

# Getting your first grant: a junior faculty perspective

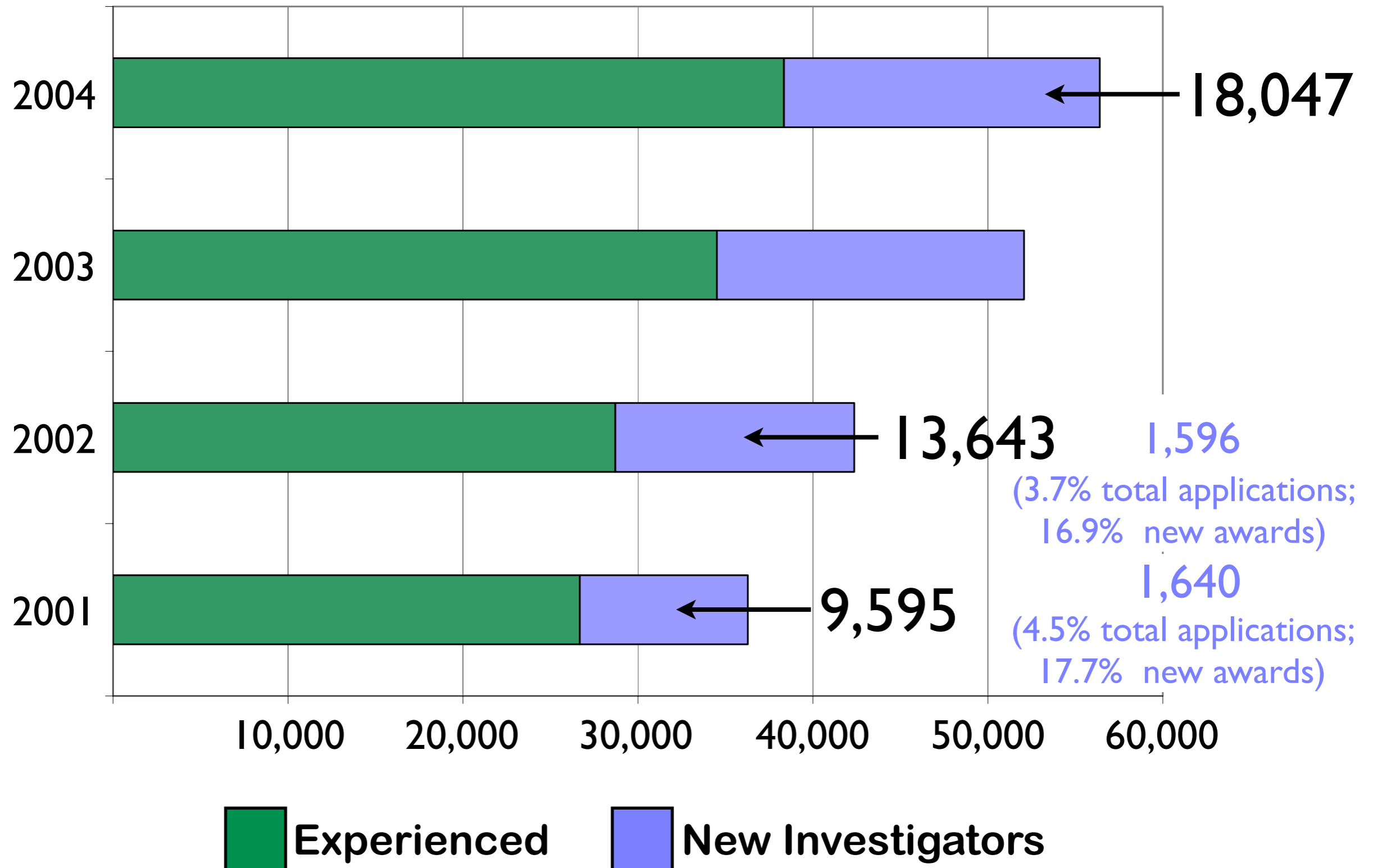
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- **The funding climate**
- **Approaches to writing**
- **Strategies**
- **Resources**

# Research project applications received (NIH Center for Scientific Review)



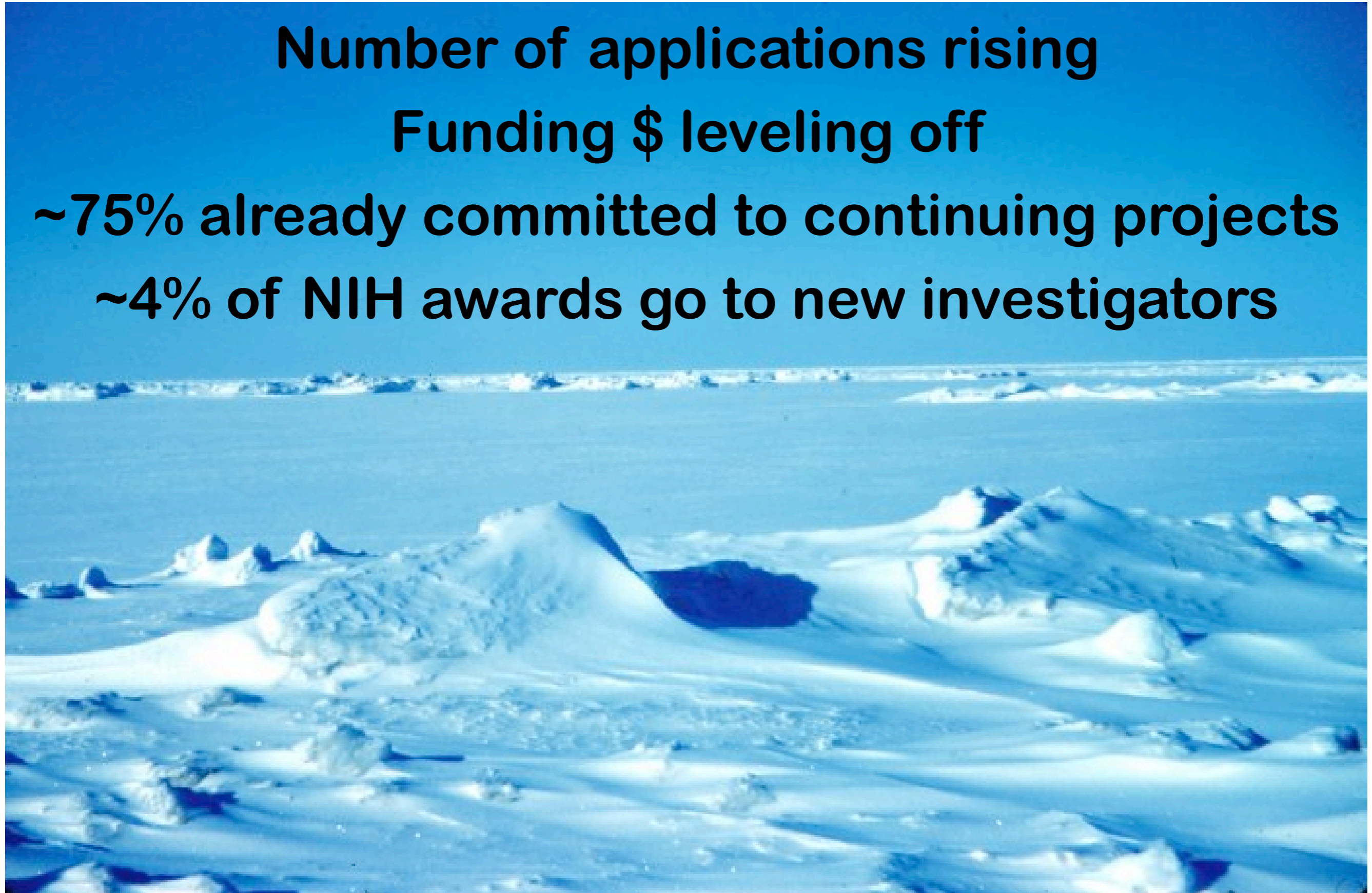
# The current funding climate

Number of applications rising

Funding \$ leveling off

~75% already committed to continuing projects

~4% of NIH awards go to new investigators



# Some thoughts on writing

**“What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure.” - Samuel Johnson**

**“Writing is easy. All you do is stare at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead.” -Gene Fowler**

**Then there is Isaac Asimov...**

**For most of us, writing is hard work**

# Protect your writing time

- Get release time from teaching and committee assignments when you start (should be in your contract)
- Take advantage of this time; just say “NO”
- Choose the members of your research group carefully

# Establish a routine

- **If possible, define your most productive writing time**
- **Set aside a block of time for writing every day**
- **Close your office door, if necessary**

**“There is no great writing, only great rewriting.”**

# **Your deadline $\neq$ funding agency's deadline**

- **Senior colleagues need time to critique your proposal**
- **You need time to revise (and re-revise) accordingly**
- **Office of Contracts and Grants needs time to approve budget and ensure that your proposal meets agency guidelines (don't rely too heavily on this)**
- **Your administrative support staff does not need to race around at the last minute because of your deadline**

**So, start writing several months in advance of the official deadline**



# **Strategies:**

## **Do your homework**

- **Understand missions of different funding agencies**
- **Search for Program Announcements (PAs) and Requests for Applications (RFAs) relevant to your work**
- **Research funding levels at different Institutes; some have specific policies to aid new PIs**

# Strategies (continued)

- **Get senior faculty with study section experience to review your proposal**
- **Talk to Program Officers/Directors; they are extremely helpful**
- **For NIH, write a cover letter requesting study section, as well as primary and secondary institutes for funding**

# Resources

- **NIH Center for Scientific Review Video: “Inside the NIH Grant Review Process”**
- **NIH, NSF web sites**
- **Science Next Wave Career Development Center**
- **Strunk and White, “The Elements of Style,” 3rd Edition (used book stores)**

**Take advantage of this time to think  
deeply about your work and to put it  
into a broader context**

**“I hate writing; I love having written”  
-Dorothy Parker**