

October 21th, 2022

Success at external peer-reviewed grant competitions takes more than just a smart, well-trained scientist with a great idea. It takes months of preparation, writing, and re-writing. It also takes a village. Behind every successful grant application is a detailed (and tough!) internal review. Any investigator who has undergone an internal review knows its value. Good internal reviews are often what turns a promising but un-fundable application into a winner. One of the reasons for our high success rates in FRQS Chercheur-Boursier salary award competitions, and for our higher-than-average success rates in CIHR operating grant competitions is the robust internal review process that has been in place at the MCH for decades (and is now a model for the rest of the MUHC).

Doing internal reviews is very time consuming. Reviewing a single application can take 3-4 hours or more. This is followed by a 1-2 hour face-to-face meeting with the applicant and the other 1-2 internal reviewers to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal and make suggestions as to how to improve it. The most devoted internal reviewers may also do a second round of reviews after revisions have been made. Contributing to 1-2 internal reviews per cycle is the norm (there is one round of applications in spring and another in the fall, plus scattered competitions throughout the year). Very devoted internal reviewers may do 3 in a cycle. This acknowledgement recognizes the truly exceptional contributions of 2 department members who went above and beyond this fall. **Dr. Patty Li** reviewed 4 FRQS salary award applications as well as a CIHR operating grant. **Dr. Meranda Nakhla** reviewed 5 FRQS salary award applications and a CIHR operating grant. Rumour has it that both provided comments after the first rounds of reviews as well. Neither of these exceptional women has time to kill. In addition to running their own highly successful research programs, both have important clinical commitments, Patty on the general pediatric wards and clinics, and Meranda with the Endocrinology service. Meranda is also Associate Chair of Research and Associate lead of the Child Health and Human Development Program of the RI-MUHC. Both are also mothers of young children. Their commitment to the success of their colleagues and their willingness to give their very precious time to the internal review process is greatly appreciated. The only compensation for this time-consuming task is the satisfaction of helping a colleague. The applicants lucky enough to have them as reviewers undoubtedly benefited and were able to submit much more competitive applications.

Please join me in thanking everyone who contributes to the internal review process. Every review helps. The exceptional efforts of Patty and Meranda this late summer and fall merit particular recognition and appreciation.

Have a great weekend.

Beth Foster, MD, MSCE, FRCPC
Professor of Pediatrics
Chair, Dept. of Pediatrics McGill University
Pediatrician-in-Chief, Montreal Children's Hospital of the MUHC
Harvey Guyda Chair in Pediatrics