L. STROLGER

# CYCLE 26 ANONYMOUS PROPOSAL REVIEWS

# INTRODUCTION



Reid, I. N. 2014, PASP, 126, 923
N. Reid, presentations to STUC
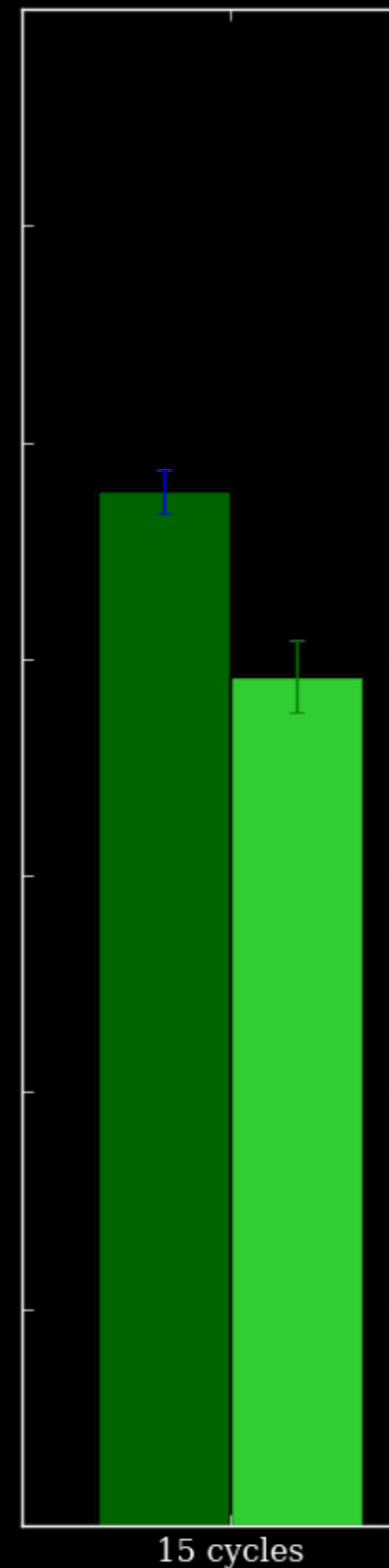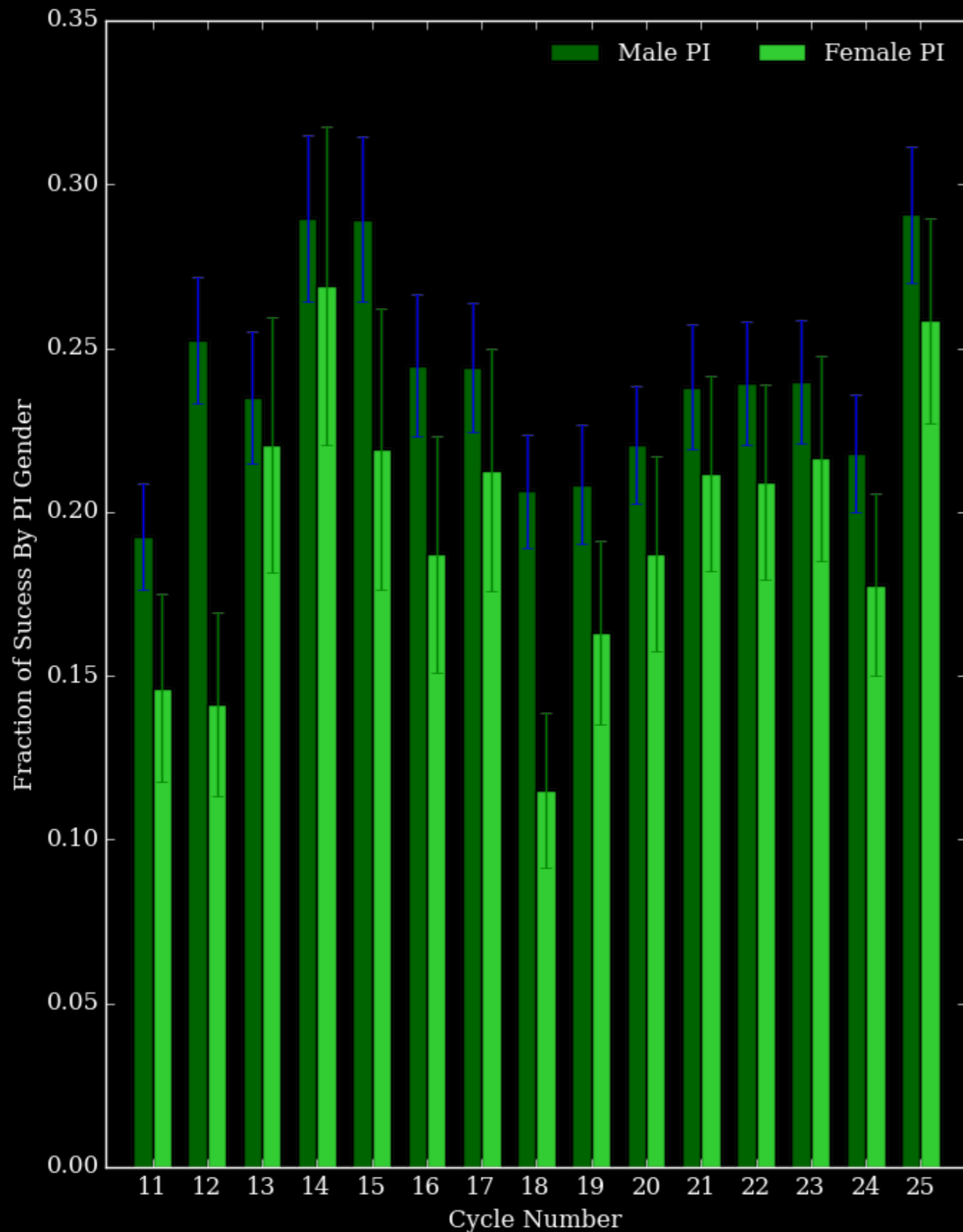
- ▸ Removed PI names from front-page material in Cycle 22

- ▸ Started listing all investigators alphabetically in Cycle 23

- ▸ S. Johnson's review of Cycles 24 & 25 TAC interestingly found no systematic biases in preliminary grading rounds, and panel conversations focused on qualifications of the team.

Based on the available literature, feedback from the community, and the discussions of the Working Group, it is our recommendation that the Institute move toward a dual-anonymous proposal process beginning with Cycle 26 HST in late 2018. We understand that a fully anonymous process requires active participation from community, and that there is notable apprehension as to what the effect of anonymizing will do to the scientific productivity of the observatory. We therefore recommend a phased approach, in which most of review is done anonymously with a sensibility check done at the very end of the review.

Lou Strolger (STScI, Chair), Peter Garnavich (U. Notre Dame), Stefanie Johnson (U. Colorado), Mercedes Lopez-Morales (CfA, STUC), Andrea Prestwich (CfA/Chandra), Christina Richey (JPL), Paule Sonnentrucker (STScI), Michael Strauss (Princeton U.), and Brian J. Williams (STScI)
* Tom Brown and Neill Reid (STScI; Ex-officio)

- Proposers will craft their PDF submissions to be anonymous in accordance with proposer guidelines.

    - Exclude names or affiliations of the proposing team in the PDF submission (incl. figures and personal websites).

    - Cite all references in the 3rd person (incl. references to data and software).

    - Make reasonable effort to anonymize their submissions.

- Proposers will be required to submit a Team Expertise and Background section with their Phase I submission. This section will not be anonymous, and will be used in a final check.

- Proposers will no longer be required to submit detailed Management Plans for Large, Treasury, or Archival programs at Phase I. These should be required in budget proposals.

‣ **<u>Consider proposals solely on the scientific merit of what's proposed</u>**<u>.</u> Follow the evaluation criteria we have provided you.

‣ Do not spend any time attempting to identify the PI or the team.

‣ In the panel discussions leading to the scientific ranking, do not make guesses on identities, insinuate the likely identities, or instigate discussion on their past work— there will be an appropriate time for this later.

‣ Language is key— utilize the appropriately neutral pronouns (e.g.,"what they propose", or "the team has evaluated data from a C23 program").

‣ Please identify proposals that are not compliant with the anonymizing guidelines.

‣ Proposals that have egregiously violated these rules should have already been brought to the attention of the SPG and flagged for disqualification prior to the meeting.

‣ Less serious cases (a stray "we" or "our") should be also be pointed out. Panelists should attempt to ignore these less flagrant errors whenever possible, and keep focused on the scientific merits.

‣ Cases that are too difficult to ignore (levelers could be important in making that decision), or not sufficiently anonymized, should be commented on in the recommendations to the Director, and may be disqualified.

‣ Panelists should provide specific feedback in their comments to proposers if a proposal was not sufficiently made anonymous.

▸ In someways conflicts are somewhat easier— no need for "major" and "minor" categories. When a person is conflicted, they leave the room.

▸ We will rely more on self-identified conflicts (i.e., interpersonal, close collaborators, competitors and competing proposals). We will continue to track collaborative/competitive conflicts, etc. and may declare some conflicts in advance.

▸ As a panelist, if you strongly suspect you have a conflict with a given proposal, **you are conflicted**. However, keep in mind that anonymizing process will make it very tough to know for certain who the proposers are.

▸ HST time should be openly available to any scientists who presents a highly compelling scientific case. However that time is a highly valued resource that must be used responsibly.

▸ After the scientific ranking, the panel will then review the credentials of the teams on only the proposals they recommend (above their orbit-allocation line).

▸ Panels will be given the lists of proposal investigators, alphabetized and the Team Expertise and Background sections. The panel should break for 20+ mins. to review the materials.

▸ Panelists should raise specific proposals for discussion. If there are clear, compelling deficiencies in the expertise required to see through the goals of the proposal, panel must decide by consensus to flag the submission for disqualification, and provide a detailed justification in their comments to the Director.

▸ The criteria for sufficient expertise is left to the panels in order to evaluate cases as necessary (e.g., particularly difficult datasets, difficult analyses, or programs of exceptionally high risk).

▸ General inexperience with HST data should not, in itself, be a disqualifier. Nor should the failure to publish past datasets, unless there's an extraordinary issue with the team's publication history.

▸ **Proposals can only be eliminated in this final review. It will not be used to re-evaluate or upgrade programs below the nominal allocation line.**

▸ If a panel should chose to essentially disqualify a proposal after the scientific ranking, that panel effectively loses those orbits.

▸ Comments to the proposers should be based on scientific discussion, i.e., the discussion leading to the scientific ranking. It should not include comments on the team or their expertise.

## THE ROLE OF LEVELERS

▸ Levelers are present to keep the panel discussions focused on scientific merit. Unlike the chairs, they are not listening for issues pertaining to the science, rather they are focused on the discussion itself.

▸ If the discussion veers to comments on the proposing team, their past work, their validity, or their identities, the leveler's job is to refocus that discussion.

▸ They have the authority to stop the discussion on a proposal.

▸ If, in the deliberation of a given proposal, an investigator's self-revealed identity becomes impossible to ignore, and that identity has a clear impact on the discussion, the proposal should be flagged for disqualification. The levelers may bring this to the attention of the panel if they feel this threshold has been crossed.