



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

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August 18, 2017

Dear Ms. Caswell:

The mission of American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) Research Development Committee (RDC) is to promote orthopaedic research through advocacy, education, and recognition of excellence. As you are aware, the burden of musculoskeletal diseases and disorders far outpaces federal funding allocated for orthopaedic research. This past spring, the RDC met with Richard Nakamura, PhD, Director of the NIH Center for Scientific Review (CSR), and his staff to engage in a meaningful discussion on ways the orthopaedic community can help CSR increase the number of orthopaedic clinicians on study sections. The CSR is the portal for review of NIH grant applications; it organizes peer review groups to evaluate the scientific merit of proposals.

**The Problem:** We are in a scientific recession. NIH institutes have highly varying paylines, with the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Skin Diseases (NIAMS) in the 13-19% range\*. Study sections for clinical research proposal are often graded lower because there is limited or no orthopaedic clinician input in the reviews. Scientific Review Officers (SROs) have difficulty obtaining orthopaedic surgeons to serve on study sections, and there have been many instances in which those who are called to serve do not answer or follow through on commitments. \*2017 NIAMS Paylines: [https://www.niams.nih.gov/about/Us/Budget/funding\\_plan\\_fy2017.asp](https://www.niams.nih.gov/about/Us/Budget/funding_plan_fy2017.asp)

**Our Solution:** The RDC, working with the orthopaedic specialty societies, will establish and maintain a list of names of musculoskeletal content experts willing to serve on NIH study sections. The list of volunteers and their specialty area(s) will be provided to the CSR, who will call on them to serve as reviewers. Clinician reviewers will be able to identify the potential clinical impact of a proposal and provide feedback on its quality. The AAOS RDC will have a feedback system to hold the orthopaedic clinical community accountable and help ensure participation.

**The Ask to the BOS:** We are requesting that each orthopaedic specialty society solicit their membership to identify 2-3 volunteer clinicians willing and able to serve as each of three types of reviewers: Early Career Reviewer (ECR); Ad-hoc Reviewer; and Chartered Member. (Total of 6-9 volunteers) Descriptions for each are attached. When volunteers are identified, please complete the following form: <https://form.jotform.us/72285055988167>

We would like to present a list of potential reviewers to the CSR by December, and follow up on the project when the RDC meets in Washington, DC, in March of 2018. We are kindly asking for you to work within your research committees or relevant leadership to seek volunteers and submit names by December 1, 2017. The future of orthopaedic care is dependent on research; it is our duty as clinicians to ensure we are appropriately represented on study sections and work as a community to help get more clinical research grants funded.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. Please feel to contact me or Erin Ransford with any questions.

Respectfully,

Kurt Spindler, MD  
Chair, AAOS RDC