

Panel on Community Reactions

Rupali Chandar (Toledo)
Christina Richey (JPL)
Brian Williams (GSFC)

STScI solicited feedback from the community in several ways:

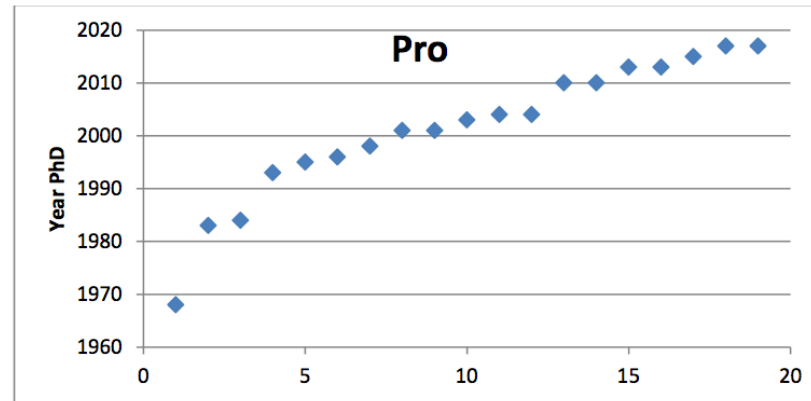
- Informal discussions by members of the WGAPR with colleagues**
- A series of roundtable discussions at STScI, hosted by Lou Strolger and Brian Williams, for STScI and JHU astronomers to give feedback**
- An email blast to the HST community of users, with the following text:**

“NASA's Great Observatories are open to science proposals from anyone in the worldwide astronomical community. Maintaining equity and a level playing field for access is a high priority for the Director and staff at STScI. In support of that goal, a number of changes have been made to the format of HST proposals. Following discussion with the Space Telescope Users Committee, the Director has established a Working Group to explore options for further anonymizing the proposal format and developing appropriate guidelines for proposers and reviewers. The rationale behind this approach is summarized in a FAQ linked from these pages, which also provide links to other associated materials.

At this juncture we are soliciting input from the community. Please send comments and feedback to hstanon@stsci.edu."

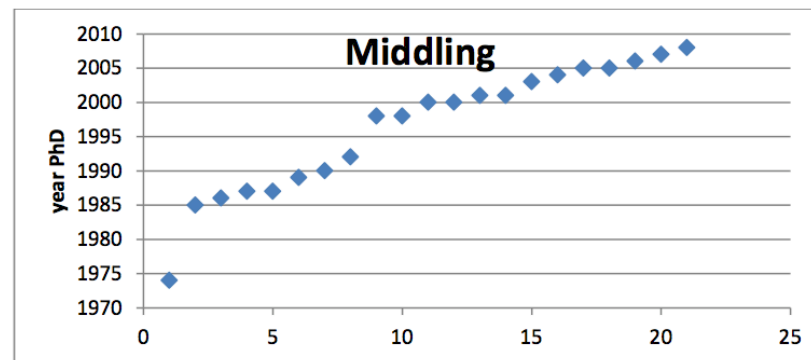
March 7, 2018

- ▶ In February we solicited feedback from the community. Received approx. 60 responses in the requested timeframe.
- ▶ 19 responses in favor, 16 “middling”, and 26 opposed.
- ▶ Notable seniority and gender differences in responses.



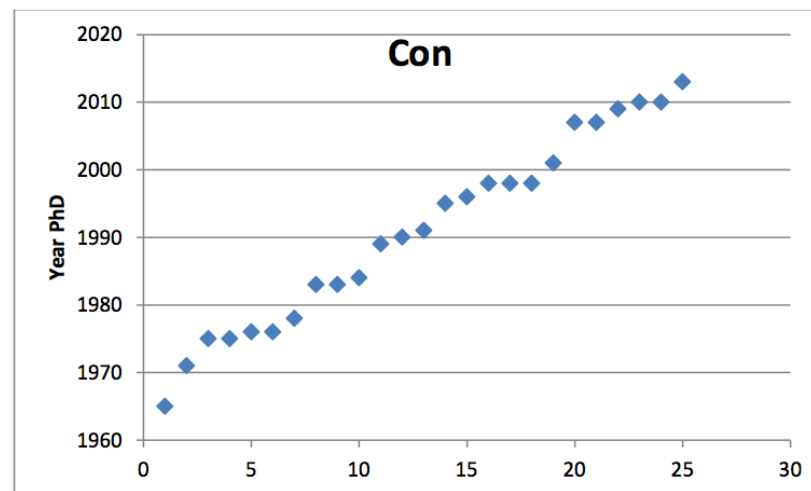
11 M 8 F

**Mean ~ 2001
Ph.D. year**



13 M 3 F

**Mean ~ 1995
Ph.D. year**



22 M 4 F

**Mean ~ 1990
Ph.D. year**

Primary Concerns from the Community

- The process wouldn't account for unique technical expertise of teams needed for successful HST work
 - While the team hasn't been a criteria in the evaluation process for HST, the community was extremely concerned the panel could no longer evaluate the team
- The proposer wouldn't be sure how to write for an anonymized process
 - An example would be how to refer to one's own unique datasets or tools that were required for proposal success
- The process wouldn't be implemented in a uniform fashion
 - How conflicts of interest were to be mitigated in the review was not clear
- Changes to the process wouldn't actually mitigate bias
- The community needed time to adapt to the changes

WG recommendations based on community feedback

- **Move towards anonymized proposals while ensuring biases aren't added back in to process**
 1. **Main scientific proposal written completely anonymously**
 2. **Team expertise & background section is the exception and is separate from main proposal**
 3. **The WG created a template for the community to utilize**
- **Ensure the panel reviewed in a fair consistent manner**
 1. **Flag proposals where no noticeable attempt for anonymizing was made**
 2. **Team expertise & background section reviewed last as a check: not as a part of the main scientific evaluation criteria**
 3. **Use Levelers whose responsibility is to keep biases in check**
- **Continue monitoring the progress and impact of biases within the process**