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Dr. Tara A. Schwetz

Acting Principal Deputy Director

National Institutes of Health.

9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20892

Dr. Noni Byrnes

Director, Center for Scientific Review

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— and reduce the tendency of study sections to discuss minor weaknesses that disadvantage otherwise meritorious applications.

Recommendation 2: Go ahead with elimination of most “Additional Review Considerations”

The ASBMB applauds the effort to reduce reviewer administrative burden by eliminating their examination of most “additional consideration” documents. Under the proposed framework, reviewers will still evaluate “Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources” and “Budget and Period of Support.” The ASBMB agrees that both retained “additional consideration” documents are important for peer reviewers to assess in the context of the research project grant application. Additionally, the society supports using drop-down ratings for these considerations and requiring a written justification only when concerns exist.

Recommendation 3: Improve the triage process for study section discussion

The ASBMB is concerned about scientific research proposals that are not discussed in study section meetings due to the weighting of preliminary scores that result in triage. The average score given by three peer reviewers to one proposal determines whether a proposal moves forward to discussion at the study section meeting; however, when the average score is pulled down by an outlier, the proposal is not discussed. It would be more appropriate for such a proposal to be discussed thoroughly by the study section to ensure fairness.

The ASBMB recommends CSR rectify how and when borderline-scoring proposals are brought into the study section discussion. This goal could be accomplished in two ways: First, task the scientific review officer with initiating discussion of borderline-scoring proposals and/or second, automatically include a set time for discussion of these proposals. The ASBMB urges CSR to ensure that quality scientific research projects are not left behind during the triage process.

Recommendation 4: Validate the framework by conducting a pilot study

The ASBMB supports the effort to address systemic funding gaps that have [resulted in the top 10% of institutions receiving 70% of NIH’s funding](#), a trend that disadvantages investigators from low-resourced, predominately undergraduate and minority-serving institutions. To reduce reputational barriers to funding for these institutions, the ASBMB recommends that the CSR consider the following actions:

as the [Asian and Pacific Islander American Scholars](#), [American Indian Science and Engineering Society](#) and [The Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science](#).

Recommendation 9: Reconsider using the proposed framework for R15 awards