

Bioethi

NSF Funding Committee: Who Should Get Funded?

You have been asked to serve on this year's National Science Foundation's Grant Award Committee. The purpose of the committee is to review this year's grant applications, and decide how to split and award \$20 million in funding. There are five proposals to be considered. Each proposal requests over \$10 million in funding.

There are a total of 10 committee members. The committee must justify the allocation of funds, based on social, environmental, health, and/or political needs, as well as show evidence that a funding recipient can show significant progress along the way to meeting the ultimate objective.

TO DO Decide who receives how much funding. Who receives none? How do you decide?

The proposals before the committee include the following:

- monarch butterfly breeding and conservation
 - a genetically engineered protein chemotherapy/antinausea medication
 - drought-resistant tomato development
 - genetic-test development for presymptom identification of Alzheimer's disease
 - HIV vaccine testing in Africa
1. A pair of committee members uses the Internet to research one of the funding proposals. Each team member collects and reviews at least five articles describing some aspect of the research focus of the funding proposal they are assigned to review.
 2. Members make a 5-minute presentation to the rest of the committee on "their" funding proposal, giving the strongest arguments in favor of funding. The presenter should distribute a one-page information sheet to each member summarizing the research-proposal background information. Committee members may ask questions following the presentation.
 3. Other committee members review each oral presentation and information sheet.
 4. The committee discusses how funds should be allocated. Discussions should include the value of the proposal to both society and the advancement of science. Partial funding of a proposal is allowed as long as sufficient funds are awarded to support the research sufficiently.
 5. The committee prepares a pie chart of funding awards to show how the funds were distributed.
 6. Each committee member writes a one-page statement describing the committee's decision-making process and the member's opinion on why the committee awarded the funds the way they did.