBS to the solutions of key issues facing the state and the nation. There are many examples in the self-study report, including violence in schools (particularly poignant for the citizens of Colorado), effective responses to natural disasters (such as Katrina and Sandy most recently), population projections in relation to environmental problems, and the wise management of natural resources, especially in developing countries. Most of the centers and programs have some mechanism for communicating significant useful findings but a much more concerted effort to publicize this work would benefit everyone and certainly enhance the public relations activities of the university, which might also positively impact fund-raising.

F. **Course development**

An explicit role that IBS plays is to provide an interdisciplinary (or transdisciplinary) perspective on the variety of issues on which their research focuses. The University of Colorado has emphasized the importance of an interdisciplinary perspective both in terms of its sponsorship of such research programs and its stated agenda for the future of the University. However, mechanisms are not in place to allow the acquired knowledge from such research enterprises to be communicated to students.

Several of the IBS faculty indicated a desire to offer courses that reflected the interdisciplinary nature of their research. They further suggested that the most effective way to do so would be to team teach courses with colleagues from a different disciplinary background. However, it is our understanding that under the current rules concerning teaching loads etc., the only way for faculty to team teach is to do so as a teaching overload. This seems counterproductive especially for faculty who are so heavily involved in research activities.

If the University is serious about the importance of interdisciplinary work, some mechanism that is acceptable to departments needs to be developed to allow for offering, on occasion, a team taught course without requiring the faculty member to teach an overload. In order to minimize the conflict between IBS and constituent departments, the higher administration should take a proactive approach to establishing those mechanisms.

G. **Internal Communication and Team Building**

**Transparency in Decision Making**
There was some concern raised over the process of decision-making within IBS. A few IBS members mentioned the desire to have a voice in the process. However, this appeared to be a minority view. Most members indicated that they were simply too busy working on projects to take an active role in the governance of IBS. Rather, most IBS members desired better communication concerning the way in which decisions are made and more communication concerning the substance and rationale behind those decisions. We recommend that at minimum one meeting and possibly two meetings a year be held in which the Board provides a report to interested IBS members as to the decisions made by the Board and the future direction of IBS.

Internal Communication

A consistent concern that was voiced by members of all programs among faculty, graduate students and staff was the lack of communication and interaction across programs. In spite of the programs now being housed within one facility, there is still somewhat limited interaction unless a research initiative involves members of different programs. The result of this is some level of ignorance among members of one program of what members of another program might be working on, what they might be thinking of doing, and what expertise they might be able to share. Better communication across programs would facilitate the type of transdisciplinary research that the Institute is trying to foster.

The move to the new building is relatively recent and a number of issues needed to be resolved so it is understandable why there has been relatively little attention paid to inter-program communication. The other impediment to such communication is simply the lack of time to attend to what is happening in other programs; IBS members from staff to faculty have extremely busy schedules that preclude them from spending much time on what other programs are doing. In conversations with IBS personnel we discovered that the traditional approaches are not particularly effective. IBS personnel indicated that they often ignore email that comes through the listserv simply because they have other things that take priority. Many IBS members have a number of lectures and brown bags (including those internal to their respective programs) that they are routinely invited to so increasing those presented by IBS researchers does not seem to be an attractive (or effective) option.

We recommend that the IBS administration design and implement processes by which communication across programs can be time efficient and not require significant breaks in the researchers’ or staffs’ routine work activities. Among the possibilities that were suggested in our conversations with IBS personnel were the following:

1. Make use of a central meeting location such as the coffee machine by placing a monitor in that location that streams announcements of events, descriptions of projects either ongoing or in the development stage, and requests for information or help with projects. Currently IBS has a monitor that announces events at the front door of the building. While this may be useful for visitors to the Institute, few IBS personnel view this monitor. Many IBS personnel simply do not use the front door and others do not want to spend the time necessary to watch the screen. However, they did indicate that they would be more likely
to view the monitor if it was by the coffee machine and might take a few minutes while drinking their coffee to learn about new developments in the Institute’s programs. The difficulty with implementing this strategy is the need for someone to be responsible for inserting such information. We recommend that this become part of the responsibilities of the person who works on public relations.

2. Another idea that uses the location of the coffee machine is to have a designated time when interested personnel can go to the coffee machine to meet people from other programs and possibly discuss each other’s work. This ‘tea or coffee time’ has been used as an effective strategy in other research institutes. It requires minimal organization and additional resources (perhaps the availability of snacks). Therefore, it could be a weekly event.

3. Poster sessions - IBS personnel reported that it is difficult for them to take time out of their schedule to attend lectures or brown bags sponsored by other programs in the Institute. Yet, they would like to know what other people are working on and, possibly discuss the work in other programs if they see it as relevant to their own. A possible strategy to facilitate this would be to have poster sessions a few times a year. Many IBS personnel produce posters for presentation at meetings etc. Poster sessions have proven to be a quick way to find out who is doing what and an efficient method of determining if one wants to pursue the topic with the presenting researcher. Again, this would require a limited amount of time and resources (refreshments are always a good way to encourage people to attend).

IV. Summary of Key Recommendations

1. Recruit new directors of IBS, Problem Behavior and the CU Population Center.
2. Plan for renewal of leadership of the Health and Society and the Environment and Society programs. Support and expand leadership of the Institutions program and the Center on Governance of Natural Resources.
3. Selectively add new faculty appointments in the institute, joint with departments in the social and behavioral sciences, to add strength where needed and to provide the opportunity for leadership to emerge from the appointment of stellar early career faculty.
4. Build staff support through selective hiring of personnel who can add needed capacity in communications, computing and program implementation.
5. Add resources in the form of a discretionary fund to be used by the IBS director to enhance incentives for increased effort on the part of affiliated faculty to engage with institute programs and activities, provide additional funds for travel to conferences and related important venues for faculty and other research staff to disseminate institute basic and translational research for the benefit of the state and the nation.
6. If possible create a fund potentially derived from indirect cost recapture to provide bridge funding or small start-up grants when needed within programs to maximize success in obtaining external funds. (Review the policies with respect to indirects applied to foundations.) Continue the process of sharing indirects with the departments involved to foster cooperative mutual engagement in research and training activities.

7. Create greater opportunities for departmental involvement in institute activities. Work with departmental advisors and chairs in figuring out how to support graduate training and provide additional opportunities for undergraduates to be engaged in research and perhaps program implementation activities as a form of community service (even possibly internships).

8. Support the development of graduate training certificates to build on the strength of the multidisciplinary activities of the institute and provide opportunities for unique access to expertise. Team teaching could be an important part of this effort if bureaucratic obstacles can be removed that prevent it.

Concluding Comment

The Institute of Behavioral Science (IBS) has become one of the premiere interdisciplinary institutes in the nation. The University of Colorado, Boulder should be proud of its accomplishments over the past fifty years and should now leverage the substantial investment of those who helped build IBS from the ground up and the university in its recent support of the creation of an excellent facility for the important work of its centers and programs. Additional incremental support for staffing, bridge funding, selective new faculty appointments, and, most importantly, the successful recruitment of key leaders in the institute should secure its national reputation and set the stage for even more significant contributions to the university, state and the nation as the institute evolves moving forward. The administration is to be congratulated on this success and the vision that it has fostered which now puts IBS in the top ranks of those centers and programs that are working hard to make a difference in society whether making our schools safe havens, providing for better health, responding to natural and human-made disasters, or making advances in bio-demography and institutional analysis, among other important areas of inquiry.