

NCAR Non-NSF Proposal Review Panel (PRP) Report to the Members

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Context

As a result of UCAR, PACUR and NSF discussions to streamline NCAR's non-NSF proposal review process, a new process was established which more closely adheres to the NSF cooperative agreement; thus,

- It may be appropriate for NCAR personnel and/or facilities to be used for other projects that contribute to the overall advancement of the atmospheric and related sciences.
- NSF and UCAR/NCAR are concerned about unfair advantages that the use of NSF-funded NCAR staff and facilities may have on the ability of the university community and others to obtain funding.
- UCAR shall involve the university community members in the retrospective review of non-NSF funded proposals in excess of \$300,000 and will notify NSF of the results of this review.
- UCAR shall provide the review criteria and list of Panel members to the NSF Program Officer for comment prior to the review.
- NSF will review the Panel report and address any significant issues with UCAR/NCAR. NSF will monitor NCAR's obligations involving the use of NCAR personnel and/or facilities for non-NSF projects.

PRP Members

(Appointed by the UCAR President, NCAR Director & PACUR Chair)

- Bob Street, Stanford University – Chair
- Dave Parsons, University of Oklahoma
- Natalie Mahowald, Cornell University
- Vernon Morris, Howard University
- Albert Semtner, Naval Postgraduate School
- Jie Zhang, George Mason University

Process for the Review of NCAR's Non-NSF Proposals

- Last year UCAR, NCAR and PACUR with the approval of NSF moved the review of these proposals out of PACUR and formed this separate review panel.
- The panel meets once a year to review the Non-NSF proposals from the previous fiscal year.
- The panel can review all non-NSF proposals over \$300,000 and has access to the full proposals.
- The panel meets for a day at UCAR in Boulder to discuss the proposals and prepares a written report that is submitted to UCAR and NCAR. UCAR then submits the report to NSF.
- The panel chair reports back to PACUR and gives the annual report to the Members.

UNFAIR ADVANTAGE IS:

- Use of NSF funded facilities over and above what a typical university researcher has access to.
- Co-sponsorship or leveraging of NSF base funded staff over and above what a university researcher can leverage.

UNFAIR ADVANTAGE IS NOT:

- Competition with the community for sponsor funding.
- A non-collaborative proposal.
- The use of UCAR/NCAR buildings, services and scientific facilities that are equivalent to what is typically available to a university researcher, such as office space, research laboratories, and support staff. (If NCAR is using facility or staff time not available to a university researcher, but the proposal provides a clear benefit to a university partner, the university community or society at large, the proposal would not necessarily be unfair.)

Report on FY 14 Proposals

- The PRP was given access to all 94 proposals that met the criteria for review. As in the past, the Panel Chair randomly selected a subset of the proposals to be reviewed (~1/3 of the total). Special attention was paid to proposals with co-sponsorships and expected significant use of High Performance Computing core hours.
- The PRP met in Boulder on August 13 to discuss the proposals and to write the Panel's report.
- At the conclusion of the review, the PRP found no proposals that could be deemed unfair competition for the Universities.
- The Panel made recommendations (1) to improve/clarify the process and the information given to the Panel and (2) to make specific the co-sponsorship criteria.
- The review of the FY15 proposals will take place in January or February 2016