PEER REVIEW NOTES
September 2002

New Newsletter Format

The Center for Scientific Review (CSR) has streamlined its newsletter to reduce costs, save paper, and encourage regular visits to our Web site (http://www.csr.nih.gov/). The articles below include links to CSR and NIH Web pages, where you can find more detailed information. Additional news items and "hot links" for reviewers and applicants can also be found on our Web site. We hope you find this new format useful. Please send your comments to PRN@csr.nih.gov.

Study Section Reorganization Update

CSR has convened 12 of the planned 17 Study Section Boundaries (SSB) Teams. The SSB Teams recommend study section review responsibilities for each Integrated Review Group (IRG) proposed in the Phase 1 report (http://www.csr.nih.gov/events/updatephase2.htm) of the Panel on Scientific Boundaries for Review (PSBR). SSB Team recommendations are released on CSR's Web site (http://www.csr.nih.gov/PSBR/IRGComments.htm) and are open to public comment for 90 days. Key upcoming PSBR events and dates include --

- Infectious Diseases and Microbiology SSB Team recommendations will be available for comment through November 15, 2002
- The Pulmonary Sciences SSB Team will meet October 27-29, 2002.
- The Molecular Approaches to Gene Function and the Fundamental Genetics and Population Biology SSB Teams will meet jointly November 13-15, 2002

In May 2002, the Center for Scientific Review Advisory Committee approved the Hematology SSB Team's study section guidelines and recommended that CSR implement the new Hematology IRG. NIH is in the process of establishing rosters for the reorganized study sections, and we expect to post them on our Web site by November 2002.   The first meetings of the new Hematology IRG study sections will occur in June 2003.

For additional news and information about CSR's PSBR reorganization, visit the CSR Reorganization Activities Web page at http://www.csr.nih.gov/review/reorgact.asp.

Applicant Misconduct

What should a reviewer do if, in the course of reviewing an application, a section or sections appear to be plagiarized? What if a reviewer finds evidence suggesting that preliminary data presented in an application has been fabricated? NIH policy on handling potential cases of misconduct is clear (see Guidelines for Reviewers http://www.csr.nih.gov/Guidelines/revguide.htm). It is vital that reviewers do not make allegations of potential misconduct at the study section meeting or in their critiques. Such concerns must be brought to the attention of the Scientific Review Administrator (SRA) in a confidential manner, preferably before the study section meets.

What if an applicant contacts a study section member believed to have reviewed his/her recent application to inquire about a suggestion made in the summary statement? Such contacts are

inappropriate. NIH policy states that applicants must not communicate directly with any review group member about an application either before or after the review (see http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.pdf; Form 398 Instructions). All questions must be directed to the SRA in charge of the review group. Failure to observe this policy strictly creates serious breaches of confidentiality and conflicts-of-interest in the peer review process. If an applicant contacts a reviewer, the reviewer must report the incident immediately to the SRA in charge of his/her review group.

For additional information on NIH peer review policies and practices, visit the Office of Extramural Research Peer Review Policies and Issues page http://grants2.nih.gov/grants/peer/peer.htm.

CSR Review Internship Program Is Expanding

CSR's Review Internship Program, offers a training opportunity for biomedical and behavioral scientists interested in pursuing careers in science administration. The first interns started work at CSR a little over a year ago, and since then a total of six individuals have been recruited from the NIH intramural program. Participants and CSR staff have been pleased with their experiences. One intern has already been hired as a full-time SRA, and others are now pursuing permanent appointments.

In 2003, the Review Internship Program will be expanded to include researchers from outside NIH. Interns will be mentored by an experienced SRA and receive hands-on experience overseeing the peer review process. Appointments will be from 1 to 2 year(s) long, full-time, with salary commensurate with experience. We hope to select a maximum of six participants each fiscal year. There are two application dates to choose from: *November 1, 2002,* for positions starting no sooner than February 2003, and *February 1, 2003,* for positions starting in August 2003.

If you know a skilled scientist with 4 or more years of postdoctoral experience who may be interested, please encourage him/her to visit the CSR Review Internship Program Web site at http://www.csr.nih.gov/Internship/Internship.htm.

Kotchen Appointed Special Advisor on Clinical Research Review

Dr. Theodore Kotchen, Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology and Associate Dean for Clinical Research at the Medical College of Wisconsin, has been appointed Special Advisor on Clinical Research Review at CSR. He is deeply committed to helping us maintain fair and high quality reviews for clinical research applications.

Dr. Kotchen will serve as a liaison with the external clinical research communities. In this role, he will work to transmit information to clinical research communities about CSR's reorganization activities and obtain feedback regarding these changes. He will also help educate beginning clinical investigators and develop approaches for expanding the reviewer pool for patient-oriented proposals. In addition, Dr. Kotchen will examine CSR's practices and suggest new approaches to improve the review of clinical research proposals.

Please visit CSR's News Flash area at http://www.csr.nih.gov/NewsFlash/newsflash.asp for more information about Dr. Kotchen and his role as Special Advisor on Clinical Research Review.