

New Investigator Program Award Task Force Report
AACP Council of Sections

Participants:

Chair: Sudip Das (Butler)

AACP Staff: Ken Miller (AACP)

Biol. Sci. Representative: Dan Brazeau (U of Buffalo)

Chemistry Representative: John Williamson (Ole Miss)

Pharmaceutics Representative: Nita Pandit (Drake)

Pharmacy Practice Representative: Kimberly Daugherty (Sullivan)

SAdS Representative: Michelle Chui (U of Wisconsin)

Agenda:

- Do we need to increase the amount of the award? If yes, how?
- Review the award criteria.
- Critiques should be sent to all applicants.
- How can we keep the NIP awardees involved in the AACP annual meetings?

Discussion and Action Items:

- A teleconference was held on November 03, 2008 to review the New Investigator Program awards.
- During the July 2008 COS meeting, a question was raised as to whether we could increase the amount of the award, since \$ 10,000 is considered significantly low, especially for pharmaceutical sciences starter grants. Similar starter grants offered by PhRMA and AAPS are in the range of \$ 25,000. Historically, the NIP grants originated in the late 80's with funds from the Burroughs Wellcome Foundation. The situation has evolved to where Dr. Bachman, on behalf of the AFPE, now approaches the pharmaceutical companies (most often the marketing departments of the respective companies) to obtain the funding. From a fundraising perspective, it might be helpful for AFPE to raise funds from pharmaceutical and biotech companies if a few of the grants could be disease state focused, particularly disease states the funding agencies are interested in. It was noted by the group that the grants could be linked to disease states with an appropriate mechanism in the future.
- The total amount AFPE provides to AACP for the NIP award is \$ 150,000 and it is less likely that the amount could be increased significantly beyond \$ 10,000 per grant unless the number of grants could be decreased. However, it was noted that since these awards are starter grants, it is not the amount of money but the recognition by peers in the academy which is emphasized by the NIP awards. The consensus was to explore the possibilities for

- increasing the amount of funds by fundraising but not reduce the number or the amount of the award.
- **ACTION:** No changes to the number or the amount of the grant will be made at this time.
 - It was suggested that NIP awardees should be encouraged to attend the annual meeting of the AACP. It was suggested that we offer complimentary registration to NIP awardees.
 - Regarding the eligibility criteria for grant applicants, clarification of “other types of funding (grants and contracts)” was offered by Dr. Miller. It was decided that investigators holding federal agency grants would not be eligible. If someone receives a NIH or other federal grant while the NIP grant is being reviewed, it is the investigator’s responsibility to withdraw his/her NIP application. Investigators with start-up funding from their university will continue to be eligible for the NIP grants. It will be the responsibility of AACP to check eligibility; the responsibility does not totally fall on the reviewers. It was suggested that the NIP grants be designated as a starter grant. This will allow the grantee to submit similar grant applications for future bigger grants.
 - **ACTION:** Dr. Miller will make appropriate changes in the general program overview.
 - In terms of the process of awarding the grants, Dr. Miller explained how the grants are allocated to each section; it depends on the ratio of the number of total applications received to the applications received for each section.
 - No critique was sent to a number of applicants either because there was no comment or somehow the comments were not sent. The participants of this telecon who also participated in the NIP review process mentioned that they sent the reviewers’ comments.
 - **ACTION:** Dr. Miller will investigate why the comments were not sent to some applicants.
 - Although many NIP awardees who usually do not normally attend the AACP meetings (except for SAdS and Pharmacy Practice), probably to attend their discipline specific meetings such as AAPS. It is understood that conference attendance funds are limited for all and everyone wishes to maximize professional gain from the monies available to them. If we could offer a complimentary registration (or a discount) and the respective Deans could offer additional support, perhaps all NIP awardees could attend the annual AACP meeting.
 - **ACTION:** We need to bring this issue to the attention of Dr. Lucinda Maine and BOD.
 - There should be some documentation on how the grants are evaluated. Some sections discuss the process of evaluation in their annual business meetings while others do not.
 - **ACTION:** Dr. Miller will review the evaluation criteria and e-mail his findings to this group.

Submitted by: Sudip Das