Membership Balance Plan

Proposal Review Panel for Astronomical Sciences

1. Name
Proposal Review Panel for Astronomical Sciences (the Committee) #1186

2. Authority
This committee is established in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C., App. and the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §1861 et. seq.

3. Mission/Function
The Committee will advise the National Science Foundation (NSF) on the merit of proposals requesting financial support of research and research-related activities. The Committee will review proposals submitted to NSF under the purview of Division of Astronomical Sciences (AST).

The Committee will review and evaluate proposals, which may include site visits, and provide written recommendations on proposals as part of the selection process for awards. The Committee may evaluate and provide advice on the progress of awarded proposals.

4. Points of View
The subject and number of proposals to be reviewed determine the number of members attending each meeting. Members are selected on an ad hoc basis.

Primary considerations are:

- Special knowledge of the science and engineering subfields involved in the proposals to be reviewed to evaluate investigator competence and the intellectual merit and utility of the proposed activity. Within reasonable limits, reviewers' fields of specialty should be complementary within a reviewer group.
- Broader or more generalized knowledge of the science and engineering subfields involved in the proposals to be reviewed to evaluate the broader impacts of the proposed activity. Reviewers with broad expertise are required for proposals involving substantial size or complexity, broad disciplinary or multidisciplinary content, or significant national or international implications.
- Broad knowledge of the infrastructure of the science and engineering enterprise and its educational activities, to evaluate contributions to societal goals, scientific and engineering personnel, and distribution of resources to organizations and geographical areas.

Federal employee members will be designated as Regular Government Employees (RGEs). Individuals outside the Federal Government will be designated Special Government Employees (SGEs). The members will provide their own best independent judgment based on their individual expertise.

5. Other Balance Factors
To the extent practicable, other factors considered are:

- Qualified individuals reflecting small, medium, and large organizations, as well as public and private organizations
- Qualified individuals reflecting underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities
- Qualified individuals reflecting range of ages
- Qualified individuals reflecting different geographical areas

6. Candidate Identification Process
AST staff will solicit suggestions for potential members from a wide range of sources, including but not limited to: NSF management, knowledgeable NSF program staff, other Federal agencies, and proposers.

Suggestions will be reviewed and potential candidates will be identified taking into consideration professional and personal qualifications, experience, and other balance factors. The best qualified candidates for each area will be identified. The resulting top candidates will be contacted for interest and availability.

7. Subcommittee Balance
Not Applicable

8. Other
There are currently no other known factors affecting the balance of the Committee.

9. Date Prepared/Updated
This Membership Balance Plan was prepared on 4/15/2016

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