PEER REVIEW NOTES
September 2003

Dr. Ehrenfeld to Leave CSR

On Sept. 4, Dr. Ellie Ehrenfeld announced that she will step down as Director of the Center for Scientific Review at the end of the month. She noted that CSR had completed the design phase of its reorganization, and she expressed her gratitude to all those in the NIH and extramural communities who supported this and other efforts to ensure the vitality of the NIH peer review process. Dr. Brent Stanfield, CSR Deputy Director, will become CSR's Acting Director. For additional information, go to **http://www.csr.nih.gov**.

CSR Receives a Record-Shattering Number of Applications

NIH received over 66,000 applications in fiscal year (FY) 2003—Oct. 1, 2002, through Sept. 30th, 2003. Of these applications, slightly over 43,000 have been or will be reviewed by CSR, shattering the record set for the same period last year by approximately 8,000 applications.

Technology Enhancing Review: Electronic Review Administration (eRA) Initiatives

NIH Launches New Internet Assisted Review System (IAR)

On Aug. 1, the new NIH IAR system was released for reviewers to use. It will replace the current electronic review system, offer a number of updates and new features, and be an integral part of the Commons database. Approximately 25% of CSR study sections will begin using it in the upcoming review round (Oct./Nov. 2003). The remaining study sections will begin using the new system by June 2004. Reviewers will access the IAR Web interface through the eRA Commons (see **https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons**). IAR is useful in expediting grant application reviews. The tool provides a standard process for electronically submitting critiques and initial priority scores prior to review meetings. More productive meetings result when reviewers have the opportunity to examine each others' critiques online prior to meetings and to modify their own critiques after meetings. For information on the new features (including Rich text and Greek characters) of the new IAR system, go to **http://era.nih.gov/eranews/latestpartners.cfm.** The IAR online tutorial (**http://era.nih.gov/Docs/IAR_Reviewer_Tutorial_02-13-03.pdf**) and user's guide (**http://era.nih.gov/Docs/IAR_Reviewer_User_Guide.pdf**) are great resources for learning more about this tool.

Pilot Testing Begins for Electronic Grant Submission

The first phase of the Grants.gov (formerly E-Grants) pilot began this past summer. The primary objectives are to test the ability of applicants to download, fill in and then electronically submit SF424 applications for health services projects. NIH is working with Grants.gov to produce electronic versions of the PHS 398 form, and we expect to pilot test electronic submissions of actual 398 applications in Oct./Nov. 2003.

Human Subjects Research Review Update

It is sometimes hard to know when studies involving human tissue or existing data sets require human subjects protections and when exceptions apply. To sort out the issues, consult "*Research on Human Subjects: Are you Conducting Research Using Human Subjects?"* at **http://www-cdp.ims.nci.nih.gov/policy.html**.

NIH defines children as individuals under 21 years of age. To comply with the Inclusion of Children policy,

however, all relevant age groups need to be addressed. Hence, inclusion of individuals from 18-21 does not automatically satisfy the requirement to include children. Consult the decision tree for the exemptions that apply: **http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/tree_children_hs.pdf**. You should know that when the Inclusion of Children policy was developed, ongoing longitudinal studies (Type II grants) were grandfathered (question 8: **http://grants2.nih.gov/grants/funding/children/pol_children_qa.htm**). A "5A" code then appeared on summary statements to indicate that the studies started before this policy was implemented. However, now that the policy has been in effect for more than 5 years, the exemption and the 5A code are no longer available. Investigators must therefore address the requirement to include children, even if data collection started prior to 1998. No additional recruitment of subjects would be an acceptable basis for exclusion.

Helpful decision trees related to a variety of Human Subject policies can be found at the following Web site: **http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/peer/peer.htm**.

Reorganization Update

Another Milestone: First Meetings of Reorganized Study Sections

CSR held the first study section meetings for the first Integrated Review Group (IRG) designed in the Panel on Scientific Boundaries for Review (PSBR) reorganization. In June 2003, the three new study sections of the Hematology IRG met for the first time. In Oct./Nov. 2003, study sections within the new Biology of Development and Aging; the Musculoskeletal, Oral and Skin Sciences; and the Oncological Sciences IRGs will hold their first meetings. See CSR's PSBR Implementation Timeline for more information about the launch of the reorganized IRGs and meetings of their component study sections: **http://www.csr.nih.gov/events/timeline.htm.**

Moving Forward: New Provisional Rosters and IRG Descriptions Available

CSR is proceeding with plans to implement the IRGs approved in Jan. and May 2003: Cardiovascular Sciences; Digestive Sciences; Bioengineering Sciences and Technologies; Respiratory Sciences; and Renal and Urological Sciences. The study sections within these IRGs will hold their first meetings in Feb./Mar. 2004, with application receipts beginning in Oct. 2003. Provisional rosters for these study sections currently are available via the reorganization timeline Web page: **http://www.csr.nih.gov/events/timeline.htm**. The guidelines for each IRG are also available on CSR's IRG descriptions Web page (**http://www.csr.nih.gov/review/irgdesc.htm**).

By Jan. 2004, CSR will post on its Web site the IRG descriptions and provisional rosters for the study sections within the Immunology; Endocrinology, Metabolism, Nutrition and Reproductive Sciences; and Surgical Sciences, Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering IRGs.

To keep abreast of the latest news and activities related to the reorganization, visit the CSR Reorganization Activities page at **http://www.csr.nih.gov/review/reorgact.asp**.

Musician/Scientist Thrives at CSR—Meet Our Staff

As a classical pianist, Dr. Carl Banner has performed in Carnegie Hall and soloed with the St. Louis Symphony. Unlike his musical peers, he holds a Ph.D. in cellular and developmental biology from Harvard and works as a Scientific Review Administrator at CSR, where he has found a unique way to harmonize his two careers. Read the first of a new series of CSR staff stories at **http://www.csr.nih.gov/staff_stories/staffstories.asp**.

Please send your questions or comments to PRN@csr.nih.gov