

Final Recommendations of the NIAAA Extramural Advisory Board
‘Mechanisms of Behavioral Change’
Jan 31 – Feb 1, 2006

1. Develop consortia of investigators using existing studies or data sets to test a series of common questions. These questions will use a transdisciplinary approach that integrates neuroscientific, computational, and behavioral-social sciences to;

- a. perform reanalysis of existing studies with new models looking at potential mechanisms of change prior to treatment, within treatment and outside treatment.
- b. add supplemental questions (such as instruments on behavioral change, social context, etc.) to existing efficacy and epidemiological studies. Such measures may include the examination of mechanisms associated with alcohol related cognitions, affect, self regulation and social-environmental dimensions as well as biological and psychophysiological response.
- c. characterize animal behavior that finger prints specific aspects of human behavior and bidirectional predictions of response.

2. Promote funding mechanisms that allow time for adapting and/or developing conceptual approaches and measures for assessing behavioral change. Such mechanisms may include:

- a. ARPA
- b. small-individual consortiums
- c. interdisciplinary training by adapting K25 mechanisms for funding computational neuroscience.
- d. encouraging smaller grant mechanisms or supplements to existing grants to reduce barriers for junior investigators.
- e. encouraging projects that leverage the resources of NIAAA, other NIH IC's, or NIH Roadmap.
- f. employ review approaches for special RFA with review criteria and distinct scoring systems focused upon high risk – high pay-off projects.
- g. facilitate multi-disciplinary collaboration.
- h. encourage mentoring in interdisciplinary research

3. Emphasize the development of innovative and exploratory research, recognizing the high risk nature of this type of work.

4. Develop and support longitudinal studies of the natural history of behavioral change in drinking behavior. Encourage the use of genetic, electrophysiological, imaging, and other neurobiological measures, techniques and instruments. Innovative measures of assessing real time cognitive and affective change also should be developed.