



June 30, 2010

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National Institutes of Health
RKL2 - Two Rockledge Center, 3030
6701 Rockledge Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892-7776

Dear Toni,

I am writing on behalf of the Biophysical Society's 9,000 members to express concern over the new policy prohibiting the submission of most supplementary material after the initial grant application is submitted. We are concerned that while this new policy may streamline the administrative process, it does not make sense to deny reviewers important information that is germane to the decision they have to make. This is especially of concern given that applicants can submit only one revised application and funding is expected to be extremely tight for the foreseeable future; applicants should be allowed to make their best case and reviewers should have the most up-to-date information.

Often four months or more pass between application submission and review. With this lengthy delay, the possibility that a significant advance might take place in the intervening period is not negligible.

To the concern that supplemental materials create too great a burden on reviewers we respond that the burden of reading a supplement that is restricted to two pages is small compared to reading the application, especially the new and shorter ones. In most cases any reasonable reviewer can glance at this supplement to see if it really addresses a concern that has arisen in the review. If it is tangential or irrelevant to the main concerns, it requires little time for further consideration. On the other hand, a reviewer would be aided by seeing some important advance, or notification that a significant paper is now in press (in the case that the acceptance occurs within thirty days of the review).

The NIH wants to ensure that reviewers make the best decisions based upon the science. Allowing short supplements that may facilitate this goal far outweighs any additional burden on reviewers or the review process. I would be happy to discuss further with you the Society's concerns on this matter.

Sincerely,

Peter Moore
President

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