We wish to express our gratitude for the hard work, diligence, and insightfulness of the members of the Internal Review Committee. We have carefully read its report and revised several questions to address the committee’s concerns and have included below additional comments we think are more appropriate to this response document than in the Self Study report itself.

We are gratified that the Committee in its report has recognized IBS’s achievements, standing, and contributions to interdisciplinary social science research on problems of societal importance and the important impact the Institute has had on the campus, the state, and the nation. We also wish to thank the IRC for supporting the Institute’s resource requests from the university and understanding that IBS’s success in the years ahead and its ability to continue to contribute to the teaching, research, and outreach profile and standing of CU Boulder depends heavily on the availability of such resources.

We have divided our response to the IRC report into two sections, the first on the “Completeness of the Self Study” and the second on “Suggestions for future changes within IBS.”

1. Completeness of the Self Study: The IRC report expressed some puzzlement about why the Self Study Strategic Plan is almost entirely taken up by the strategic plans of the several programs, with a much shorter discussion of IBS plans in general. We have done this quite deliberately, but have perhaps been remiss in not specifying more clearly in the Self Study the reasons why we have done so. We have added some material in questions 1 and 7 in the Self Study report to address this oversight. We include here the additional paragraph for Question 7 to explain our decision:

“IBS’s Strategic Plan is and must be constructed upon the foundations provided by the considerable accomplishments and plans of each of its programs. IBS’s mission is to support interdisciplinary, collaborative research on problems of societal importance. Given limited resources, IBS does not and cannot address any and all problems of societal importance but has selected over the years an important sub-set for intense interdisciplinary examination within each of its programs. The particular societal problems addressed in each program have evolved and changed over the years in response to emerging problems of societal importance, with the IBS Board of Directors serving as the instrumentality for approving program research directions, appointing program directors, and prioritizing how scarce Institute resources are allocated among them. Each program determines its own strategies for tackling the research issues around which the program is organized, with the Board providing oversight and facilitating coordination and collaboration with other programs when there is an intersection of interests among research scholars. It should be noted that the Institute has been quite nimble over the years, with new directions emerging within programs, the addition of a new program focusing on health and society, and several notable cross-program initiatives that have yielded extra-mural research funding and significant and influential scholarship (described in Question 5). The programs are the foundations of IBS’s research, training, and outreach activities—thus the inclusion of a Strategic Plan for each program in this section of the Self Study--but the programs have and will
continue to evolve and have and will continue to have permeable boundaries that allow for cross-program initiatives and joint membership by faculty in several programs."

2. Suggestions for future changes within IBS: We appreciate the suggestions the IRC report made regarding changes that the Institute might want to consider making in the future. We would point out that we share many of the same concerns, have considered several of them in the past, and will continue to address them in the years ahead. For the most part, however, they involve major policy changes that cannot be made in the short period of time allowed to us to respond to the IRC report.

A. We agree entirely that the IBS by-laws must be updated. We will turn our attention to this task within the next few semesters.

B. We will examine again the question of IBS governance, especially the role of the Board in Institute decision-making, with possible expansion of the role of faculty in Institute decision-making. We will carry out further investigations of the governance question but would point out that a previous investigation carried out by Ed Greenberg in 2011 indicated that the vast majority of faculty did not want IBS to have a departmental structure, with formal votes on Institute policies and personnel appointments, and were quite happy with the existing arrangement in which they have full access to program directors, members of the Board, and the IBS Director.

C. We agree that the Institute’s decision-making and policies must be made more transparent and that faculty, researchers, and staff should be better informed about the research, training, and out-reach activities of the several programs. We appreciate the “nudge” from the IRC on this matter. We will investigate a number of options including an all-IBS business meeting in the Fall semester each year and a presentation by programs on an annual rotating basis during the second semester each year. These would be in addition to the annual all-IBS gatherings that are held each semester during which the Director shares news of the Institute with those assembled.

D. We would like to do a better job of “branding” and communicating what IBS does to Colorado and the nation but would need more resources to accomplish this, including assistance in updating our web-site and a staff person responsible for publicity. We would point out, however, that several programs already do a great deal in terms of out-reach and advising on public policies. Several IBS programs are well-known to community members, state and local officials, and practitioners who work closely with IBS-associated faculty, researchers and staff.

E. While IBS does not have an external advisory committee, we will consider if such a committee would be helpful to us in carrying out its mission. We would point out that the Blueprints program in the Problem Behavior Program and the Natural Hazards Center in the Environment Program have external advisory committees which meet twice annually.

F. We are mindful that having better links to faculty in the Psychology and Neuroscience would be helpful in enhancing the quality of our research on the interdisciplinary investigation of problems of societal importance both in terms of the individual level of analysis in multi-level investigations and in our ever expanding commitment to evaluation research. We are making some progress on this front, though more is needed. We have several projects underway with IBG at the present time and the search committee for Del Elliott's replacement as Director of Problem Behavior is being done jointly with Psychology and Sociology.