



National Institute of
General Medical Sciences

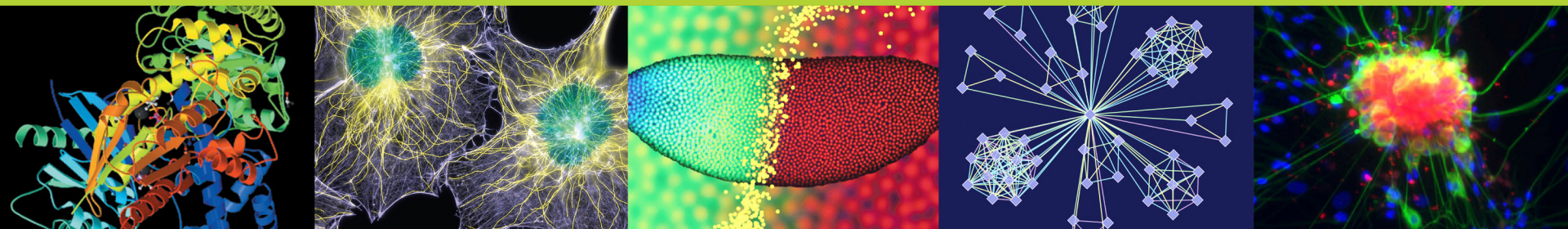


Evaluation of the NIGMS Support for Competitive Research (SCORE) Program

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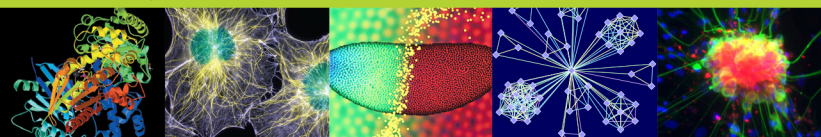
Co-Chair

SCORE Evaluation Working Group



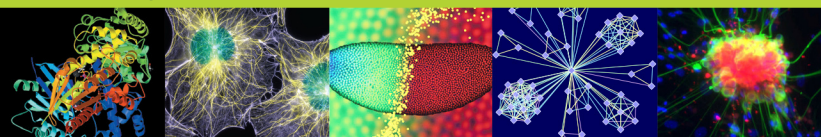
SCORE Evaluation

- **Support for Competitive Research Program**
 - Comprises 3 mechanisms (SC1/SC2/SC3) to support research and career development at institutions serving underrepresented groups.
 - Awards are made for investigator-initiated projects.
 - Investigators are ultimately expected to obtain and transition to non-SCORE funding.
 - A working group of Council was convened to evaluate the SCORE program:
 - Co-chairs: Kaye Husbands Fealing, Ph.D. and Peter Espenshade, Ph.D.
 - Panel: Drs. Squire Booker, Goldie Byrd, Lourdes Echegoyen, Elena Bastida, Bill Gern, Mark Lee, and Carlos Gutiérrez.
 - Comprehensive data on SCORE applications, awards, trends, and outcomes were provided by NIGMS OPAGE.



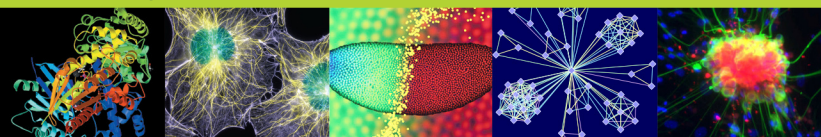
SCORE Funding Mechanisms

Mechanism	\$/Year (Direct Costs)	# Years	Renewals?	PI eligibility	Award Goals	Post-Award Goals
SC1	250k	4	1 only	Established investigators but with no prior non-SCORE support.	Augment skills/productivity. Improve quantity/quality of data and publications.	Non-SCORE support
SC2 (primary comparator: R01)	100k	3	No	No prior support. Established advisor with substantial NIH funds required.	Generate preliminary data, test new idea.	Other external research support (could be SC1, SC3, or anything else)
SC3 (primary comparator: R15)	75k	4	Indefinite	No prior non-SCORE support. Progressive development of publication record required.	Research project of limited scope.	Non-SCORE support
R01	250k+	4	Indefinite	Any PI with requisite skills, knowledge, and resources.	Discrete, specified, circumscribed project.	R01 Renewal, if warranted



Evaluation Questions

- 1) Is the SCORE program meeting its objectives?
- 2) Are the current program objectives the right objectives?
- 3) What challenges or difficulties has the SCORE program faced?
- 4) What are key findings and recommendations?



Evaluation Findings

1) Is the SCORE program meeting its objectives?

Increases in research competitiveness, number of underrepresented investigators, number of qualifying laboratories, but *few investigators transitioned to non-SCORE funding.*

2) Are the current program objectives the right objectives?

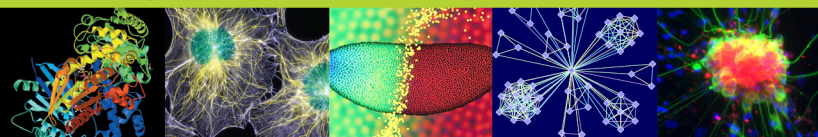
While some current objectives are appropriate, others require substantive change.

3) What challenges or difficulties has the SCORE program faced?

- Institutional support for PI and institutional readiness and commitment to growth are uneven.
- SCORE is too concentrated in a few college/university systems.
- Only 30% of SCORE awardees and applicants are racial/ethnic minorities.
- Only 57% of SC2 awardees submit any later/subsequent SCORE applications.

4) What are the key findings and recommendations?

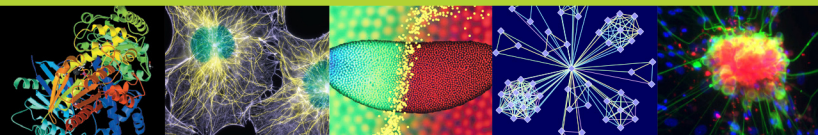
Discussed on following slide.



Recommendations

- 1) Modify program objectives to catalyze institutional support for SCORE funded investigators.
- 2) Revise SCORE PI expected outcomes.
- 3) Modify program objectives to prioritize increasing the number of students engaged in quality research.
- 4) Revise or consolidate funding mechanisms.
- 5) Develop prospective evaluation plan that aligns data collection with new objectives.

Note: Both recommendation 1 and 3 are modifications to the objectives, but are provided separately to emphasize priorities.



Recommendation 1: Modify Program Objectives to Catalyze Institutional Support for SCORE Funded Investigators

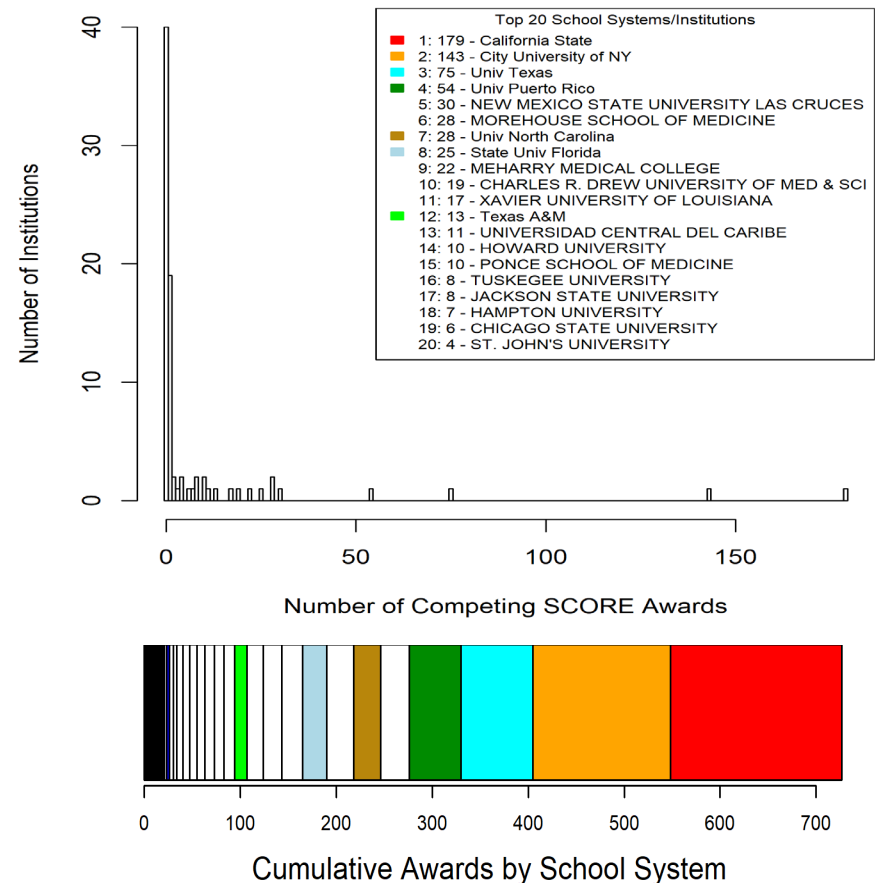
• Suggested Action Items

- Require plan for institutional development of research capacity.
- Require plan for SCORE PI support and development.

• Rationale

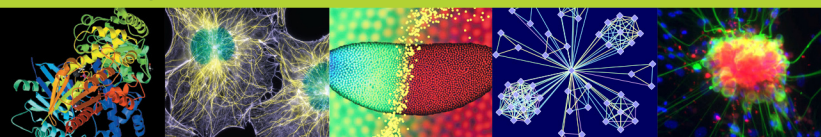
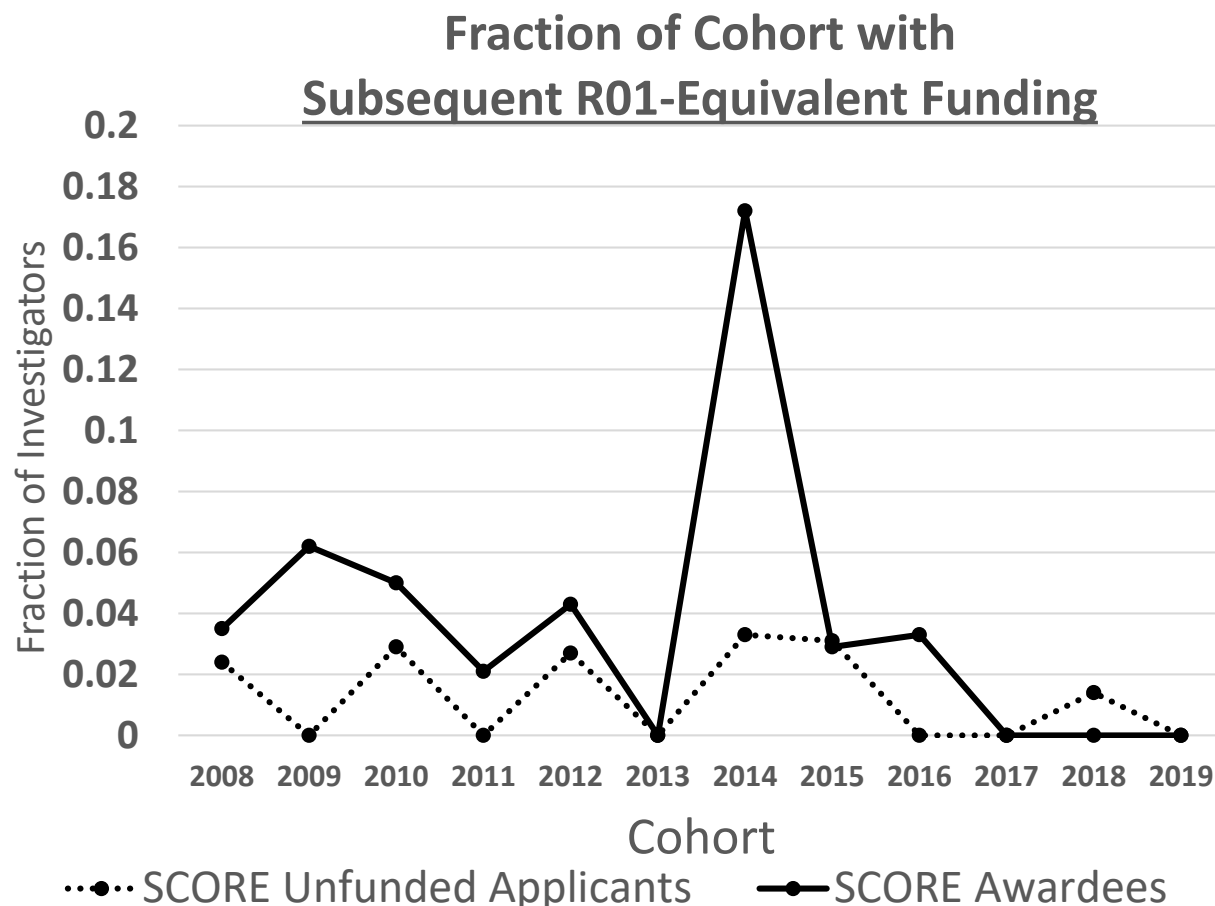
- Data show awards are **concentrated in a few colleges/university systems**, suggesting varying levels of institutional capacity to support applicants and awardees.
- There is a **need to increase institutional commitment** to growing research capacity through support of individual SCORE investigators.
- There is a **need to catalyze change** in institutional research culture and infrastructure.

Histogram of SCORE Awards by School System (N=83)



Recommendation 2: Revise SCORE PI Expected Outcomes

- **Suggested Action Items**
 - **Expand qualifying funding** beyond R01.
 - **Define competitiveness** to align with SCORE goals.
- **Rationale**
 - Research excellence is a priority.
 - Data show SCORE awardees rarely apply for or receive R01s.
 - “Research competitiveness” is ambiguous.



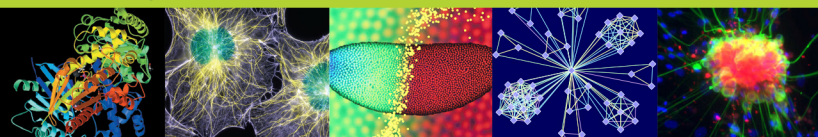
Recommendation 3: Modify Program Objectives to Prioritize Increasing the Number of Students Engaged in Quality Research

- **Suggested Action Items**

- **Clarify student involvement** in SCORE supported research in the FOA.
- **Prepare prospective evaluation** of student involvement in SCORE.

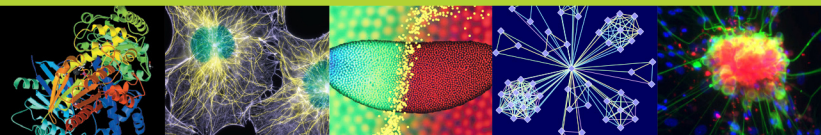
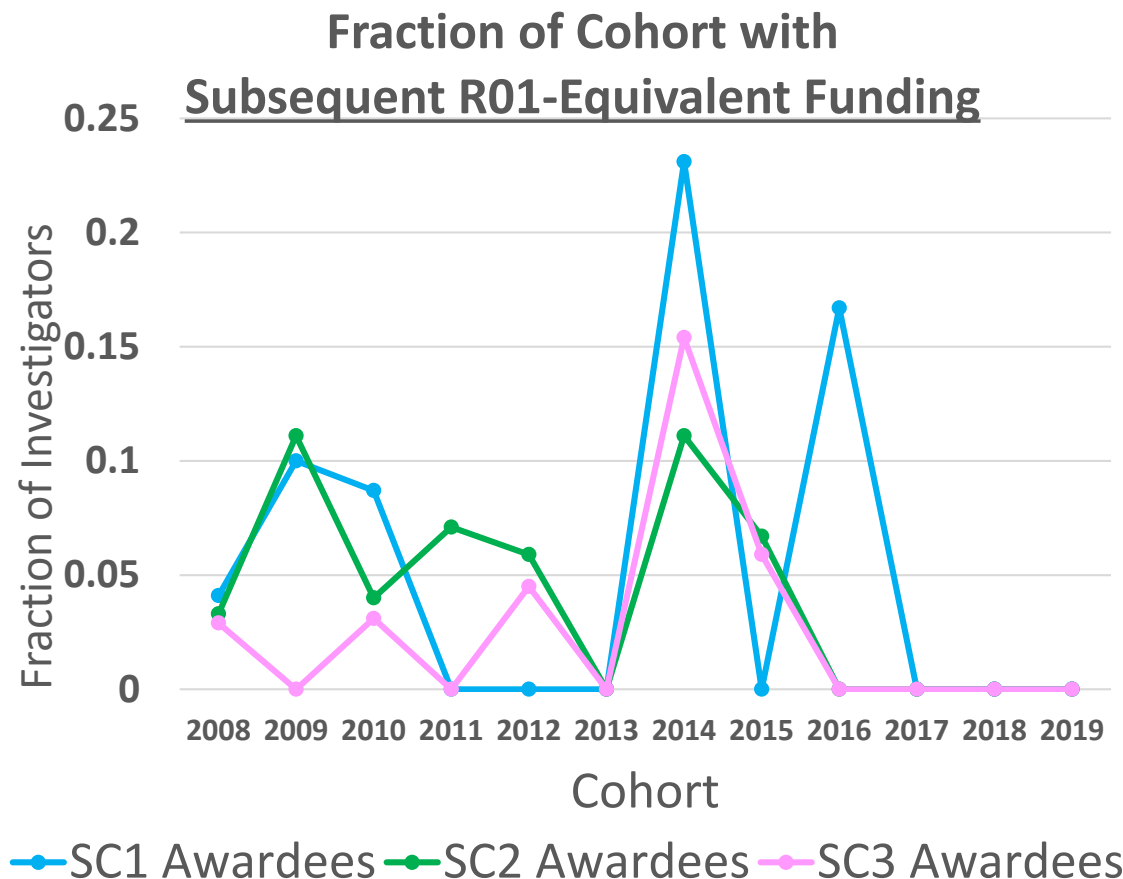
- **Rationale**

- There is a need to:
 - a) Increase the number of underrepresented students engaged in high quality motivating research, and
 - b) Prepare the next generation of underrepresented faculty.



Recommendation 4: Revise or Consolidate Funding Mechanisms

- **Suggested Action Items**
 - **Eliminate the SC1** mechanism.
 - **Strengthen the SC3** mechanism.
 - **Maintain the SC2** mechanism.
- **Rationale**
 - Allows continued participation in SCORE.
 - Few SC1 awardees received R01 awards.
 - Supports institutional capacity building through continued participation.
 - Stabilizes research opportunities for students.



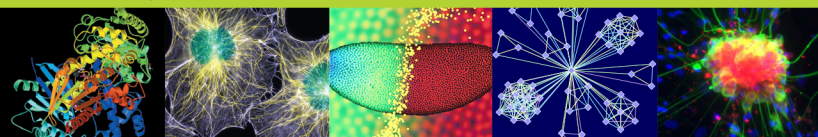
Recommendation 5: Develop a Prospective Evaluation Plan That Aligns Data Collection with New Objectives

- **Rationale**

- Need more robust, complete, and relevant evaluation data.
- Evaluation (including prospective evaluative strategies) is a priority outlined in the NIGMS Strategic Plan.

- **Example**

- Data on students participating in SCORE-supported research is not currently collected but will be necessary to evaluate new objectives.



Summary

- **SCORE is meeting many of its *current* objectives....**
 - SCORE has increased the number of labs and underrepresented PIs at eligible institutions; PI research competitiveness has also increased, but
 - Few SCORE PIs transitioned to non-SCORE funding.
- **Objectives, however, should be examined and appropriately modified.**
 - More emphasis needed on the institutional role in SCORE (e.g., support for PIs, plans for growth).
 - Supporting opportunities for student research should be an explicit program goal.
- **SC1 (\$250k, R01-like) should be eliminated, SC3 (\$75k, R15-like) should be strengthened.**

