SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF THE CURRENT PROCESS

CATHY OLKIN

INSTITUTE SCIENTIST, SOUTHWEST RESEARCH INSTITUTE

FEBRUARY 8, 2021

MY EXPERIENCE (1) – SPACECRAFT MISSIONS

- Teams are formed early (before draft AO) and are formed to win.
- Heritage is important as it shows competence but this also makes it harder to include new people into leadership positions.
- High-performing teams tend to be moved in tact.
 - That is a good thing because they have proven experience in working well together.
 - But it creates a barrier to entry.
- Critical to get more people experience so they are viable candidates for leadership positions.

A SUGGESTION

- Align incentives with the goal in mind.
- Examples of incentives are scoring criteria and costs.
- Potential example: Require the team to identify opportunities to bring in new people over the course of development and operations to learn from the team in roles like PI, PM, PSE, IPIs, etc.
 - Ask for a plan for how the mission will fill those positions.
 - Provide a set budget for this activity that is only accessible for this activity.

MY EXPERIENCE (2) – DPS COMMITTEE, PUBSUB, ETC

- Learn from the experts.
 - DPS meetings now feature expert speakers in EDI.
 - Included implicit bias speaker before awards committee meeting.
 - Included bystander training.
- Follow expert advice on how to reduce unconscious bias in decision making. From Patricia Knezek's talk at 2016 DPS meeting and from Bauer & Baltes 2002:
 - Increase awareness of implicit bias before evaluations begin.
 - Let people sit with information. Don't rush decisions.
 - Rate on explicit criteria.
 - Be concrete in linking evidence to criteria.

MY EXPERIENCE (3) – DPS COMMITTEE, PUBSUB, ETC

- Have a continual focus on inclusion across all activities.
 - Meeting planning (bathroom signage, pronoun stickers, accessibility)
 - At the committee level, gave young people a voice; added a student representative to the committee.
- You can't know everything that is going on in the community.
 - The PCCS (Professional Culture & Climate Subcommittee) was a great resource for identifying issues and bringing ideas to the table.
- Try new things and evaluate.
 - Started PSJ with Dual Anonymous Review.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

- Need to focus on science, management and engineering leadership.
- When writing a proposal, one writes explanation of why the leadership team can do the job. Transparent communication of what is sufficient experience for given leadership roles would help proposers to be more inclusive.