

In scientists we trust: peer review and funding path breaking research

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Keeping Researchers in Mind

European Forum on Philanthropy and Research Funding

Evaluation workshop series

Oxford, November 2010

Content of presentation

- What is the problem?
- Any solutions?
- Facets of peer review
- Modifications of peer review: an example
- The limits of change

What is the problem?

- Excellent research and path breaking research
- Selection through consensual peer review

Consensus about quality is possible but how about consensus about exceptionalism?

Any solutions?

- Abandon path breaking science
- Abandon peer review
- Modify peer review

What modifications are possible?

Peer review at a glance

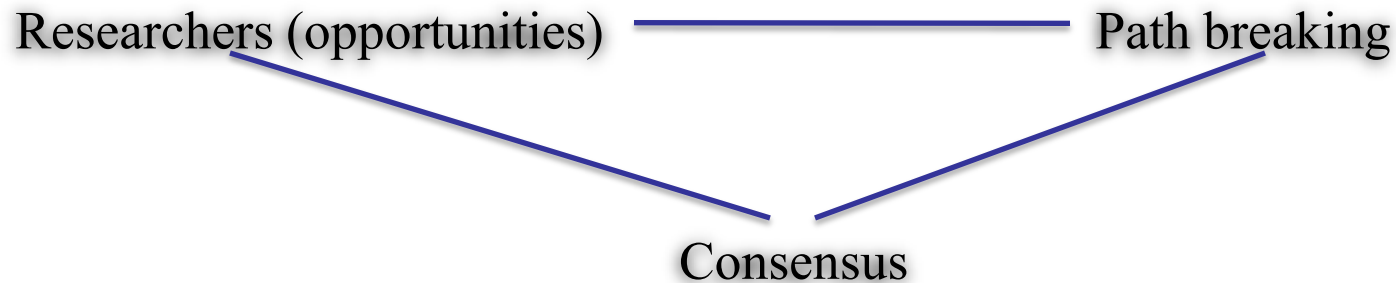
	Research Funding Organisations	Journals and publishers	Conferences	Research organisations
Type of peer review	Consensual peer review Discrete peer judgement	Discrete peer judgement	Discrete peer judgement	Consensual peer review
Procedure	What is assessed? Who chooses the peers? How are the peers elected? How are the meetings conducted? The role of the chair person? The role of the panel officer? 'Institutional' and 'emergent' procedures?	How are the peers selected? Peer pools? Conflict of interest? Blind refereeing?	Cases of disagreement?	Promotion panels rules? Organisational procedures and HR rules? Representation? What is the object of the peer review? References and the rules involved in calling these?
Criteria	How are the criteria for forming the judgement negotiated? Organisational missions and peer review criteria? Are criteria objective or subjective? Excellence or promise?	What are the criteria for forming the judgement? Conflict of interest? Excellent research? What is a good paper?		How much is enough? What is good research? Who is a good teacher? The balancing act: who does what?
Outcome	Who enacts the outcome?			

Peer review: variation axes

- Subject
 - Research
 - Researchers
 - Opportunities
- Criteria
- Deliberation
 - Consensus
 - Dissent

Peer review configurations

- Configuration 2



The Howard Hughes Medical Institute

- A portrait
- The story of success
- How do they do it?

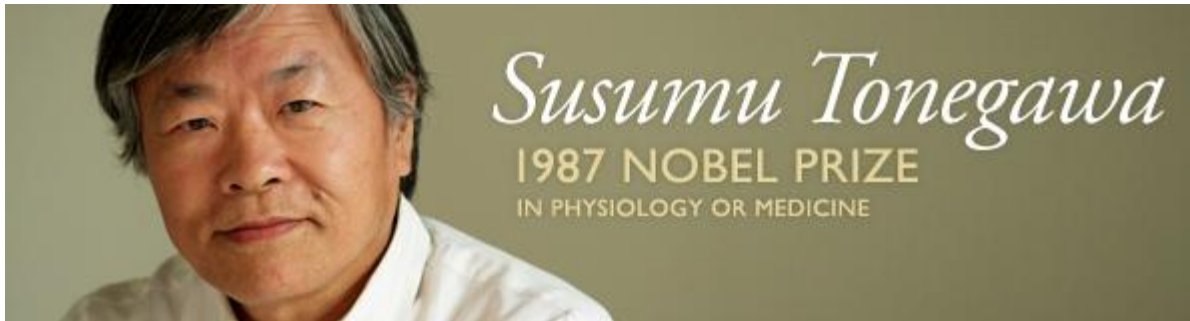
HHMI coffee area and library



View towards surrounding park



A story of success: the beginning



A story of success: the process

Between 1987 and today HHMI investigators have 15 Nobel Prizes.

In 2004 two HHMI investigators shared the NP.

In 2009 HHMI investigators got two NPs.

A story of success: Thomas Steitz, 2009, Chemistry



A story of success: Jack Szostak, 2009, Physiology or Medicine



How do they do it?

- Select people – “identify talent and throw loads of \$ - path breaking things follow”
- No proposal as such - an essay of 3,000 (achievement and future intentions)
- Three stage peer review process
 - HHMI officers
 - Discrete peer review
 - Peer review panel

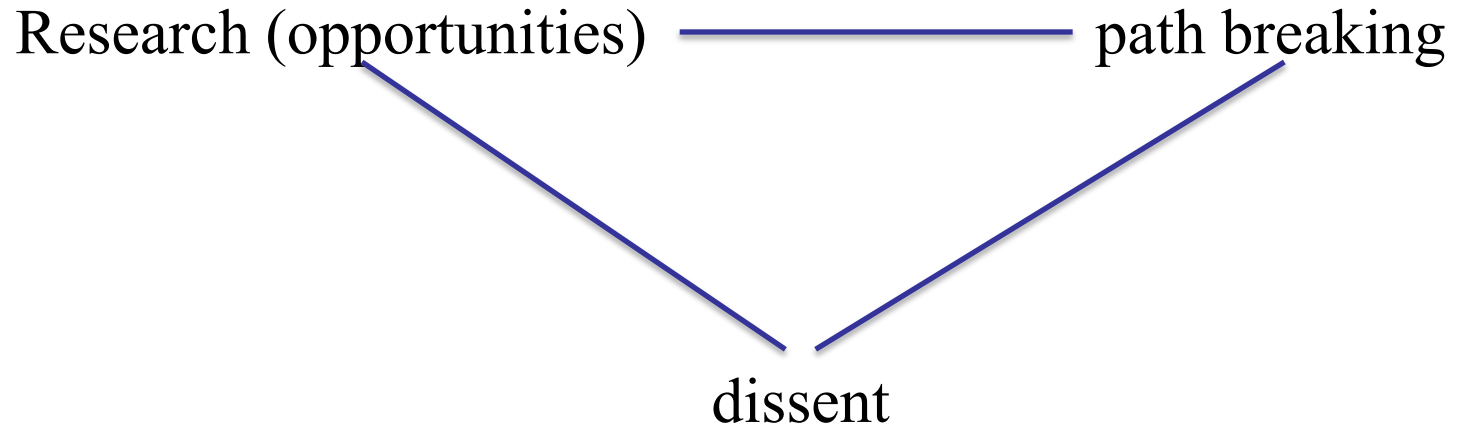
How do they do it?

- Criteria – ‘what will be the implications for the research field if this person is not funded?’
- Award for five years
 - No evaluations during this time
 - Peer review at the end
 - Report on what has been done – five papers and how did these change the research field

Limits to change

- Private - public
- Abundance – scarcity
- Risk - safety

Configuration 3?



Thank you for listening!

Any questions?

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