



Proposal Fitness Test: Application Strengths and Weaknesses from Five Years of Pre-Submission Review Data



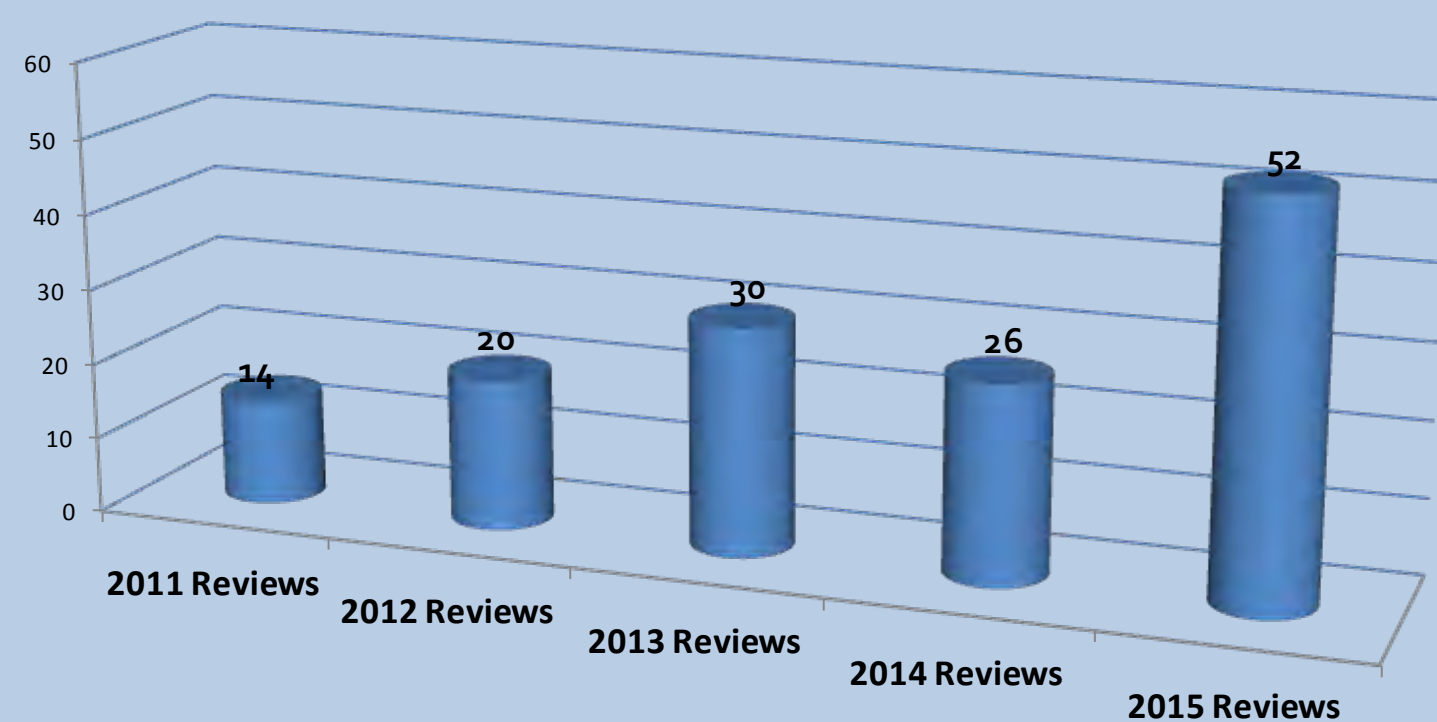
Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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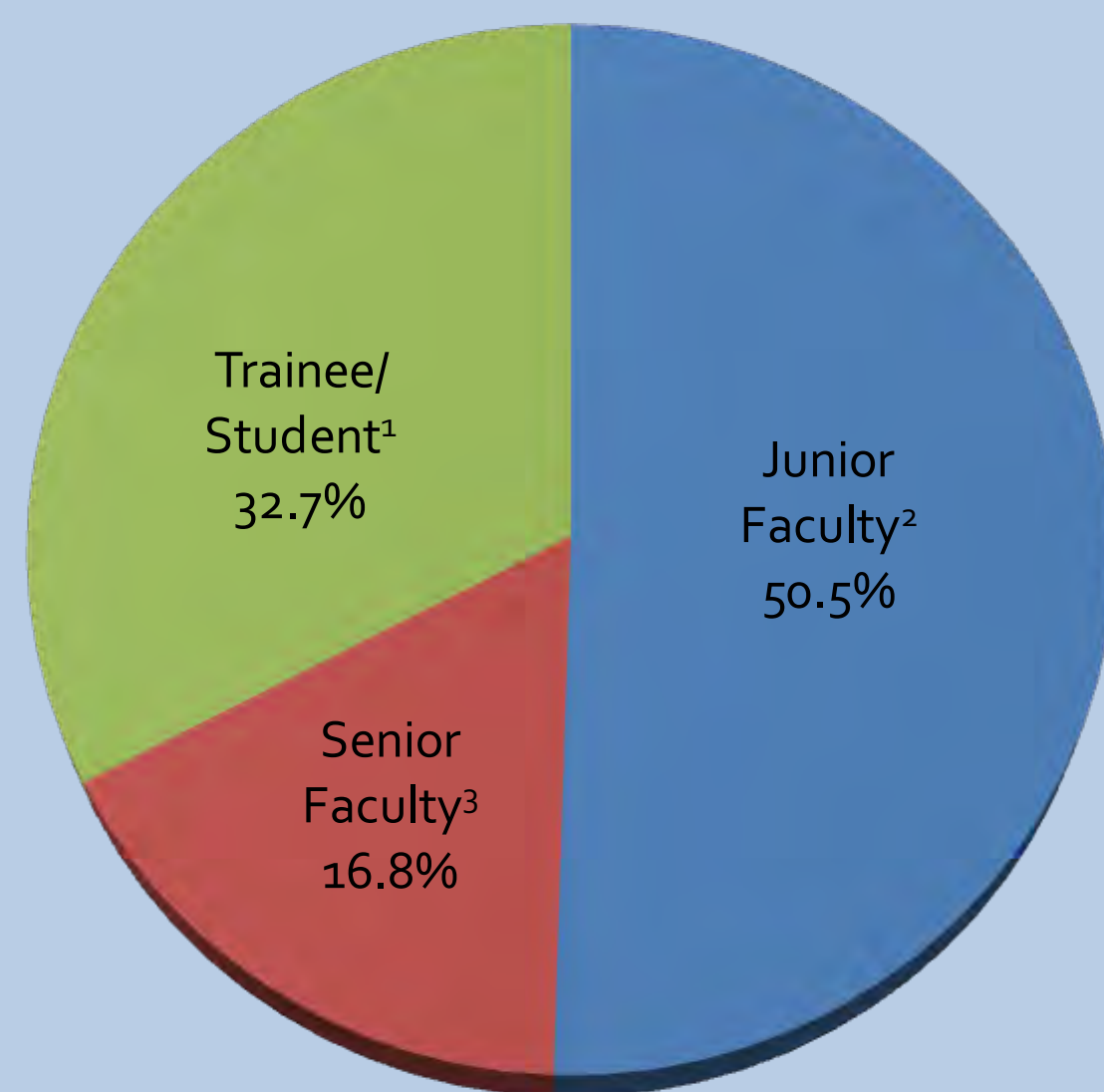
MSK's Grants & Contracts Funding Development Team (FDT) has offered a Proposal Review Service since 2009, where our Proposal Review Consultant, a former NSF program director, comments on MSK proposals' grantsmanship and responsiveness to sponsor and funding opportunity review criteria. Data from 142 proposal reviews (2011-2015) have allowed us to track the growth of the service, the career levels of the investigators requesting reviews, and the most frequently-critiqued areas of the grants. This poster presents our analysis of the data collected and suggests next steps that the FDT can take to further assist PIs in submitting winning grant proposals.

Reviews/PI Numbers

Number of Proposals Reviewed
2011-2015



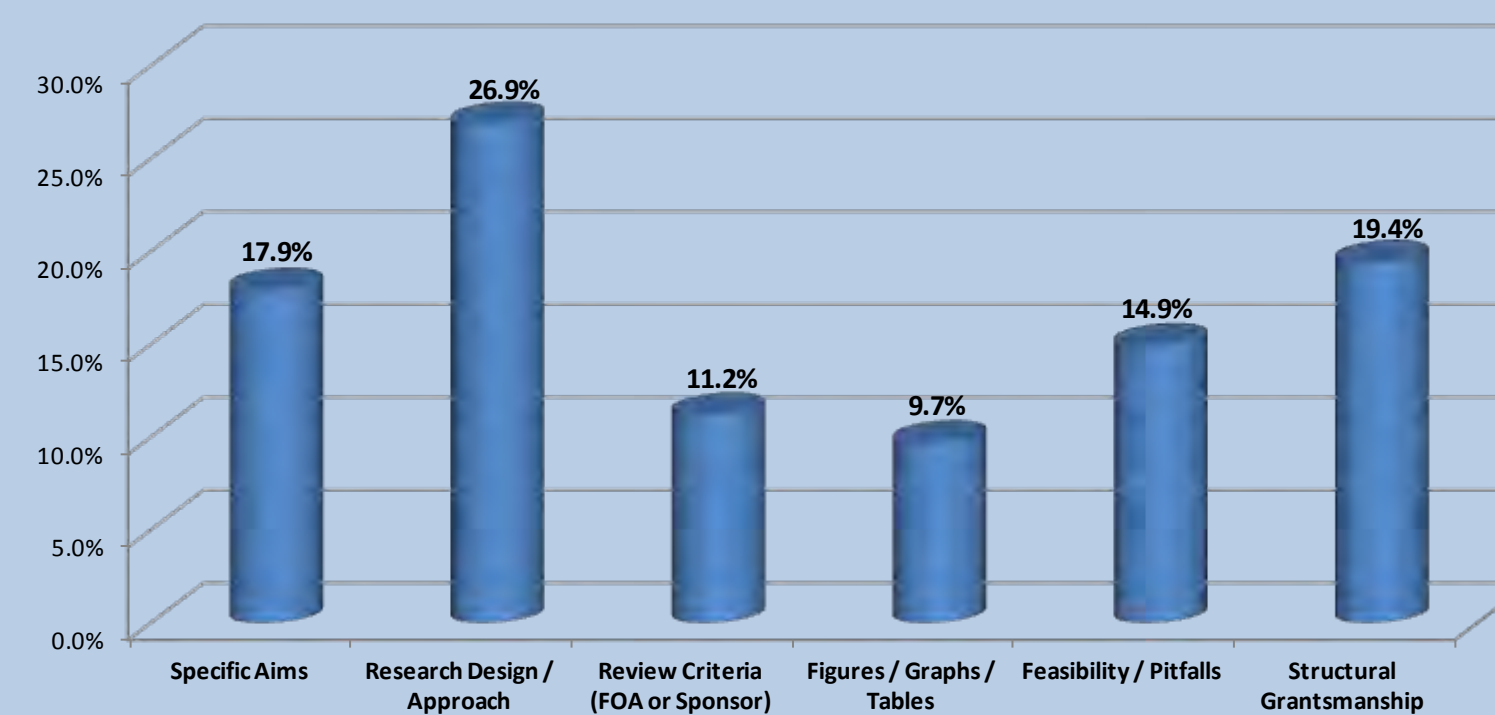
Career Level of Reviewed PIs*



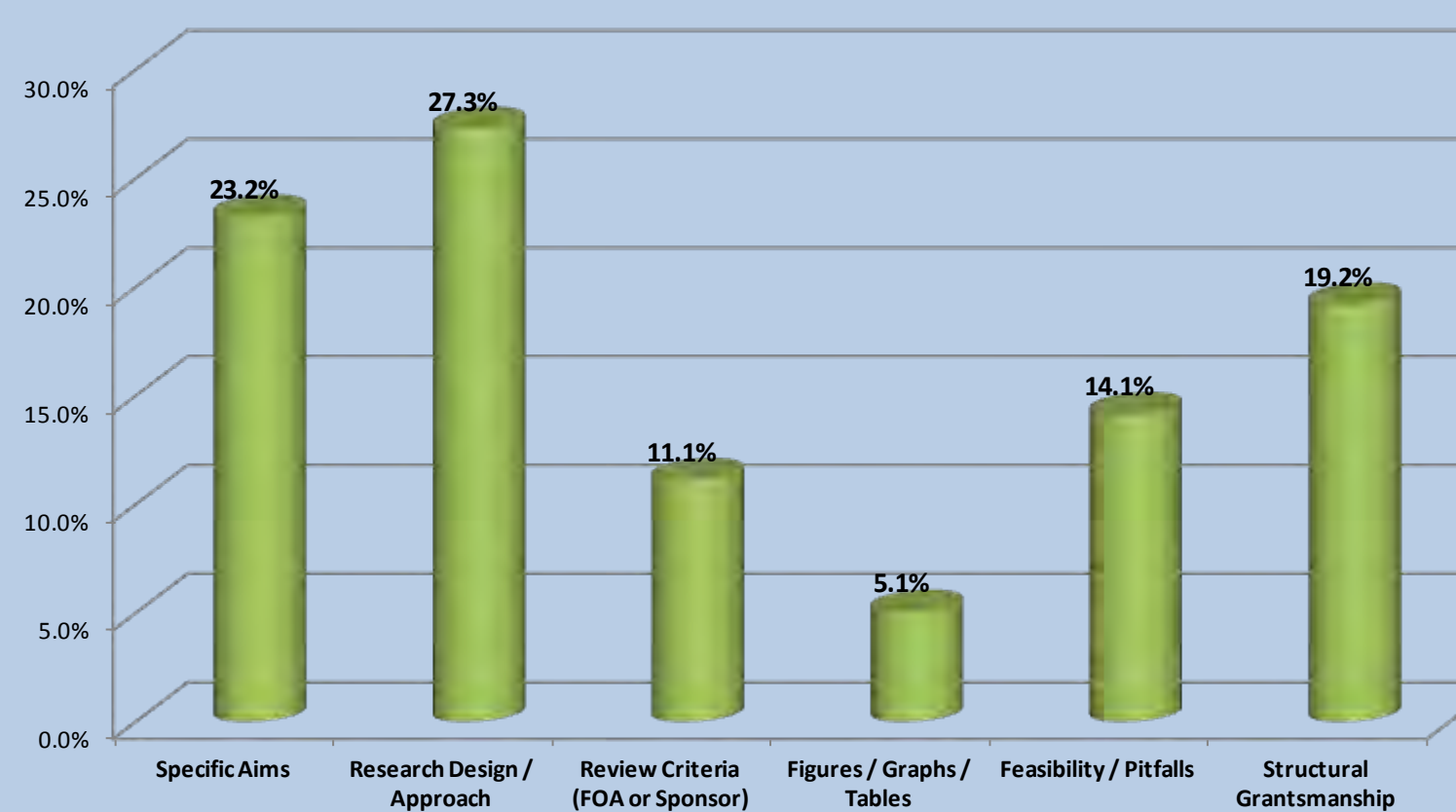
*Unique PIs only (i.e. non-returning)
¹Post-doc, Research Fellow, or Grad Student;
²Assistant/Associate; ³Attending or Member

Proposal Sections Critiqued

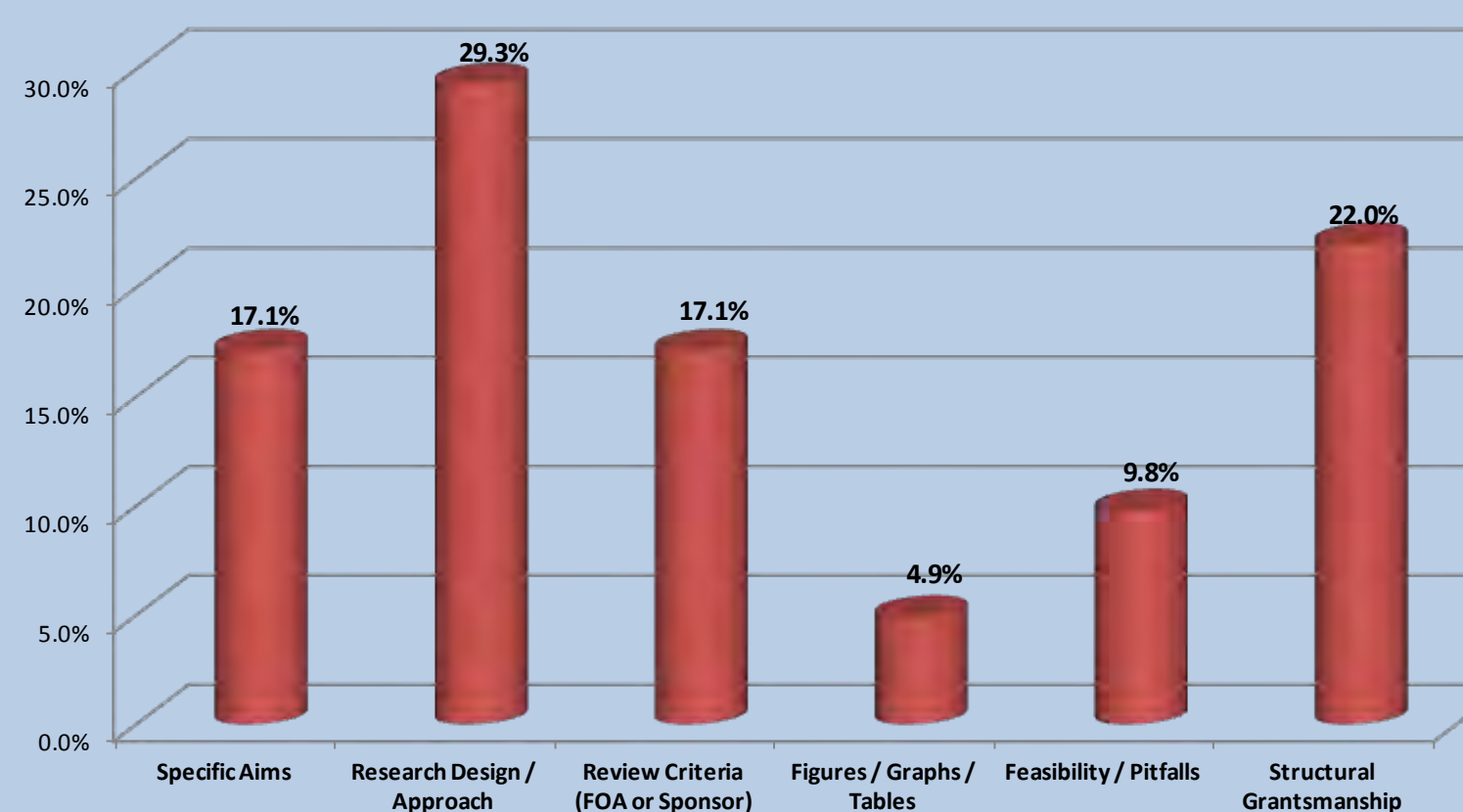
Junior Faculty



Trainees / Students



Senior Faculty



Assessments

- Considering the junior faculty are an interstitial group between actively-mentored students and more established investigators with grants experience to draw on, we were not surprised that the majority of PIs who used the Proposal Review Service were junior faculty
- Across all faculty levels, most of the review critiques were centered on the research strategy as the main focus of the reviews, suggesting that some MSK Faculty and Fellows may benefit from general grants-writing guidance.
- We have identified targeted proposal development needs in each career cohort. Certain populations may require support in crafting specific aims (Students), in responding to sponsor-specific [especially non-NIH] review criteria (Senior faculty), and in the presentation of supporting data and feasibility (Junior faculty).

Future Directions

- This guidance may be in the form of Center presentations or workshops, proposal development mentorship, and resources, templates, or outlines. G&C is developing population-specific presentations to address some of these needs. In an effort to improve the Proposal Review Service itself, a survey has been prepared to solicit feedback from the faculty.