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After working for nearly 2 years, the [Administrative Conference of the United States](#) is nearing completion of a set of recommendations aimed at [improving the use of science in the administrative process](#). The ACUS [Committee on Regulation](#) met last week to discuss draft recommendations informed by a [report prepared by a consultant](#), as well as three widely-attended conferences hosted in collaboration with ACUS and the [National Academy of Sciences](#) (NAS), the [George Washington University](#) (GW), and the [U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy](#) (SBA), respectively, to which Committee members and the public were invited. The Committee tentatively agreed to focus the current set of recommendations on best practices and transparency of research.

Perhaps more interesting than the recommendations the Committee agreed to move forward, however, are the ones it did not. One recommendation that was deferred for a future time identified best practices for systematic review of scientific evidence. The practices were designed to address concerns raised over the years in numerous [NAS reports](#) and were based largely on those reports as well as the [conference](#) GW co-hosted in collaboration with ACUS. Another recommendation, aimed at improving peer review procedures, was informed by the two conferences co-hosted by GW and SBA, as well as a [recent report of the Keystone Center](#). While Committee members appreciated the importance of these recommendations for improving the quality and transparency of the science used in rulemaking, they decided to reserve them for future ACUS projects where they could be evaluated more fully. The consultant report identified a third set of recommendations aimed at presidential review of rulemaking, however, both ACUS leadership and Committee members discarded these very early in the process as being outside the scope of this project. It was noted that, if ACUS were to address presidential oversight (as at least one Conference member recommended), it would likely take a very different approach from that used by the consultant.

The Regulation Committee will meet again on April 2 and April 29, with a goal of finalizing recommendations to present to the [ACUS Council](#) and full [Conference Assembly](#) at its next [plenary meeting](#) in June 2013. This will likely be the first of several recommendations on the topic of science used for rulemaking. The [Administrative Conference Act](#), which authorized ACUS in 2009, identifies “improv[ing] the use of science in the regulatory process” as one of five purposes of the Conference, and Committee members encouraged ACUS to initiate more projects to address the systematic review of scientific evidence and peer review.

