

Date: September 17, 2010

From: National Science Foundation

Marine Geology and Geophysics, Biological Oceanography Programs

To: Ridge 2000 Office, Dan Fornari R2K Office Head

Subject: Changes in Ridge 2000 Program for 2011, 2012

Dear Dan:

Thank you for your recent visit to NSF to present the on-going R2K community activities and plans for the near future. NSF concurs with you that the R2K Program (and RIDGE before that) greatly enhanced our knowledge of ridge-related science. We are also aware that this could not have been accomplished without a dedicated program. By all measures RIDGE/R2K has been successful in advancing interdisciplinary marine science and is something to be proud of. You, along with all previous chairs of the R2K Steering Committee, are to be congratulated for providing excellent leadership over the program's nearly 20-year tenure. And you, in particular, have made a valiant effort to keep the program going past its midterm review. Thank you for all for efforts on behalf of NSF and the community.

At this stage NSF's prime consideration must be as a course of action that serves the community best. R2K has been in a synthesis/integration mode for a few years now and such integrative studies must, of course, continue. However, in view of the falling proposal pressure (which includes an increasing rate of resubmittals), it is felt by the Division that the community would be better served if we returned reviewing all future ridge-related proposals to the Core panels. Separating the review of Ridge proposals to once-a-year special panel in 2007 was made necessary mostly due to proposal pressure. That reason now no longer exists. Thus, in 2011 there will be no special competition for R2K. Instead, all future ridge-related proposals will be welcomed back in the Core panels and the R2K as a special initiative will formally come to an end in 2012 after a long and successful run and proud legacy.

We feel that the early reintegration of R2K into Core and removing the programmatic confines imposed by the R2K mid-term review will help invigorate and broaden ridge science by providing PIs more flexibility by allowing ridge-related proposals to be submitted to two, as opposed to one, competition a year. It also allows all compelling ridge-related ideas to come forth, including new field programs anywhere along the global ridge system. In the next two years, however, NSF especially encourages submission of R2K integration and synthesis proposals that capitalize on the last eight years of focused R2K research as these will lead to insights that will stimulate new lines of inquiry and will be important for casting R2K in the best light, in its end-of-program documentation.

We know that considerable work has been done by the R2K community to prepare for the 2010 Portland Meeting and that many groups are working on collaborative projects related to integration and synthesis. Having a 2011 February proposal target through the Marine Geology and Geophysics and Biological Oceanography programs will allow researchers at the meeting who are developing ideas to submit their proposals for consideration earlier than would otherwise be possible.

Once again, thank you Dan. We hope you will share this letter with the R2K Steering Committee and the broader community of mid-ocean ridge researchers the program has fostered.

Yours truly,

For the R2K Program

Barbara Ransom, Rick Carlson, Bilal Haq, Larry Harding, Dave Garrison,
Rodey Batiza and Phil Taylor