National Aeronautics and Space Administration

EXPLORE
SOLAR SYSTEM&BEYOND

No-Due Date (NoDD) Programs

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Updates on PSD R&A Programs

General Updates

- Program statistics will now be posted on NSPIRES with the abstracts of selected proposals. Official statistics will no longer appear in selection letters.
  - Better access for the entire community
  - Provides the ability to update numbers in case of changes
- Compliance: We have new and better tools for automatic (administrative) compliance checking (e.g. margins, font size). These have dramatically improved our ability to identify non-compliant proposals.
  - All compliance issues are verified by a Program Officer (PO)
  - Non-compliant proposals may be returned without review
- We are looking for ways to ensure that data are properly archived and that papers get into PubSpace, even after a grant ends
  - This is being worked at the SMD level

Planned Changes in ROSES21

- We will be using DAPR (Dual Anonymous Peer Review) for all DAPs (Data Analysis Programs)
  - Early data from DAPR programs are encouraging, but stay tuned as we get more data
- Change for “duplicate” proposals:
  - For programs with due dates: proposals may not be submitted to more than one program per ROSES year, or if currently under consideration by another program covered by C.1.
  - For NoDD proposals: no proposal may be submitted if it was previously submitted to any program (whether NoDD or otherwise) within the past year (12 months).

COVID Augmentations

The high level of response to the Expressions of Interest (EOI) resulted in tightened constraints on requests.

As of January 8, PSD had received 40 requests (including 3 cross-divisional requests) totaling ~$4.5M. This is over half of the funding available for such augmentations.

The PSD Process:

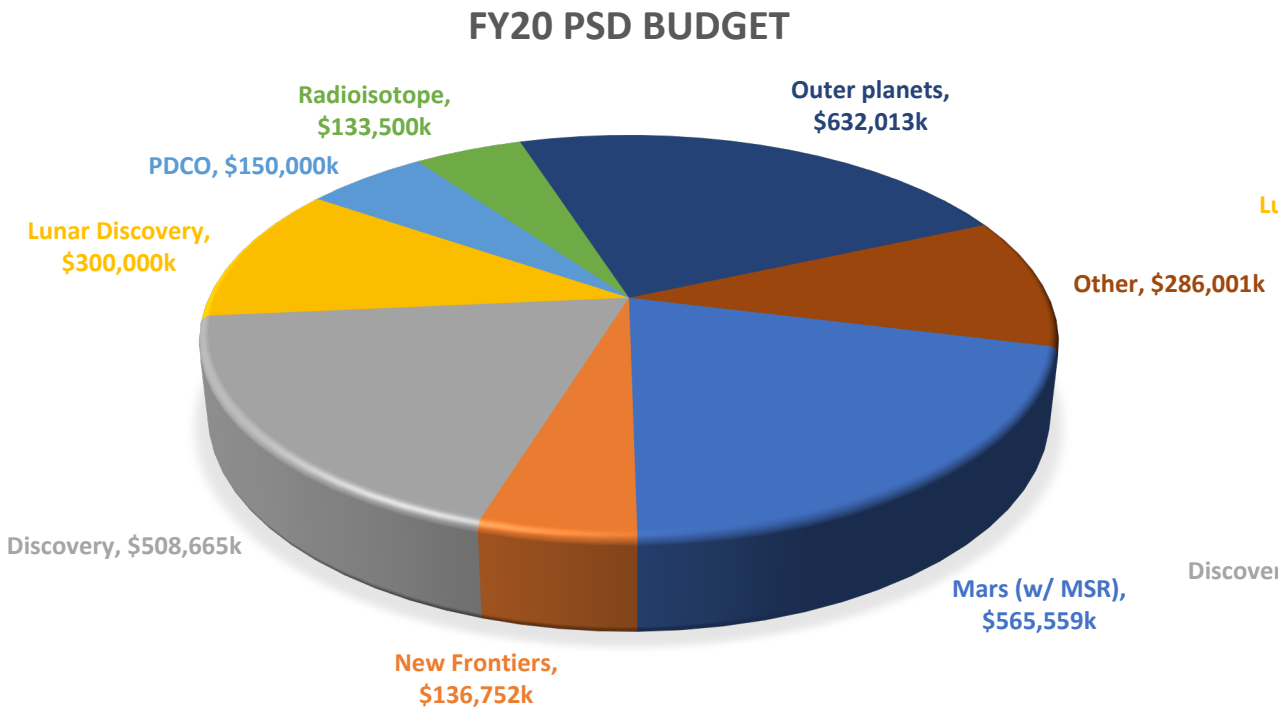
- Check each request for eligibility
- Place eligible requests into priority bins
- Send out funding for highest priority bins
- Repeat as additional requests arrive

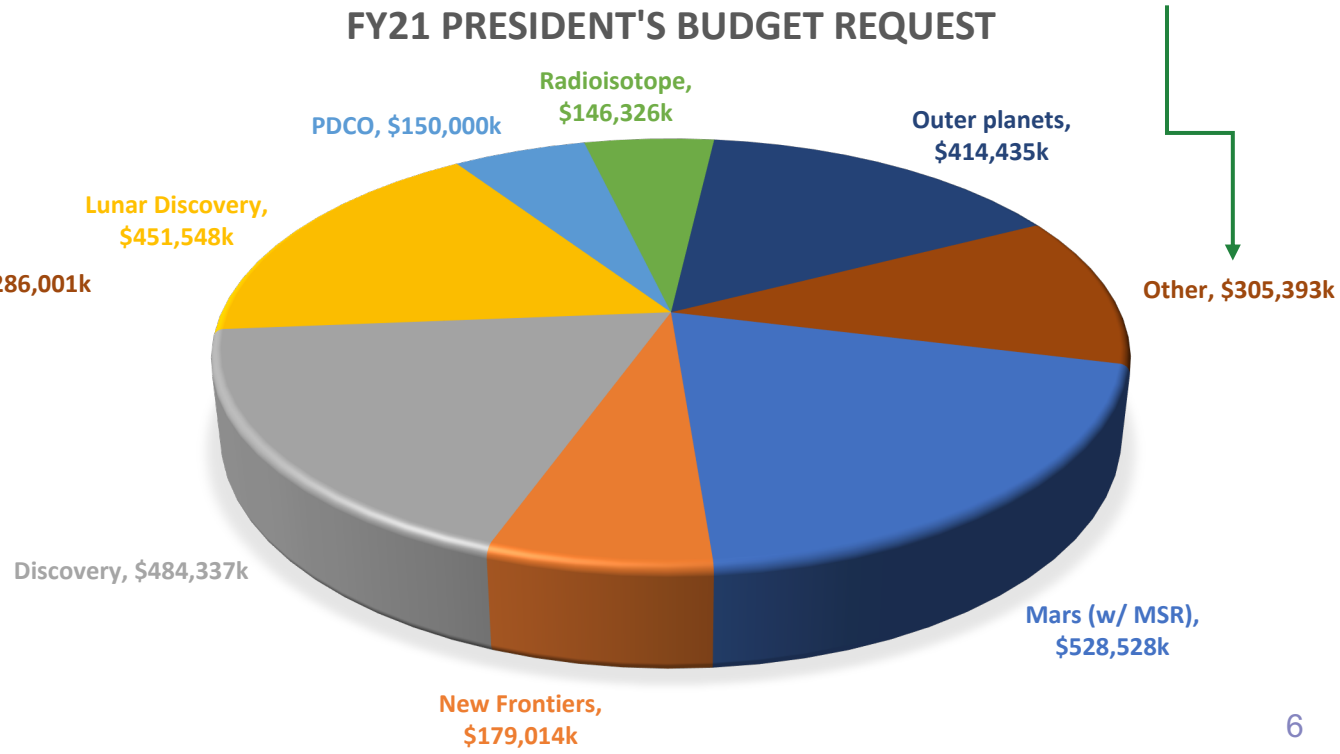
Unfortunately, PSD does not anticipate being able to provide full funding to all received requests.

Budgets

NASA's FY21 Appropriation has been passed: HQ is working on developing an operating plan now.

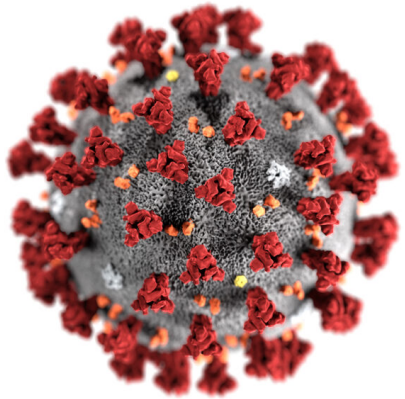
R&A is located here along with several other programs….





No Due Date Programs (NoDD): Why?

Flexibility for Proposers



COVID highlighted the challenges faced by proposers, but every year we see proposers who are unable to meet deadlines because of factors beyond their control:

- Illness
- Wildfires
- Hurricanes
- Family circumstances

Or, as we call it: Life

Other Advantages of NoDD for the PIs and the larger community

- Eliminates conflicts between due dates
- Provides flexibility for small institutions
  - Important for diversity
  - Increased time flexibility for thinly staffed AOR departments
- Separates inspiration from the proposal cycle
  - Have a great new idea? You can submit it without having to wait up to a year for the next call. **Less time between having an idea and proposing it!**
- Allows proposers to participate in reviews more readily

Advantages of NoDD for NASA

- Provides additional flexibility for Program Officers to manage workload
- Spreads budget risks naturally across programs
- Reduces proposal pressure

Risks/Concerns

- Need to ensure that selection decisions continue to get out promptly.
- Need a clear budget draw-down plan to ensure funding availability throughout the year.
- Exert diligence in addressing all potential conflicts of interest
- **These concerns were all addressed in putting together the implementation plan.**

NoDD Implementation

Core Principles

1. No due dates means no due dates: real, implied, or inferred
   - Seamless transition between years (ROSES, FY, etc.)
2. Maximize flexibility in timing of reviews
   - Potentially may be able to notify proposers of results faster

What changes for proposal submission:

The seven NoDD programs (EW, SSW, PDART, Exobiology, SSO, PICASSO, and LARS) no longer have due dates. A proposal may be submitted to any of these programs at any time, with the following caveat:

- No proposal may be submitted to any NoDD program if it was previously submitted to any program covered by C.1 in the past year (12 months).
  - This applies even if the proposal was substantially revised on previous review
  - This applies even if the proposal was submitted to a different program under C.1 (even if that program is not also NoDD)
  - If a proposal is returned without review, it does not count as a submission for this purpose

Amendment of calls

In any given year, sometimes circumstances warrant an amendment to a Program Call. Amendments may still be made to NoDD programs:

- Amendments that would not result in changes in proposal eligibility (i.e., effect the eligibility of some proposals for a given program) may be made without delay.
- Amendments which reduce scope in a program will have a delayed effective date to allow proposals currently in work to be submitted.
  - If the affected proposals would be eligible for submission to a different program, this delay may be very short.

Review Principles

Reviews must continue to:

- Maintain high quality
- Provide selections in a reasonable timeframe

Reviews will be carried out on a rolling basis as proposals come in.

Two innovations in reviews for NoDD:

- Rolling Evaluation Panels (REPs)
- Triage

Review procedures will vary somewhat from program to program, *as they do now* – there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution for reviews.

Review Innovations I (REPs)

Reviews will be carried out on a rolling basis. To do this, we have:

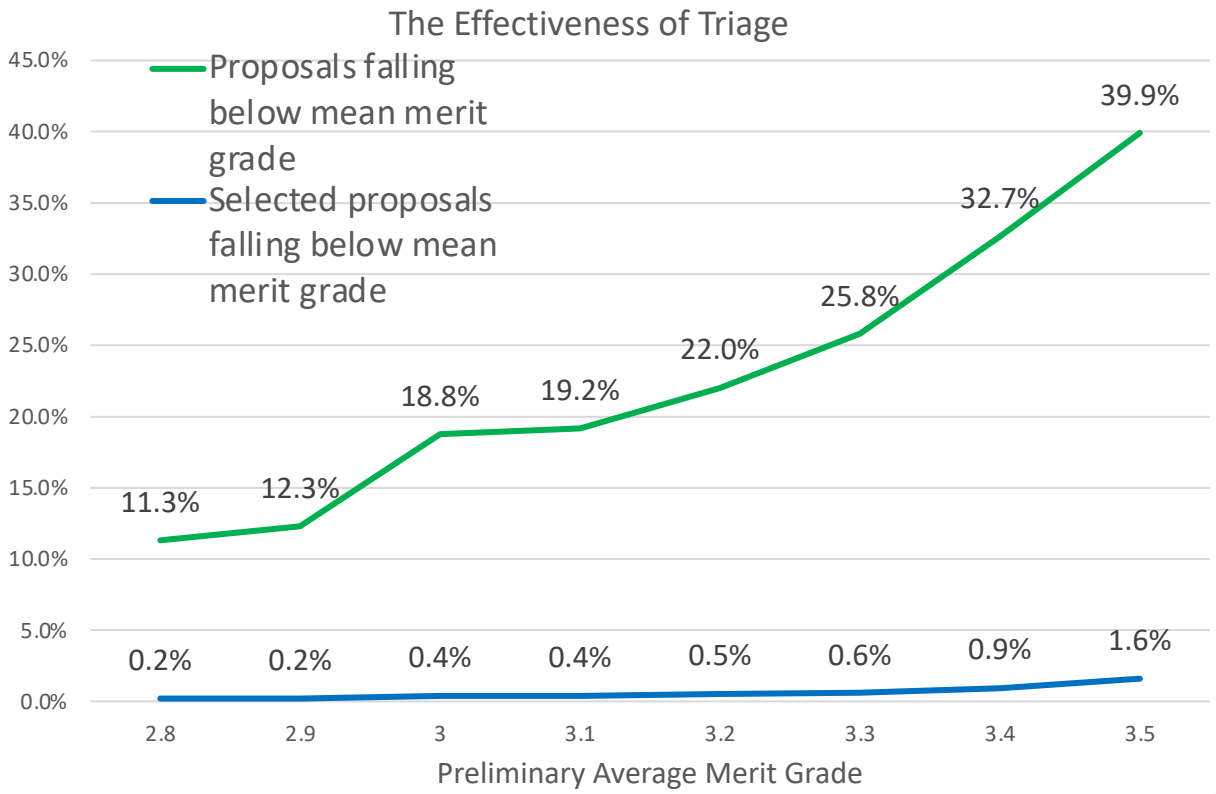
- Rolling Evaluation Panels (REPs): The REPs will consist of people who have agreed to be reviewers for a program
  - Each REP member will agree to a defined term of service (e.g., 6 months; 10 total reviews) as defined by the individual programs
  - There is a four-month “cooling off” period following the the end of service before the reviewer may submit a proposal as PI: this is to allow proposals they reviewed to “clear” the system without creating conflicts
  - REP members will give POs a list of major (financial) conflicts when they join the REP.
  - If you submit a proposal, you can be a member of the REP as soon as your proposal is no longer under consideration (i.e., the proposal was Selected or Declined).

Review Innovations II (Triage)

With NoDD, REPs will also take advantage of triage: this has been done before for a number of programs outside of PSD, as well as for FINESST

- Triage can be used to make determinations for a small number of proposals with little risk of “losing” proposals that would otherwise get funded.

- Triaged proposals would not be discussed in panel but would get a review that summarizes the findings of the pre-panel individual reviews.



How does NoDD affect selections?

NoDD programs cannot use the same metrics for notification times as programs with due dates. Larger programs will tend to have faster notification times than smaller programs, but across all NoDD programs, we set two new metrics:

1. The average time to notification will be 150 days or less
2. The maximum time to notification will be 225 days or less

Budget for programs will be spread evenly across the year, and we anticipate that some proposals will initially be made Selectable to buffer proposal submissions to budget availability. No proposal will be held in Selectable status for longer than 6 months, and all proposers will receive a final Select/Decline letter.

Metrics for success

Primary measure of success: Are proposers taking advantage of flexibility?

- Metric: What is the decoherence time of proposal submission? (e.g., how are proposal submissions spread through the year?)

Secondary measure of success: Do we have a reduced burden of proposals/reviews?

- Metric: Does the overall rate (proposals per year) of submissions change?

Things we will watch for:

To be successful, NoDD also should not have negative unintended consequences. We will be watching:

- Mean and maximum notification times
  - Are notifications timely?
- Demographics of proposers and proposing institutions
  - Are there any unanticipated negative impacts on underrepresented communities? (or positive impacts?)

Other Evaluation Criteria

NoDD will initially be implemented on a 3-year trial basis: throughout this time, we will monitor and evalute how it works with an eye toward potential improvements/modifications and potentially other metrics for judging success.

Additionally, we anticipate seeking community feedback during the third year of the experiment on how NoDD is working:

- Focus on feedback on what's working, what requires refinement, and helpful suggestions for NoDD improvements

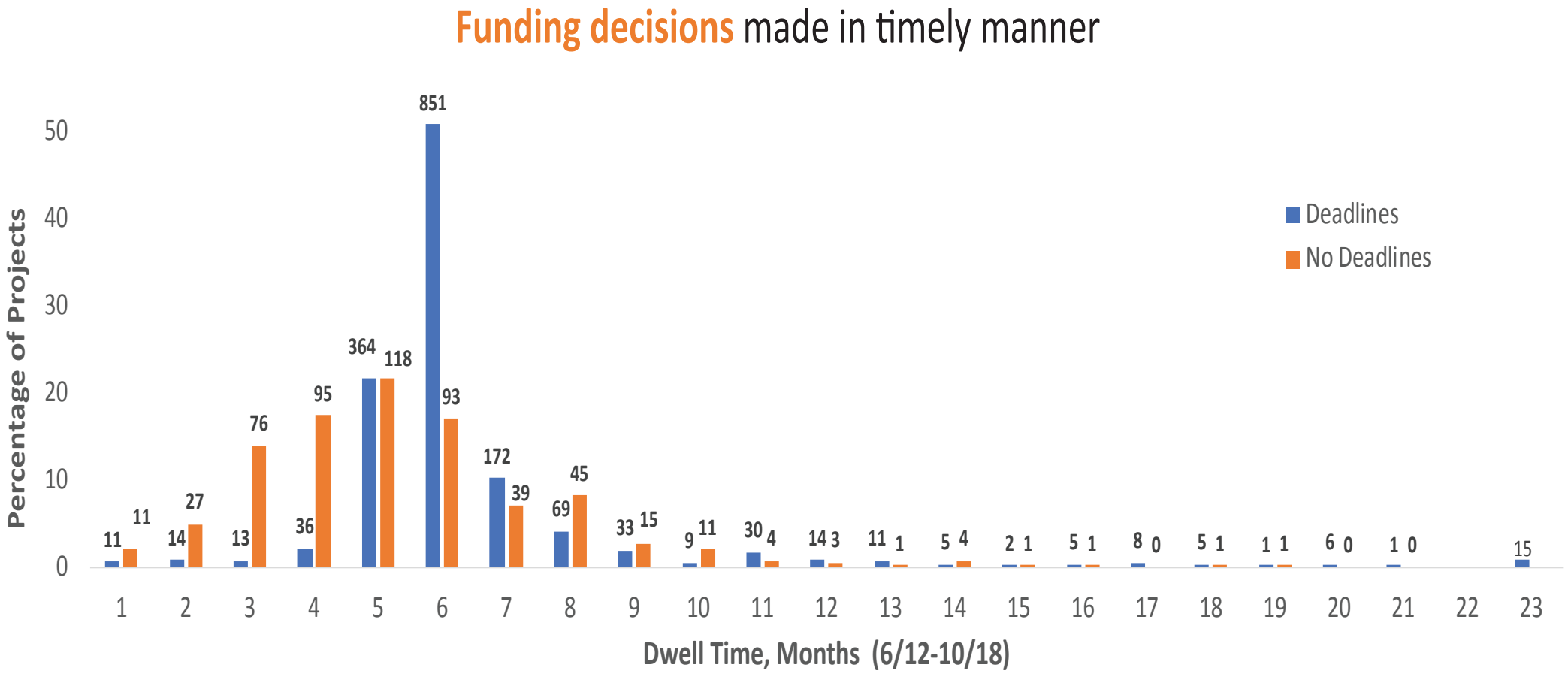
Summary

- NoDD has positive benefits for everyone:
  - More flexibility
  - Reduced time from a great new idea to funding
  - Spreads budget risk across programs more evenly
- Implementation addresses risks:
  - Timely notification of PIs
  - Manages budget over year

Backups

NSF Outcomes (Timing)

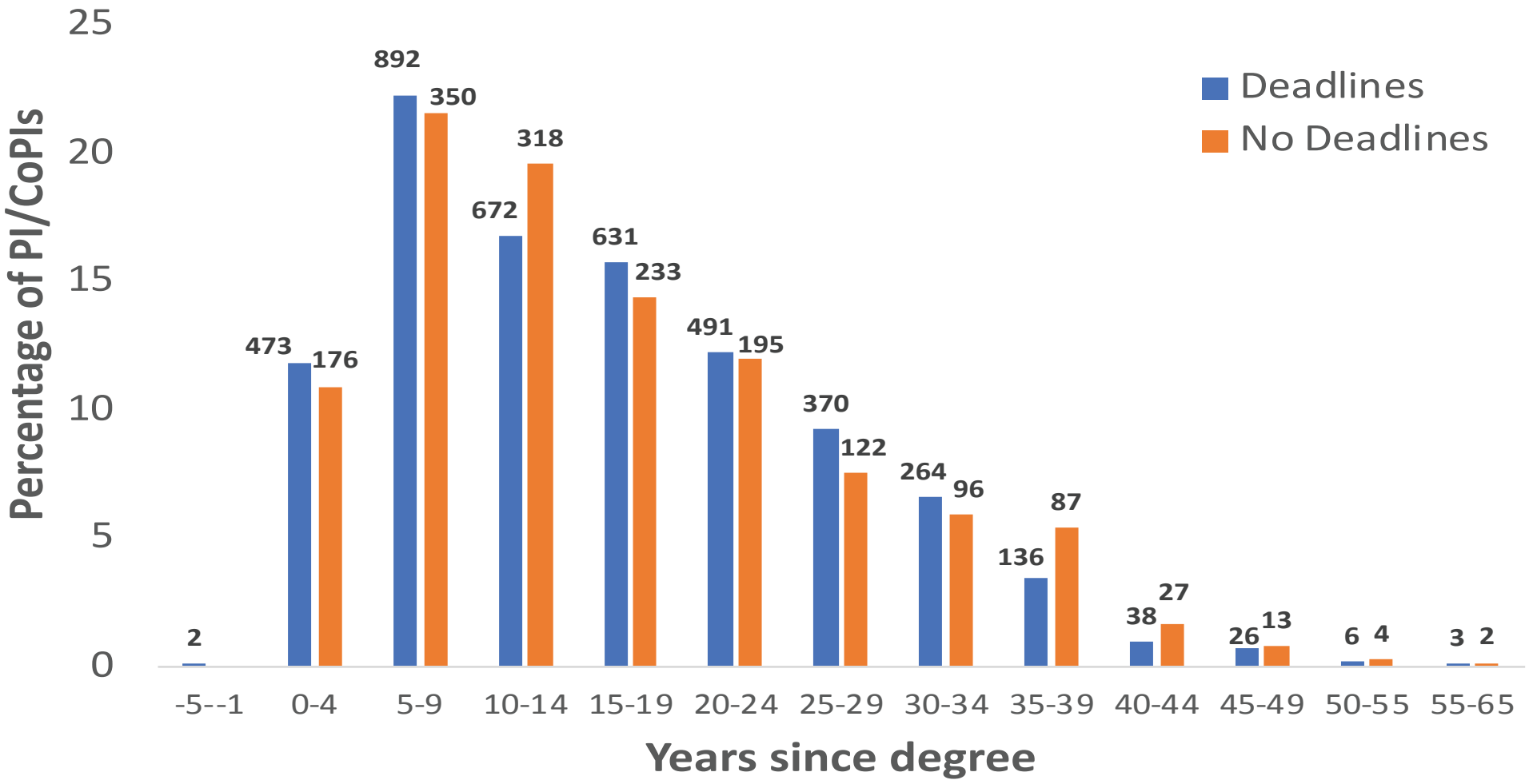
Jensen, et al. 2018
AGU 2018, PA33G-3454



Dwell time (time from submission to award decision) of projects submitted to GG, GLD, HS, SGP programs. The number above each bar is the total number of projects submitted for the reciprocal time periods before and after removing deadlines.

Jensen, et al. 2018
AGU 2018, PA33G-3454

NSF Outcomes (career stage)



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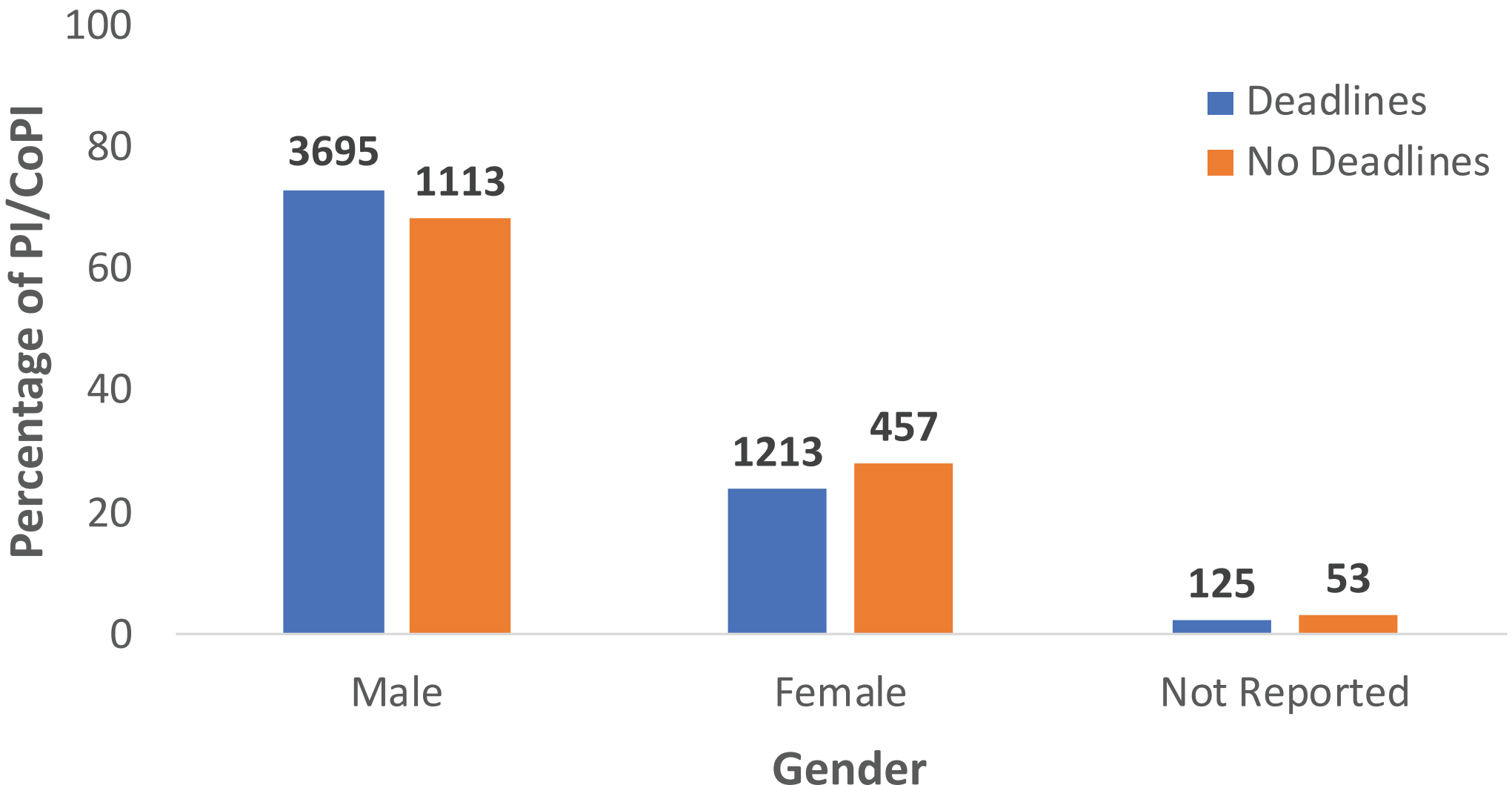
NSF Outcomes (Gender)