

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services



Center for
Scientific Review

ACD Diversity Workgroup Subcommittee on Peer Review June 2014 Progress Report

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The ACD asked for:

- Creation of a subcommittee on peer review
- Research to examine causes of award disparities
 - Text analysis studies
 - Anonymization studies
- Exploration of interventions to reduce possibility of bias

Overview of Research Efforts

- I. Development of Measures, Tools, Solicitations
- II. Baseline Assessment of Bias in Peer Review
- III. Intervention Development and Testing

I. Development of Measures, Tools, Solicitations

Challenge #1 - New Methods to Detect bias in Peer Review

- ❖ Launched on May 5, 2014
- ❖ <http://public.csr.nih.gov/Pages/challenge.aspx>
- ❖ Submission deadline June 30, 2014
- ❖ Awards September 30, 2014

How to detect bias among reviewers due to gender, race/ethnicity, institutional affiliation, area of science, and/or amount of research experience of applicants.

Judging criteria

- ❖ Best Empirically Based Submission
- ❖ Most Creative Submission

Prizes

- ❖ First - \$10,000
- ❖ Second - \$5,000

II. Baseline Assessment of Bias in Peer Review

- **Survey of New Investigators**
 - ❖ Survey created and refined
 - ❖ OMB and IRB approvals received
 - ❖ OER provided investigator contact and demographic data
 - ❖ Survey launched May 28, 2014

- **Anonymizing Experiments**
 - ❖ SRO /Chief's provided suggestions on study design
 - ❖ Subcommittee on Peer Review to review on June 9th
 - ❖ Plan is to initially review ARRA grants
 - ❖ Design includes comparison of:
 - ❖ Fully anonymized applications
 - ❖ Partially anonymized applications
 - ❖ Original applications

Baseline Assessment of Bias in Peer Review

- **Text Analysis of Summary Statements**
 - ❖ Research Plan developed with 3 Tasks
 - ❖ Contract to be awarded Summer 2014
- **Task 1: Development of Lexicon for Text Analysis**
 - ❖ Finalize Lexicon
 - ❖ Replicate Findings on Gender differences in evaluation terms
 - ❖ Evaluate Summary Statements
- **Task 2: Examination of unedited critiques by Applicant Race**
 - ❖ Test Gender-based Lexicon
 - ❖ Revise Lexicon and Reanalyze critiques– Iterative process
- **Task 3: After accumulation of critiques**
 - ❖ Test of Reviewer and Applicant Race differences in evaluation of grant applications

III. Intervention Development and Testing

Challenge #2 - Strategies to Strengthen Fairness and Impartiality in Peer Review

- ❖ Launched on May 5, 2014.
- ❖ <http://public.csr.nih.gov/Pages/challenge.aspx>
- ❖ Submission deadline June 30, 2014
- ❖ Awards September 30, 2014

Methods for strengthening reviewer training methods to maximize fairness and impartiality in peer review with regards to gender, race/ethnicity, institutional affiliation, area of science, and/or amount of research experience of applicants.

- **Prizes**
 - ❖ First - \$10,000
 - ❖ Second - \$5,000

Intervention Development and Testing

Early Career Reviewer Program (ECR)

- ❖ 3134 ECRs have been **accepted** into the program
- ❖ 1069 have **served** on at least **one** study section
- ❖ 25 percent of ECRs from under-represented groups
- ❖ Early Career Reviewer Application and Vetting System (EAVS)
- ❖ ECR video created and disseminated
- ❖ Outreach webinars for R15 schools

Questions? Comments?