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SCIENCE INSTITUTE

EXPANDING THE FRONTIERS OF SPACE ASTRONOMY

The Cycle 28 HST TAC Review

Lou Strolger, Science Mission Office
STScI Town Hall, AAS 236th meeting

June 2, 2020



Changes to the HST Review Process

Timeline for Cycle 28 TAC and Panel Reviews		
December 2, 2019	Release of the C28 Call for Proposals	Moved earlier from past cycles accommodating JWST C1 process
March 6, 2020	C28 proposal deadline	Allowed +2 weeks for justified requests due to COVID-19
March 25, 2020	Proposals distributed to reviewers	Worldwide travel restrictions necessitated a remote/virtual review
April 24, 2020	Preliminary grades from panelist; Final grades from external reviewers	
May 11 - 15, 2020	in-person virtual TAC and panel reviews	

Timeline changes

- Accommodate expected timeline for JWST Cycle 1
- Addressing COVID-19 impact throughout the community

Programmatic changes to the review

- External review for small proposals <15 orbits.
- Virtual TAC review
- Continue with dual-anonymous review process



The HST Virtual TAC Review

Planned agenda similar to previous in-person reviews.

- 2 ½ days for the panel reviews, for small (15 - 34 orbits) and medium (35 - 74 orbits) GO proposals, and regular archival and theory proposals.
- 2 ½ days for the TAC review of large (>75 orbits) and legacy GO proposals, and legacy archival and theory proposals.

Use of communication tools made the virtual review possible

- BlueJeans A/V with virtual rooms for each panel
- Slack messaging with separate channels for coordination and management
- Spirit (STScI) tool for proposal access and grading



The HST Virtual TAC Review

Challenges with virtual review

- Time
 - meetings ran from 10a-4p EDT to accommodate panelist around the globe.
 - discussion necessarily a bit slower
 - needed to balance input and discussion with the 2 ½ day agenda
- Connectivity dropouts— had fallback connection plans, including phone-in options.

We're doing an internal 'lessons learned' and surveying panelists for feedback. Already note a few improvements: allowing more meeting time, clarifying instructions, etc.

Virtual review proceeded largely without issue, thanks in large part to the maintained attention of the reviewers and their patience with minor issues.



The Dual-Anonymous Review

As with the last two cycles, we run a dual-anonymous review in which the identities of the proposers are not known throughout the scientific ranking, as a way of mitigating known and unknown biases

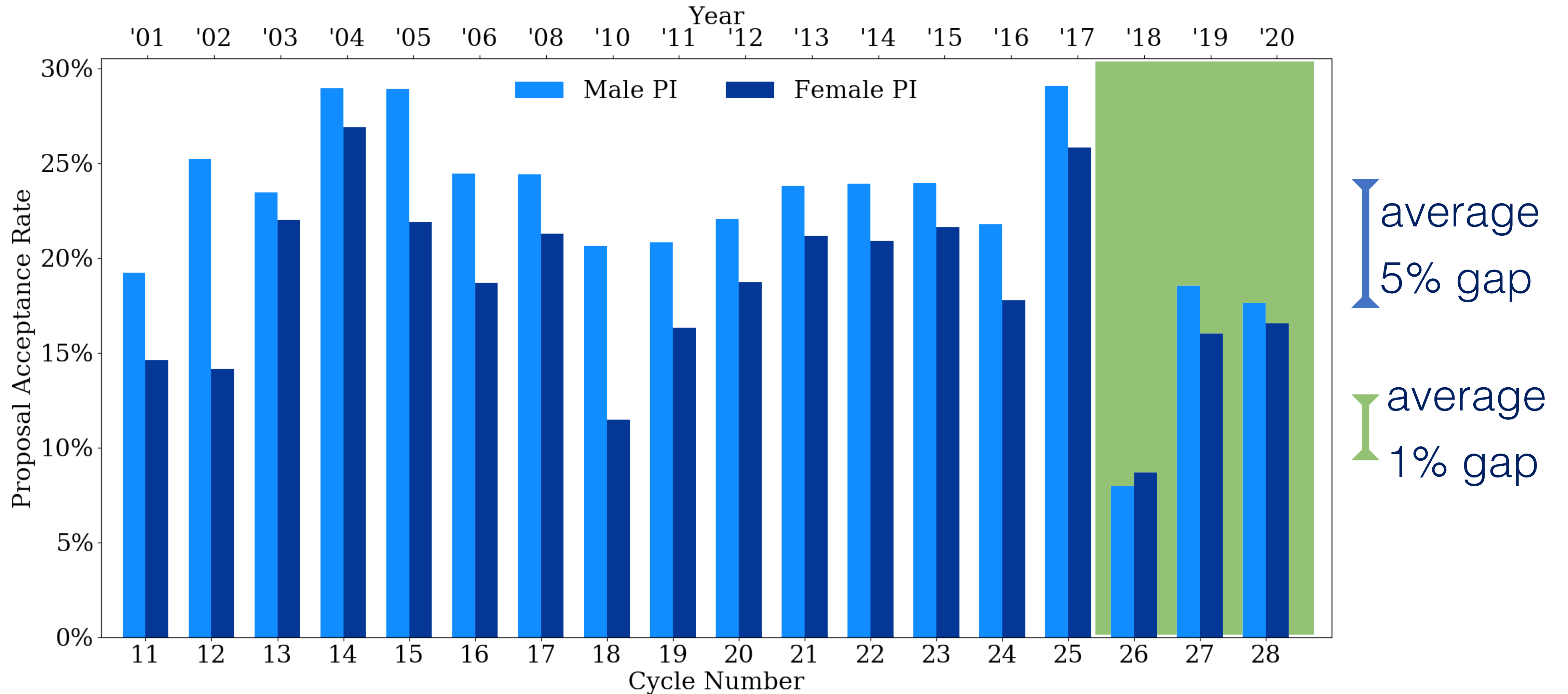
Proposers instructed to craft their proposals in accordance with guidelines to anonymize their submissions without identifying information. Most proposals compliant (one proposal removed as non-compliant).

Team expertise is evaluated after the scientific ranking

Initial feedback from TAC panelists on anonymous format was positive (again).



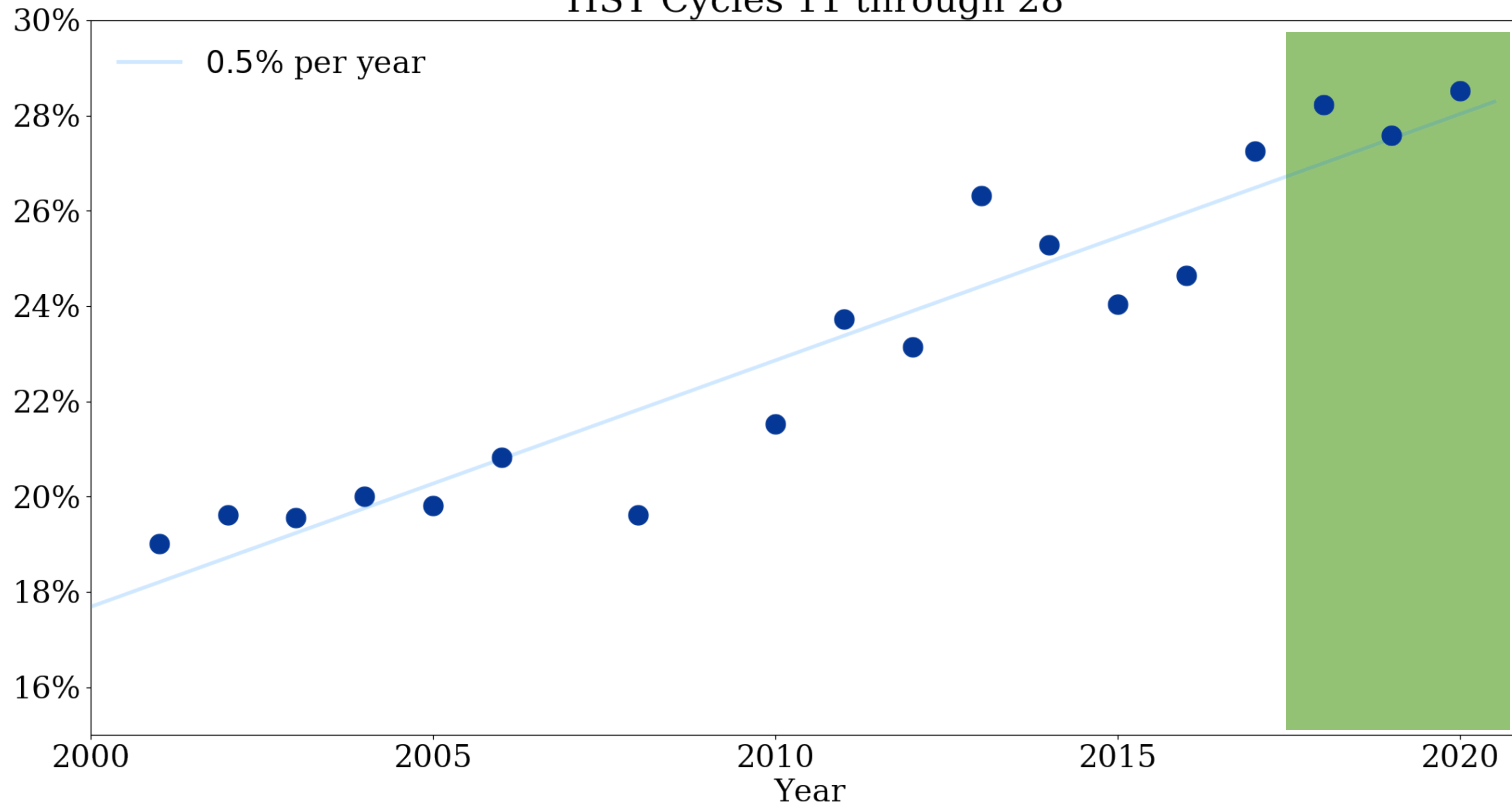
Impact of the Dual-Anonymous Review: Decreasing the Gap in Gender Bias





Impact of the Dual-Anonymous Review: Enticing New Proposers

Fraction of proposals submitted by female PIs
HST Cycles 11 through 28



Number of PIs awarded programs for their first time

Cycle 28	55
Cycle 27	51
Cycle 26	6
Cycle 25	21
Cycle 24	5



Looking forward to JWST Cycle 1

Timeline for Cycle 1 TAC and Panel Reviews	
January 23, 2020	Re-release of the C1 Call for Proposals
May 1, 2020 TBD	C1 proposal deadline
Early 2021	Virtual TAC and review panels

Timeline changes

- Proposal deadline TBD. Exploring options for late fall.
- Anticipate providing further update on schedule in mid-to-late July.
- Expect to provide community at least (8) weeks notice of the revised proposal deadline.

Anticipated programmatic changes to the review

- Survey of JWST panelists shows strong preference for a virtual TAC review, given travel concerns
- Continue with dual-anonymous review process