To: The Independent Climate Change Email Review -

From: Ron Cram

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Members of Review Team

Recently Philip Campbell has resigned from the review team because of public perception he was not objective. This was appropriate. You should know another member of the review team has also been subject to a great deal of criticism about his objectivity. This member is Professor Geoffrey Boulton. A number of blog posts about Boulton were published by Steve McIntyre on ClimateAudit.org between Feb. 12 and 14. The team should carefully consider whether Boulton's continued work on the review team may damage the credibility of the review in the eyes of the public.

In any case, the review must at a minimum replace Philip Campbell who brought the committee expertise in the peer-review process. The review team is also missing expertise in the area of statistics. I would suggest you replace Campbell with an editor of a statistics journal, someone who can provide insight into the review process as well as insight into the many charges of statistical wrongdoing at CRU. The lack of a statistician on the review team is a major problem which will adversely affect the credibility of the review in the eyes of the public.

Academic misconduct

The website explains the review will:

1. Examine the hacked e-mail exchanges, other relevant e-mail exchanges and any other information held at the Climate Research Unit to determine whether there is any evidence of manipulation or suppression of data which is at odds with acceptable scientific practice and may therefore call into question any of the research outcomes.

The emails do show evidence of "manipulation or suppression of data which is at odds with acceptable scientific practice." A great deal has been published about the email by Phil Jones which says he just completed "Mike's Nature trick" to "hide the decline." See http://www.eastangliaemails.com/emails.php?eid=154&filename=.txt

It is clear the decline Jones is trying to hide is the decline in temperature reconstructions from tree-ring proxies starting in 1981 (or 1961 for Keith Briffa's). He hid the decline by splicing the temperature record onto the temperature reconstruction. In recent newspaper reports, Jones has tried to defend his actions by saying he was replacing "invalid" proxy data with "more valid" temperature data. This excuse is not acceptable.

Any qualified statistician will tell you it is wrong to splice one type of data onto another type of data. When Michael Mann was asked if he spliced the temperature record onto the reconstruction, he denied it on the website RealClimate.org. This is what he wrote:

"[**Response:** No researchers in this field have ever, to our knowledge, "grafted the thermometer record onto" any reconstruction. It is somewhat disappointing to find this specious claim (which we usually find originating from industry-funded climate disinformation websites) appearing in this forum. Most proxy reconstructions end somewhere around 1980, for the reasons discussed above. Often, as in the comparisons we show on this site, the instrumental record (which extends to present) is shown along with the reconstructions, and clearly distinguished from them (e.g. highlighted in red as here)."

See Mike's (Dr. Mann's) embedded response to Comment #4 at http://www.realclimate.org/index.php/archives/2004/12/myths-vs-fact-regarding-the-hockey-stick/#comments

Mann links to a graphic generated in 2003 which purports to show how the surface record takes over for the reconstruction after 1981.

There are several problems with Mann's response. First, Mann knew Jones had followed his example and spliced the temp record onto the reconstruction because Mann was one of the recipients of the Jones email. Another problem is the fact Mann first performed the splice in MBH98. He did not inform readers of that article he had spliced the temp record onto the reconstruction. And when asked about it here, Mann specifically denied the charge.

Why does Michael Mann deny the splice? Why does he try to provide cover for other researchers, like Jones, who also spliced the data? Because he knows it was wrong and would never be accepted by any qualified statistician.

Since the email has become known, certain of Jones's defenders have claimed this was a normal and accepted practice that was required in that the proxy data was invalid because of the Divergence Problem. They also claim the Divergence Problem was "well-known" because it is discussed in the peer-reviewed literature. There are several problems with this line of argument.

First, it cannot be assumed readers of the IPCC report are familiar with the relevant peer-reviewed literature or the concept of the Divergence Problem. It is probably fair to say most policy makers have never come across the term "Divergence Problem."

Second, even if readers had heard of the Divergence Problem, readers have no way of knowing Jones relied on proxies which suffered from the Divergence Problem. And readers have no way of knowing about the increased uncertainty which the Divergence Problem brings.

Third, the proxy data was not invalid, it was adverse. Every researcher knows adverse data must be reported. When confronted with adverse data, Jones had the choice of not using the data at all or of using it but reporting to readers the fact the proxies do not track temperatures well in the late 20th century. Of course, if readers know the proxies used do not track temps well in the 20th century, then it is fair to ask how it can be known the proxies were reliable in centuries past. Jones decided to avoid the question. He chose to hide the decline in the proxies. At the very least, readers deserve to know of the greater uncertainty inherent in the use of any reconstruction which uses proxies that suffer from the Divergence Problem.

Let me give an illustration. If a doctor is testing a medicine and some patients die from it, the doctor cannot refuse to report the data by claiming it is invalid since the patient died from another cause. Adverse reactions to medicine are part of the data. Even if the doctor feels the deaths were unrelated to the medicine, the deaths still have to be reported. The doctor may also report other factors which he thinks may have played a more important role in the death (perhaps the patient was hit by a bus), but the death cannot be ignored because the principle of full disclosure is in effect.

Similarly, if a supposed temperature proxy does not match up with temp changes in modern times, then it is probably not a temp proxy and should not be used. A researcher cannot claim "this proxy was good in centuries past but it is invalid for the last 20 years." If it is not reliable now, how do other periods of unreliability do not exist in centuries past? You do not. Such a claim is not going to fly with any scientist without some exceptional data to back it up, data which does not exist in the peer-reviewed literature. Probably the best course of action is to throw out the entire proxy. If the researcher decides to use the proxy anyway, the principle of full disclosure is in effect. Readers need to be told of the uncertainties of reconstructions which suffer from the Divergence Problem.

When Jones writes that he completed "Mike's Nature trick" to "hide the decline," it is an admission of academic misconduct designed to prevent readers from knowing about the Divergence Problem or the fact the temperature reconstructions were based on proxies that suffered from the Divergence Problem. By hiding the greater uncertainty of the reconstructions, Jones sought to support the claim, first made by Michael Mann and co-authors in MBH98, that late 20th century warming was unprecedented. Interestingly, in a recent newspaper report, Phil Jones admitted not being personally convinced of the claim he was trying to establish. See http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1250872/Climategate-U-turn-Astonishment-scientist-centre-global-warming-email-row-admits-data-organised.html

I hope you find this helpful.

Ron Cram