Dealing with Rejections and Revisions

Anantha Aiyyer Ben Laabs

Based on previous work by previous workshop leaders





The Hard Facts

- You will have proposals rejected and you may feel that the reviewer/panel have been unjust
- The only way to avoid rejection is not to submit anything

Who Here Has Been Rejected?

Take a moment to share your experience

What is the Process?

NSF

- Proposal is submitted
- Proposal is reviewed by program manager
 - It is possible to be rejected at this point (hopefully with some clues regarding how to resubmit)
- Proposal goes to reviewers
- Panel reviews the reviews
 - May reject without discussion
 - Rank after discussion
- Program officer makes funding recommendations
- NSF funds/rejects

What is the Process?

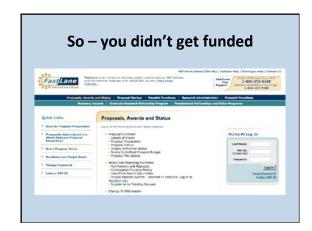
NSF Panels (USGS similar)

- · Work hard to avoid conflict of interest
- Work hard to be fair to all proposals
 We've all had proposals rejected
- Many quality proposals are not recommended
- At times the cutoff between recommended and not is very small

What is the Process?

- It is perfectly possible that a fantastic proposal might not be funded even with excellent reviews - Why?
- Proposal did not convey the awesomeness of the proposal
- · Poor fit with RFP/call/funding agency
- Others may disagree about said awesomeness

So – you didn't get funded: welcome to the club!





What do you get?

- Program officer letter
- Panel summary (very useful)
 - Panel summary attempts to summarize the reviews and "neutralize" potentially unreasonable reviews
- Reviews

What do you do with this information?

- Take a moment to develop strategies individually
- Now share with a partner
- Report back to the group

Next Steps

- Take a deep breath
- Might be good to step away from the proposal for a few days
- Address all of the issues brought up especially by the panel
- Remember the job of the panel is to create a summary that will truly help the investigators
- Big picture: is this worth pursuing?

Make sure that you....

- 1. Specifically and directly address each review critique
- 2. Substantially revise, rewrite, or remove sections that were critiqued in earlier reviews.
- 3. Updates preliminary/pilot data and interpretations.
- Incorporate new references that may have appeared since the previous submission (or were missed in the prior proposal).
- Refined/revised list of potential reviewers based on reviews (some reading between the lines required).
- 6. Create a proposal that appears noticeably stronger than the prior version.

Complete your strategic plan worksheet

- · What resources do you need to be successful?
- What are some potential funding sources for this research?
- What strategies will you apply to develop your proposal?
- If funded, what is the timeline for this research?

Other Things to Do

- Ask colleagues in the same field as you about expectations for proposals in your field
- Ask trusted colleagues to read through proposals
- Ask for copies of proposals from colleagues