

# NSF Merit Review Criteria: A Presentation to the Federal Demonstration Partnership

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# Current Merit Review Criteria

- Two review criteria:
  - What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?
  - What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?
- Established in 1997 by the National Science Board



# America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010

- Section 526. Broader Impacts Review Criterion
  - Part (a) ...to achieve the following goals:
    - Increased economic competitiveness of the United States.
    - Development of a globally competitive STEM workforce.
    - Increased participation of women and underrepresented minorities in STEM.
    - Increased partnerships between academia and industry.
    - Improved pre-K–12 STEM education and teacher development.
    - Improved undergraduate STEM education.
    - Increased public scientific literacy.
    - Increased national security.



# America COMPETES Reauthorization Act

- Part (b) ...develop and implement a policy for the Broader Impacts Review Criterion that –
  - Provides for education of NSF staff, reviewers and applicants about the policy
  - Clarifies that BI activities shall either:
    - draw on proven strategies and existing programs/activities; or
    - for new approaches, build on current research
  - Allows for research funds to be used for assessment and evaluation of BI activity



# America COMPETES Reauthorization Act

- Part (b), continued:
  - “Encourages institutions ... to develop and provide ... appropriate training and programs to assist Foundation-funded principal investigators at their institutions in achieving the goals of the Broader Impacts Review Criterion ...; and
  - Requires principal investigators applying for Foundation research grants to provide evidence of institutional support for the portion of the investigator’s proposal designed to satisfy the Broader Impacts Review Criterion...”



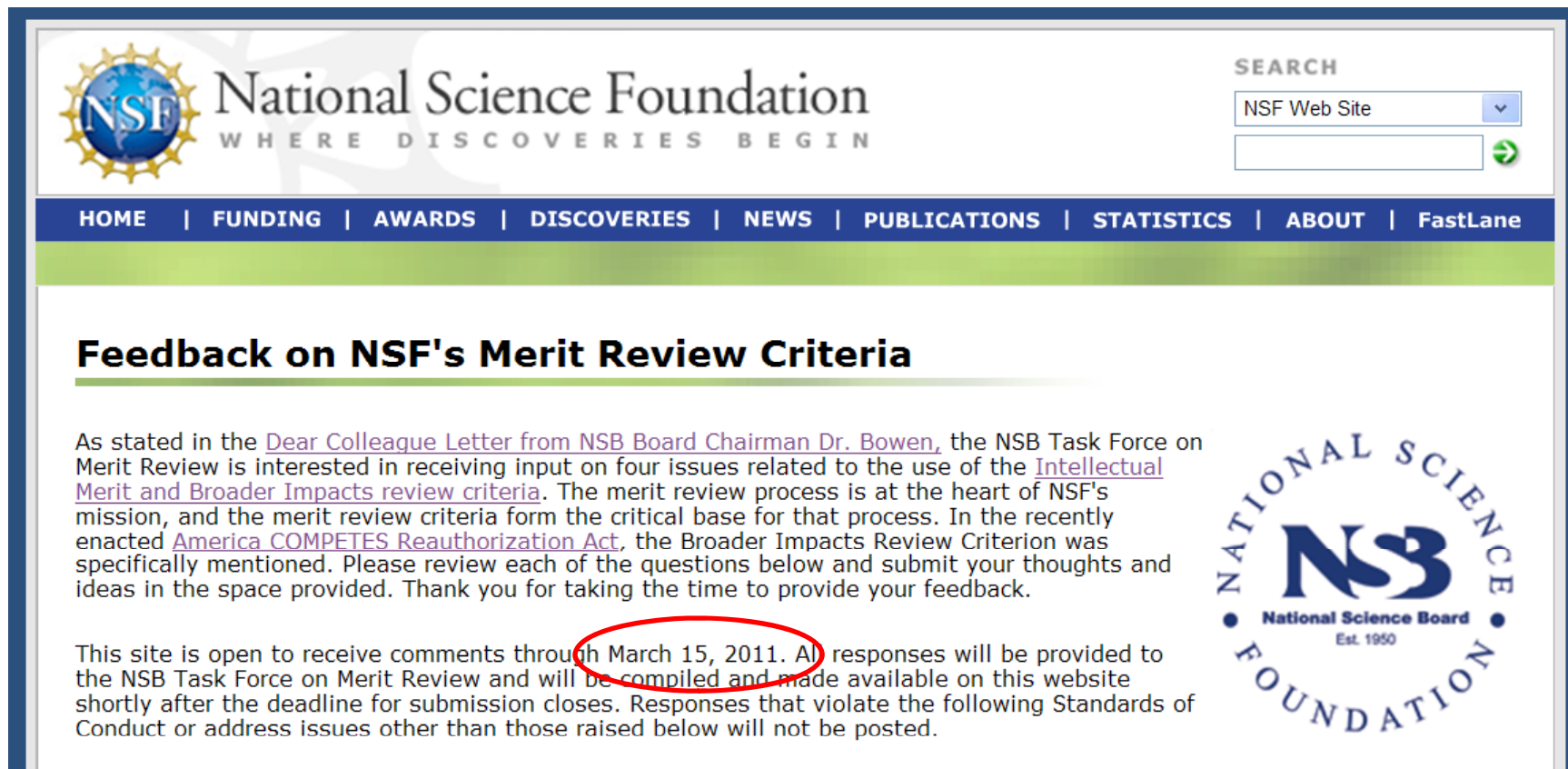
# NSB Task Force on Merit Review

- Established Spring 2010, charged with “examining the two Merit Review Criteria and their effectiveness in achieving the goals for NSF support for science and engineering research and education”
- Focusing on:
  - How criteria are being interpreted and used by PIs, reviewers, and NSF staff
  - Strengths and weaknesses of criteria
  - Impact of criteria on how PIs develop projects
  - Role of the institution

# NSB Task Force on Merit Review

- Soliciting input from multiple stakeholders:
  - NSF senior managers and Program Officers
  - Members of NSF Advisory Committees
  - NSF PIs and reviewers
  - Institutional representatives
  - University associations
  - Scientific societies
- Dear Colleague Letter from NSB Chairman published January 21, 2011  
[http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/publications/2011/01\\_19\\_mrtf.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/publications/2011/01_19_mrtf.jsp)

# Web Site for Comments




The screenshot shows the NSF website header with the logo and tagline 'WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN'. A search bar is visible in the top right. A navigation menu includes links for HOME, FUNDING, AWARDS, DISCOVERIES, NEWS, PUBLICATIONS, STATISTICS, ABOUT, and FastLane. The main content area features a section titled 'Feedback on NSF's Merit Review Criteria'. The text in this section discusses the NSF's interest in receiving input on four issues related to the use of the 'Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts review criteria'. It mentions a 'Dear Colleague Letter from NSB Board Chairman Dr. Bowen' and the 'America COMPETES Reauthorization Act'. A red circle highlights the deadline 'March 15, 2011'. The NSF logo is also present on the right side of the page.

**Feedback on NSF's Merit Review Criteria**

As stated in the [Dear Colleague Letter from NSB Board Chairman Dr. Bowen](#), the NSB Task Force on Merit Review is interested in receiving input on four issues related to the use of the [Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts review criteria](#). The merit review process is at the heart of NSF's mission, and the merit review criteria form the critical base for that process. In the recently enacted [America COMPETES Reauthorization Act](#), the Broader Impacts Review Criterion was specifically mentioned. Please review each of the questions below and submit your thoughts and ideas in the space provided. Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback.

This site is open to receive comments through **March 15, 2011**. All responses will be provided to the NSB Task Force on Merit Review and will be compiled and made available on this website shortly after the deadline for submission closes. Responses that violate the following Standards of Conduct or address issues other than those raised below will not be posted.



<http://www.nsf.gov/funding/meritreviewform.cfm>





## Next Steps

- NSB Task Force on Merit Review will continue its review and formulate overall recommendations about the review criteria
- NSF will develop policy related to the Broader Impacts Review Criterion by late June in consultation with the NSB, as required by the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act
- NSF will give sufficient notice to community before any new policy becomes effective



# How You Can Help

- Provide input on the comments web site by  
March 15, 2011
  - Institutional Representatives
  - Faculty
  - University Associations

<http://www.nsf.gov/funding/meritreviewform.cfm>



Thank You!

Questions?

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