

NPRB Science Panel Members and Independent Technical Reviewers Conflict-of-Interest and Confidentiality Requirements

Conflict of Interest

The success of the North Pacific Research Board (Board) in performing its functions depends on the effectiveness and integrity of its decision-making processes. If Board decisions are tainted by conflicting interests, its integrity is severely compromised. The Board must earn the confidence of the scientific community, of the Congress, and of the general public in the integrity, effectiveness, and evenhandedness of its decision-making processes. It will not do so if these processes are seen to be compromised by conflicts of interests. Science Panel members and independent technical reviewers should consider potential conflict situations that may arise in their review of research proposals and in other activities related to the Board. The Board decided in October 2002 that an individual may serve on the Science Panel despite a personal conflict, but must recuse him/herself from voting under three broad affiliations characterized below. The member may remain in the meeting for discussion purposes for all affiliations except item 2, bullet 4, wherein the member must leave the room during discussions and voting. Independent technical reviewers should recuse themselves from evaluating proposals if any of the following circumstances apply.

1. Affiliation with an Applicant Institution

- Current employment at the applicant institution or agency within the specific department of the applicant, or being considered for employment in that department
- Ownership of the institution's securities or other evidences of debt
- Current membership on a visiting committee or similar body that directly relates to the proposal.
- Current enrollment as a student at a department or school submitting a proposal if the proposed project will be of direct professional or financial benefit
- Received and retained an honorarium or award related to work or activities in the specific department of the applicant within the last 12 months

2. Affiliation with an Investigator, Project Director, or Other Person with Personal Interest in the Proposal

- Known family or marriage relationship, if relationship is with a principal investigator, collaborator (if curriculum vitae is included in proposal) or project director
- Business or professional partnership
- Past or present association as major thesis/dissertation advisor or thesis/dissertation student to one of the principal investigators
- Science Panel member is a principal investigator on a proposal or is listed as a collaborator and a curriculum vitae is included in the proposal package (for this case only, the panel member must leave the room during discussion and voting on that particular proposal)
- Technical reviewers who have submitted a proposal may be called on to review other proposals, but only if there is a shortage of available reviewers.

3. Other Affiliations or Relationships

- Interests of the following persons must be treated as if they were that of the Science Panel member or technical reviewer: any affiliation or relationship of member's spouse or minor child or sibling, of a relative living in the immediate household or of anyone who is legally a partner of the member, that would be covered by the affiliations listed above
- Other relationship, such as a very close personal friendship or open antagonism that might tend to affect a member's judgment or be seen as doing so by a reasonable person familiar with the relationship

Confidentiality of Documents and Restriction on Contact

Unfunded proposals will remain proprietary and confidential, though the title, author, requested funding amount, performance period, and proposal summary page will be made available to the public. Science Panel members will be given access to the full text of proposals and associated technical reviews, but cannot use that information for personal benefit or make it available for the personal benefit of any other individual or organization. Technical reviewers must follow the same requirements, but will not be given access to other reviews. Proposals and materials from unfunded proposals must not be copied, quoted or otherwise disclosed outside official Science Panel meetings, or for non-NPRB related purposes. Panel members and reviewers must not retain copies of proposals in full or part, after completing the review process. They must not contact the originators of proposals under review concerning any aspect of the contents, without NPRB approval.