

Working Group on Anonymising Proposal Review

Context

STScI places high value on the equity and integrity of the proposal review process. Recently, STScI has adjusted the proposal format to partly obscure the identities of the Principal Investigator and the proposing team as a means of lessening the opportunity for unconscious bias on the part of the reviewer. Face-to-face proposal reviews, however, still include extensive discussion of proposal personnel; the final results from HST proposal reviews continue to show that proposals led by female PIs have a lower success rate than those led by male PIs. This may indicate the continued presence of unconscious bias.

Based on advice from an external consultant, the STScI Director has decided to move to fully anonymous proposal reviews where the proposers are not identifiable to the reviewers.

Charge

The working group is charged with developing an implementation plan for anonymous proposal reviews. The goal is to start implementing the plan with the Cycle 26 HST Δ TAC process. The WGAPR should consider the broad implications of adopting a fully-anonymous proposal review system.

The working group will

- Identify the appropriate process for rendering proposals anonymous, including modifications to the current proposal format
- Review and, as necessary, modify the current proposal evaluation criteria and grading system
- Engage in dialogue with the community to solicit input and identify, and mitigate, concerns
- Provide instructions and guidelines to the community for writing proposals
- Provide instructions and guidelines to the reviewers for reviewing proposals

The working group will be coordinated by the STScI Science Mission office. The WGAPR will generally meet via telecoms or videoconference, but will hold at least one face to face meeting at STScI. The WGAPR will provide a report to the Director and will brief the Space Telescope Users Committee prior to April 1 2018.

Membership

Chair: Louis Strolger (STScI)

Members: Peter Garnavich (Notre Dame), Stefanie Johnson (Leeds Business School, U. Colorado, Boulder), Mercedes Lopez-Morales (CfA – STUC), Andrea Prestwich (CfA), Christina Richey (JPL), Paule Sonnentrucker (STScI), Michael Strauss (Princeton), Brian Williams (STScI)

Ex officio: Tom Brown, Neill Reid (STScI)