

Why American Heart:

- no US residency requirement – foreign students/postdocs welcome
- similar pay but 10K health insurance
- surprisingly more prestigious: success rate 21% v 29% NIH.

Educational:

not a delivery of outcomes defined in Specific Aims.

Criteria:

- **relevance** to AHA goals: – broadly defined, but it cannot be a gimmick.
- **applicant:** very detailed (GREs, undergrad transcripts)
- **mentor:** mentor cannot ride on his/her past educational performance. There has to be detailed Educational Plan (Group meetings; Journal Clubs are NOT enough.)
(The more thoughtful is Educational Plan → the more effort PI put into the AHA application → the bigger is PIs commitment to the applicant)

Criteria cntd. Research Project

- **Research plan:** decent, but make sure that it is not overreaching - it is NOT R01.
- **Clarity and organization:** clear thinking organized student/postdoc is a must
- **Critical:** address potential pitfalls and the ways to deal with them (a must for more advanced applications)
- **Educational:** The research plan should be educational: if you happened to be an expert in the field (postdocs might be) make sure that you emphasize new things/new approaches.
- **Career advancement:** make connection how this particular project fits with your career development.

Evaluation: 3-legged stool analogy

- applicant / mentor / project
- balance is very important:
 - saw great students, great research but not convinced about commitment of the PI;
 - great mentor, great research but the applicant failed organic chemistry as a undergrad.
 - (students coming from the Universities using English grading system: mention different grade scales)

GENERIC comments

- **Panels** are very uneven, wide spectrum of opinions some competent other not quite.
- **Roulette:** unpredictability of the process – it is subjective
- **Resubmission:** panels change every year, resubmissions especially with explicitly the addressed improvements are always scored differently

GENERIC comments cntd.

- **motivation:** why even applying ?
- You get a little financial benefit. It is mainly for your mentor benefit who does not have to spend grant money to support you. However, you will not be considered for **faculty position** unless you had some kind of a grant.

parting advice:

- do not alienate or try to bamboozle the panel.
- Crudely: panels are staffed with people who got grants in the past from the very panels they are serving on. If grantsmanship is bullshitting, your reviewers are master BS-ers.
- As wise man said: do not try to BS a Bullshitter. Unlike your 4-5 membered committees, 20+ members panels will have an expert in your field. If an expert on the panel says your arguments are dubious, or your familiarity with field is not impressive, you are doomed – panels defer to experts.