

# NIGMS Feedback Loop

*A catalyst for interaction with the scientific community*



## IN THIS ISSUE

July 8, 2008

### [Director's Message](#)

#### [Advisory Council Concept Clearances](#)

- [Administrative Supplements for Collaborative Science](#)
- [Research on Causal Factors and Interventions that Promote and Support the Careers of Women in Science and Engineering](#)
- [Short Courses on Mathematical, Statistical, and Computational Tools for Studying Biological Systems](#)

#### [Funding Opportunities](#)

- [Models of Infectious Disease Agent Study \(U01, U24\)](#)
- [National Centers for Systems Biology \(P50\)](#)
- [Administrative Supplements for Functional Studies Based on Results Obtained in the Protein Structure Initiative](#)
- [Reannouncing EUREKA \(R01\)](#)
- [Soliciting Input on Current Needs in Emergency Medicine Research](#)

#### [NIGMS-Sponsored Events](#)

- [Bridges to the Doctorate Program Technical Assistance Workshop](#)
- [Frontiers in Cell Migration: From Mechanism to Disease](#)
- [Quantitative and Systems Pharmacology Workshop](#)
- [SACNAS Conference](#)
- [ABRCMS](#)
- [6th Functional Genomics of Critical Illness and Injury Symposium](#)

#### [Research Administration Notes](#)

- [Appendices on CDs](#)
- [Transition to Electronic Submission](#)
- [Citing Research Articles](#)
- [NIH Reviewer Payment](#)
- [New Security Policy for Reviewing Grant Applications](#)

## Resources

- [Knockout Mice Available Without IP Restriction](#)
- [New Online Resource for \*E. Coli\*](#)
- [Protecting Human Research Participants](#)
- [Updates to CRISP](#)
- [Watch NIH Events Online](#)
- [NIGMS RSS Feeds](#)

## Job Announcement

- [Genetics Medical Officer](#)

The *NIGMS Feedback Loop* e-mail newsletter alerts researchers to NIGMS [funding opportunities](#), trends, and plans. NIGMS grantees and recent applicants are automatically subscribed; we encourage other interested individuals to subscribe themselves. To subscribe, change your subscription options, or unsubscribe, visit the *NIGMS Feedback Loop* [subscription page](#) on the NIH LISTSERV Web site.

What information would you like to see in future issues? Send your ideas to *NIGMS Feedback Loop* coordinator James Deatherage (301-594-0828, [deatherj@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:deatherj@nigms.nih.gov)).

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## Director's Message

I would like to use my Director's message to bring you up to date on the NIH budget and progress on "Enhancing Peer Review."

### ***Supplemental NIH Funding for Fiscal Year 2008***

On June 30, the President signed a supplemental appropriations bill with \$337.5 million in additional funding for science agencies, including \$150 million for NIH. Most of these funds will be distributed to the institutes and centers, and the NIGMS share is approximately \$10 million. The additional funds will enable us to make a number of awards for highly scored R01 applications, including those from new investigators, before the end of this fiscal year.

### ***Enhancing Peer Review***

As I noted in the [last issue of the \*Feedback Loop\*](#), NIH has been actively involved over the past year in an examination directed toward enhancing our peer review system. Since the [draft recommendations report](#) was released in late February, NIH has developed draft implementation plans and solicited input from various groups, including scientific societies, a selection of current study section chairs, NIH staff, and the

scientific community at large. Many of the proposed actions were refined in response to this input. The [recommended actions](#) were presented to the Advisory Committee to the Director, NIH, on June 6.

Some of the key recommendations are to:

1. Allow reviewers to spread their 12-session commitment over 4-6 years.
2. Increase the expectation that certain classes of NIH grantees will serve on study sections if asked.
3. Allow reviewers who serve at 18 or more full study section meetings to apply for an administrative supplement of up to \$250,000 in total costs to compensate for the time and effort related to their outstanding and sustained service, and permit such reviewers to request that they be considered for MERIT/Javits awards on a competitive basis.
4. Modify the rating system to include separate scores for specific review criteria including impact, investigator(s), innovation/originality, project plan/feasibility, and environment.
5. Restructure the summary statement to align with the explicit rating criteria.
6. Shorten and restructure applications, with 12 pages allowed for R01 applications and other mechanisms scaled appropriately.
7. Cluster review of applications from early stage investigators and clinical research applications within study section meetings.
8. Continue to fund at least a target number of new and early stage investigators.
9. Continue to support potentially transformative research through the NIH Director's Pioneer, NIH Director's New Innovator, and EUREKA awards, as well as through new transformative R01 awards.
10. Establish policies to carefully rebalance success rates among A0, A1, and A2 applications to increase system efficiency.

Two key possible actions, considering all applications as "new" and requiring at least 20% effort from all principal investigators, will not be taken due to substantial concerns expressed by the scientific community regarding potential unintended consequences.

Detailed implementation plans are now under development. Some of the actions should be relatively straightforward to implement whereas others will be more complex. It is anticipated that full implementation will take approximately 18 months.

### ***Progress Toward an Appropriation for Fiscal Year 2009***

Congress has initiated its work on the NIH budget for 2009. The Senate Appropriations Committee passed a bill that includes a 3.5% increase over the Fiscal Year 2008 enacted level for NIH, with approximately 2.9% increases for NIGMS and most other institutes and centers. The House Appropriations Committee has begun its deliberations on their version of the bill, but it has not been voted on at this time.

As always, I welcome your questions and comments.

Best,

Jeremy M. Berg  
Director  
National Institute of General Medical Sciences  
[bergj@mail.nih.gov](mailto:bergj@mail.nih.gov)

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## **Advisory Council Concept Clearances**

### ***Administrative Supplements for Collaborative Science***

Collaborations between investigators who employ complementary intellectual and technical approaches can lead to novel insights into challenging biomedical problems. The Council supported a new program to provide NIGMS-funded researchers with administrative supplements of up to \$135,000 in direct costs to form new collaborations. We expect to publish a notice detailing this program in July 2008, with the first deadline for letters of intent in November 2008 and applications in December 2008. For more information, contact Program Directors [Susan Haynes](#) or [Marion Zatz](#) at 301-594-0943.

### ***Research on Causal Factors and Interventions that Promote and Support the Careers of Women in Science and Engineering***

The Council approved plans to issue a request for R01 applications to develop the evidence base on the effectiveness of programs that advance the careers of women in science and engineering and to promote improved understanding of the possible factors explaining the current career patterns of men and women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. We expect to publish the announcement in July 2008 with an application deadline in October 2008. Address questions to Program Director Juliana Blome at 301-594-2762 or [blomeju@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:blomeju@nigms.nih.gov).

### ***Short Courses on Mathematical, Statistical, and Computational Tools for Studying Biological Systems***

The Council approved renewal of an announcement to support short courses and workshops to cross-train students and investigators in the utilization of mathematical, statistical, and computational approaches in their biological systems research. Training may introduce biologists to quantitative approaches and/or acquaint non-biologists with biological research. The new announcement, similar to the previous one (see [PA-98-083](#)), should appear this summer. For details, contact Program Director Matthew Portnoy at 301-594-0943 or [mportnoy@mail.nih.gov](mailto:mportnoy@mail.nih.gov).

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## Funding Opportunities

### ***Models of Infectious Disease Agent Study (U01, U24)***

[MIDAS](#) was launched in November 2004 to stimulate the development of useful computational and mathematical models for understanding infectious disease dynamics and to provide expert consultation to policymakers. NIGMS has recently released two requests for information—one for competing and new MIDAS research projects ([RFA-GM-09-001](#)) and one for a new MIDAS information resource center ([RFA-GM-09-002](#)). Note that the receipt date has changed to July 17, 2008 (see [NOT-GM-08-128](#)). A request for applications for Centers of Excellence will be released shortly.

### ***National Centers for Systems Biology (P50)***

NIGMS invites applications for [National Centers for Systems Biology](#) that promote institutional development of pioneering research, research training, and outreach programs focused on systems-level inquiries of biomedical questions within the NIGMS mission (see [RFA-GM-09-009](#)). Submit letters of intent by September 24, 2008, and applications by October 24, 2008. We expect to fund up to two centers totaling \$7 million per year. For more information, contact Program Director Jerry Li at 301-594-0828 or [lij@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:lij@nigms.nih.gov).

### ***Administrative Supplements for Functional Studies Based on Results Obtained in the Protein Structure Initiative***

Investigators with NIGMS grants or with peer-reviewed grants from a PSI research center may request administrative supplements for functional protein studies (see [NOT-GM-08-123](#)). Investigators should read the [complete announcement](#) and, after establishing the feasibility of collaborating with a PSI center, discuss the possibilities of such funding with Program Directors Charles Edmonds (301-594-0828, [edmondsc@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:edmondsc@nigms.nih.gov)) or Ward Smith (301-443-9375, [smithwar@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:smithwar@nigms.nih.gov)).

### ***Reannouncing EUREKA (R01)***

NIGMS plans to reissue the EUREKA initiative in Fiscal Year 2009 to support exceptionally innovative and potentially very-high impact research. The funding opportunity announcement, similar to the previous one (see [RFA-GM-08-002](#)), should appear in the [NIH Guide](#) this summer with a fall submission deadline. For more information, see the EUREKA [FAQs](#), or contact Program Directors Ravi Basavappa (301-594-0828, [basavapr@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:basavapr@nigms.nih.gov)) or Laurie Tompkins (301-594-0943, [tompkinL@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:tompkinL@nigms.nih.gov)).

### ***Soliciting Input on Current Needs in Emergency Medicine Research***

In response to the 2006 Institute of Medicine report on U.S. emergency medicine, NIH is planning to enhance biomedical research and research training in this important discipline. If you would like to offer comments, suggestions, or insights on general topics surrounding emergency medicine and more specific areas related to this field, please respond to the request for information (see [NOT-NS-08-021](#)) by August 8, 2008. Address questions to Program Director Scott Somers at 301-594-3827 or [somerss@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:somerss@nigms.nih.gov).

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## **NIGMS-Sponsored Events**

### ***Bridges to the Doctorate Program Technical Assistance Workshop***

To inform applicants of changes to the Bridges to the Doctorate Program (see [PAR-07-410](#)) and offer guidance on submitting applications for September 2008 and January 2009 submission dates, we are offering an all-day technical assistance workshop on July 25, 2008, on the NIH Bethesda campus. Contact Program Directors Shiva Singh ([singhs@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:singhs@nigms.nih.gov)) or Jermelina Tupas ([tupasj@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:tupasj@nigms.nih.gov)) at 301-594-3900 for more information.

### ***Frontiers in Cell Migration: From Mechanism to Disease***

This international meeting on the NIH Bethesda campus from September 16-18, 2008, will review recent advances in cell migration and consider future directions for understanding migration at the molecular, cellular, and organismal levels. View the [agenda or register](#).

### ***Quantitative and Systems Pharmacology Workshop***

During this 2-day [workshop](#) beginning September 25, 2008, on the NIH Bethesda campus, participants will gain state-of-the-art knowledge and perspective on topics at the interface of systems biology and pharmacology. Other goals include increasing collaboration and establishing pressing and long-term research needs for advancing the ability of systems biology to inform drug discovery and drug action. Registration is required.

### ***SACNAS Conference***

The Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science will hold its [annual meeting](#) from October 9-12, 2008, in Salt Lake City, UT. This year's meeting will focus on global change—particularly climate change—and its impact on all fields of science.

### ***ABRCMS***

The [Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students](#) will meet in Orlando, FL, from November 5-8, 2008. The conference is designed to encourage underrepresented minority students to pursue advanced training in the biomedical and behavioral sciences and to give faculty mentors and advisors resources for facilitating students' success.

### ***6th Functional Genomics of Critical Illness and Injury Symposium***

This annual symposium, held on the NIH Bethesda campus on November 17, 2008, offers a unique opportunity for communication and collaboration among researchers committed to applying lessons from functional genomics at the bedside of critically ill and injured patients. Following the symposium will be the inaugural meeting of the NIH-supported United States Critical Illness and Injury Trials Group (USCIITG) from November 18-19, 2008. Visit the meetings' [joint Web site](#) for more information or to register.

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## **Research Administration Notes**

### ***Appendices on CDs***

NIH now requires that paper applications provide appendix material only on CDs (see [NOT-OD-08-031](#)). Submit five identical CDs containing all appendix material in the same package with the application. Do not compress or encrypt the files.

### ***Transition to Electronic Submission***

Pending successful conversion of the SF424 (R&R) grant application forms to Adobe in late 2008, NIH has scheduled the transition to electronic submission of most remaining grant mechanisms in 2009:

- Research Career Development Awards (all Ks except K12) - February 12, 2009
- Individual National Research Service Awards (F) - April 8, 2009
- Institutional National Research Service Awards and Other Training Grants (T, D) and K12 - September 25, 2009

For details, see [NOT-OD-08-073](#).

### ***Citing Research Articles***

Anyone submitting an application, proposal, or progress report to NIH must now include the PubMed Central or NIH Manuscript Submission reference number when citing relevant articles describing his or her NIH-funded research (see [NOT-OD-08-033](#)).

### ***NIH Reviewer Payment***

NIH is discontinuing the use of Central Contractor Registration (CCR) to pay honoraria and expense reimbursements to reviewers (see [NOT-OD-08-075](#)). While a new payment system is being developed, reviewers who don't have active CCR registration will receive checks issued by World Travel Services. Reviewers with active CCR accounts will continue to receive payment through direct deposit until their account expires.

### ***New Security Policy for Reviewing Grant Applications***

All grant application information distributed on reviewer CDs now is password protected (see [NOT-OD-08-071](#)). Reviewers can access the password from the List of Meetings page in the Internet Assisted Review system or by contacting the Scientific Review Officer for the meeting.

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## **Resources**

### ***Knockout Mice Available Without IP Restriction***

NIH is making more than 2,500 knockout mouse strains available for purchase from Lexicon. The license agreement allows investigators to publish any results from research involving the lines and also to seek patent or other intellectual property protection for inventions or discoveries resulting from such research. For more information, read [NOT-DA-08-015](#).

### ***New Online Resource for E. Coli***

To find and contribute information about the genetics, physiology, molecular makeup, and gene expression patterns of *E. coli* K-12, the scientific community can freely access the new online resource [EcoliHub](#).

### ***Protecting Human Research Participants***

The NIH Office of Extramural Research offers a free, Web-based course on [protecting human research participants](#). The tutorial satisfies the NIH human subjects training requirement for obtaining NIH awards.

### ***Updates to CRISP***

Visit the updated Web site for [CRISP](#), the database of federally funded biomedical research projects. The new site still offers the ability to search NIH-funded research and will eventually include more details, such as budget information, links to publications and patents resulting from the research, and current research investments in specific diseases

### ***Watch NIH Events Online***



NIH makes special events, seminars, and lectures available for viewing on the [NIH VideoCast Web site](#). From this site, you can watch the [NIH Director's Pioneer Award Symposium](#) scheduled for September 22-23, 2008, and the Stetten Lecture featuring Nobel laureate Roger Kornberg on October 29, 2008.

### ***NIGMS RSS Feeds***

Really Simple Syndication (RSS) is used to distribute news as it's published. To keep up on Institute news, you can subscribe to any of our eight RSS feeds. To view the available feeds and learn how to subscribe, read [NIGMS RSS Feeds and RSS Help](#) on the NIGMS Web site.

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## **Job Announcement**

### ***Genetics Medical Officer***

The Division of Genetics and Developmental Biology is recruiting a human/medical geneticist with an M.D. or M.D./Ph.D. degree, clinical genetics experience, independent research experience, and a knowledge of the NIH peer review and grants processes. Responsibilities include developing and managing grants aimed at applying genetic and genomic data to understand the biological basis of phenotypes, with a focus on normal human traits and genetic disorders as well as related areas of genetics. Applications must be received by August 5, 2008. The [full position announcement](#) is posted at USA Jobs. If you need additional information, contact Division Director Judith Greenberg at 301-594-0943 or [greenbej@nigms.nih.gov](mailto:greenbej@nigms.nih.gov).

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