

Awards Committee Report, 2010:

RR Comment: Remind LWPES office to set up score sheets like Bob Rosenfield and Ken Copeland did (one column last name, second column first name) so they can be sorted alphabetically. Bob told Christy and did it himself last year, but it was not incorporated this time around.

CAS: Determine which scoring system to use. My recommendation is to use the new NIH 10-point scale with only 0.5 increments allowed so as to spread out the scores. Reviewers should avoid giving two grants identical scores. Base rankings on mean NIH scores.

CAS: Regarding getting outside expert reviews, it was very cumbersome and did not go as well as I hoped. A major issue was following up on outside experts to get their comments in on time. I suggest that we try again (similar to the NIH electronic Study Section):

- Each grant will be assigned to a Primary and Secondary Reviewer on the Committee;
- The Primary Reviewer will be responsible for soliciting one-page critiques from 2 experts (PES members preferred) (comments back to Degnon w/ f/u by Degnon and Primary Reviewer).
- These expert critiques will be made available to all Committee Members (Degnon).
- Based on the expert critiques and hir own evaluation, the Primary Reviewer will summarize the strengths and weaknesses for the Committee (applicant career potential, mentor, project science, project impact) and suggest a score; the Secondary Reviewer will attach hir comments and own suggested score below the Primary Reviewer's (Degnon to suggest how).
- The Primary/Secondary Reviewer comments will be circulated to the entire Committee to append any additional comments about each application for a period of no more than a week (Degnon). (note: all Committee members will also have access to the experts' critiques to assist in scoring). The Committee Members will then submit their score sheets for compilation by Degnon and approval by the Committee Chair.
- The Committee Chair will be responsible for reporting results to the BOD for final decisions about awards based on funds available (Note: it would be useful to give this info to the Committee before the final reporting).
- Copies of the expert critiques will be provided to applicants (trimmed as necessary). The Committee feels that this should be an essential part of the process

CAS: Time Lines. Needed for application deadlines, experts' comments, Committee voting, and award decision dates. Ora and Lynne both felt that a sufficient lead-in was needed to be able to get outside expert reviews, so early December deadlines for grant submission is probably still necessary. The review process went too slow this year and will need improvement. Suggest:

- First week in Dec: Receipt of Applications
- Second week: Assign Primary and Secondary Reviewers (Committee Chair)_
- Third-Fourth week: Assign Experts to critique (this gives the Primary Reviewer time to identify experts). The Experts will need firm deadlines to do their written critiques! I suggest a two week turnaround be mandatory, but three weeks may be more realistic (Primary Reviewers and Degnon will have to follow-up on this vigorously)
- Third week of Jan all critiques should be in and available to Primary/Secondary Reviewers.

- First week Feb: Post Primary Reviewer's suggested scores and allow Secondary Reviewers to comment and give their scores. Committee discussion of scoring/strengths/weaknesses electronically may proceed for up to one week.
- Third Week Feb: Receipt of all scores at Degnon, compilation, review by Committee Chair.
- End of Feb: Report results to BOD for finalizing awards, based on funds available. The BOD and Treasurer will have to provide anticipated funding availability to the Committee by this time.
- March: notify applicants.

Suggest that the Committee Chair and Degnon finalize these timelines in time to announce deadlines for receipt of applications by early September.

Bob Rosenfield: suggests a small phrase be added to the application instructions to include information about future directions. For RFs, I look at potential of the applicant and potential of the project for further career development. There is seldom any info about this in applicants or reference letters. Unfortunately, the requirement for this info is only hinted at in the official NIH instructions for R23s.

To accomplish this, I suggest modification of the final few words of the following sentence to include "future", as follows:

"The research plan must describe how the proposed training will serve as a suitable vehicle to reach the overall career goals and for acquiring the skills, theories, conceptual approaches, and methodology necessary for future independent research." NICOLE: THIS IS AN ACTION ITEM FOR YOU.

For future action item: Recommend reviewing this process and the success/failure of obtaining outside expert reviews after 3 years. (counting this year as the first). NICOLE: THIS IS AN ACTION ITEM TO DO IN 2012.

CAS: Regarding funding decisions, this year we got hung up on inflexibility of CSA and RFA funds: thanks to John Kirkland, we had 400K in funds for fellows (8 slots), but only 300K for scholars (6 slots). Since the scholar awards are intended for two years, only half of the latter was available for new scholar awards. There were 10 fellow applications and 9 scholar applications and the Committee consensus was that the quality of fellows did not drop to 7 or 8. Thus it would be preferable to fund fewer fellows and more scholars. Suggest asking Research Council to help the Treasurer and Degnon in drafting the industry support grants and keeping flexibility to be able to shift funds between the two types of awards.