Reviewer Guidelines for Proposals, OCEA 130/230, Spring 2012

**Background:** The purpose of this exercise is to familiarize the class with how panel reviews work, and to provide feedback (for those who want it) on their proposals. We will run this similar to a real NSF proposal.

For reference, the current success rate for NSF is about 10-15%. This means that many highly rated proposals are not funded. However, the system works well, and most people feel that it is fair.

**Ratings:** Similar to NSF, we will rate proposals on the following criteria:

- **Excellent**—no or very minor problems. Should be funded.
- **Very Good**—strong proposal, some aspects could be improved
- **Good**—proposal has merit but there are multiple issues
- **Fair**—proposal is substantially flawed in methods, background, etc.
- **Poor**—proposal should be started over from the beginning

**Panel Assignments:** For each proposal, there are 2 primary assignments.

- **Lead person**—guides discussion. Provide a brief overview of the proposal, what the topic is, what type of proposal, strengths and weaknesses.

- **Second person**—provide additional comments. Also serve as the “scribe”, taking notes about the proposal to give to the proposal writer (this can be done orally or in written comments after the panel is finished)

- **Other panel members**—should read proposal, comment on it during discussion.

**Each person submitting a proposal for review is Primary and Secondary on one proposal.** For the rest of the class, you can (should!) look at all the proposals, and comment on them during discussion. You can vote on any proposal you feel you have an opinion about.

The **Program Manager** will keep time, total the points, provide additional information if necessary, but does not directly discuss the proposal or vote on it.

**Things to consider as you read or discuss a proposal:**
- Is it well organized and clear?
- Is it exciting (did the author explain why the research should be done?)
- Were the methods, statistics, etc. adequately explained?
- Were the questions/hypotheses testable?
- Could the work be completed if it were funded?
- If we were only funding 10-15% of the proposals (i.e. about 2), would this be one of your most highly rated ones?