

## Advisor's Report on Appeal of Discovery Grant

Applicant's Name : D.A.S. Fraser

University : University of Toronto

Evaluation Group : 1508-033

The applicant appealed the decision of the committee on the grounds of error and procedural unfairness in the review process. The applicant has complete access to another comparable application, 9436-2010, which received higher ratings in all three evaluation areas of NSERC.

The committee supplied only the three ratings and no further comments in its Message to Applicant. The two referee reports on file were supportive of the applicant.

The applicant provides a very clear comparison of the two above-mentioned proposals. Under Excellence of the Researcher, number and venue of publications, presentations and honours are compared. A comparison of the two Research Proposals is provided, however, the appellant admits that this is the "most subjective aspect of the review process." With respect to the Training of HQP, application 9436-2010 has 21 HQP supported versus the appellant's 18. Note that I do not have access to application 9436-2010 to verify any of the details provided in the appeal letter.

The applicant is a professor Emeritus and clearly specifies his/her activities in Appendix C of Form 100, with research involvement four days per week. Section 6.8.3.3 of the NSERC Peer Review Manual provides clear guidelines as to how applications from Emeritus professors are to be evaluated, indicating that a direct comparison with application 9436-2010 appears to be appropriate.

"Applications from Adjunct and Emeritus professors are evaluated using the same criteria, scale and indicators as all other applicants, supplemented by consideration of the extent of the applicant's contributions to research, including involvement with other faculty and the training of HQP. They are assessed against the same expectations as all other established researchers in terms of the quality of their contributions, their proposed work and their training of HQP. "

In addition, NSERC Evaluation Committee members are instructed to incorporate consideration for delays in research productivity into their evaluation of an application. Section 6.8.3.1, quoted below, provides guidelines for evaluating delays in research.

"NSERC recognizes that research productivity and contributions to the training of HQP may be disrupted during periods of pregnancy or early child care (parental leave), whether or not a formal leave of absence was taken, or as a result of other personal circumstances. Administrative leave, illness, disability and other situations may also result in delays in research.

The onus is on the applicant to clearly describe any circumstances that delay research or affect dissemination of research results. Members are asked to be sensitive to the impact of

these circumstances on the level of productivity while ensuring that the quality of research programs supported by NSERC remains competitive.”

I have reason to believe that once the committee factored in consideration for Delays in Research Productivity, that they deemed application 9436-2010 to be of superior ranking to that of 19361-2010. As I do not have access to application 9436-2010 or to the committee’s deliberations, I cannot be certain however.