

Is Bridge Funding the Right Investment?

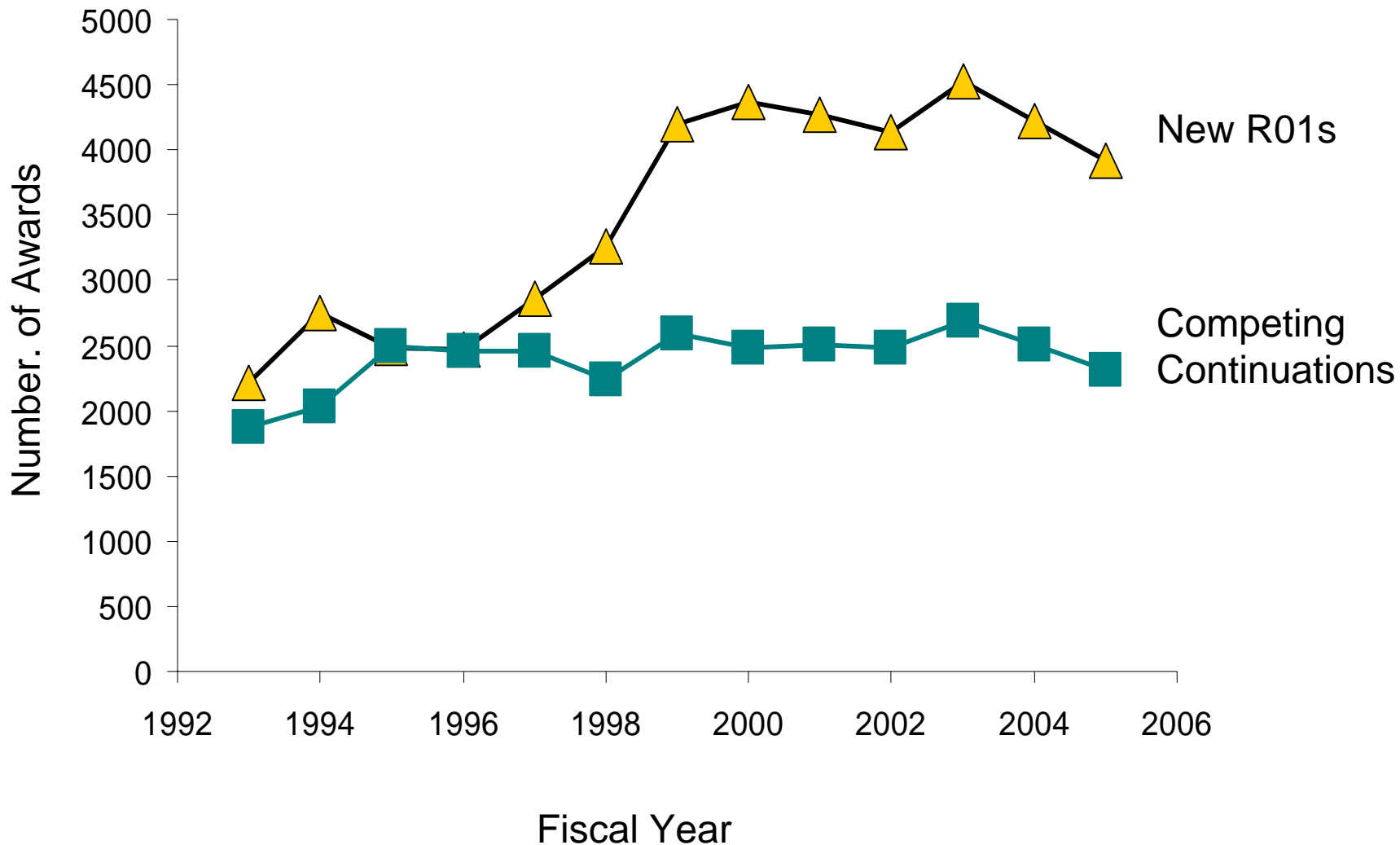
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Data Sources: Zerhouni congressional testimony 2005
<http://grants2.nih.gov/grants/award/>

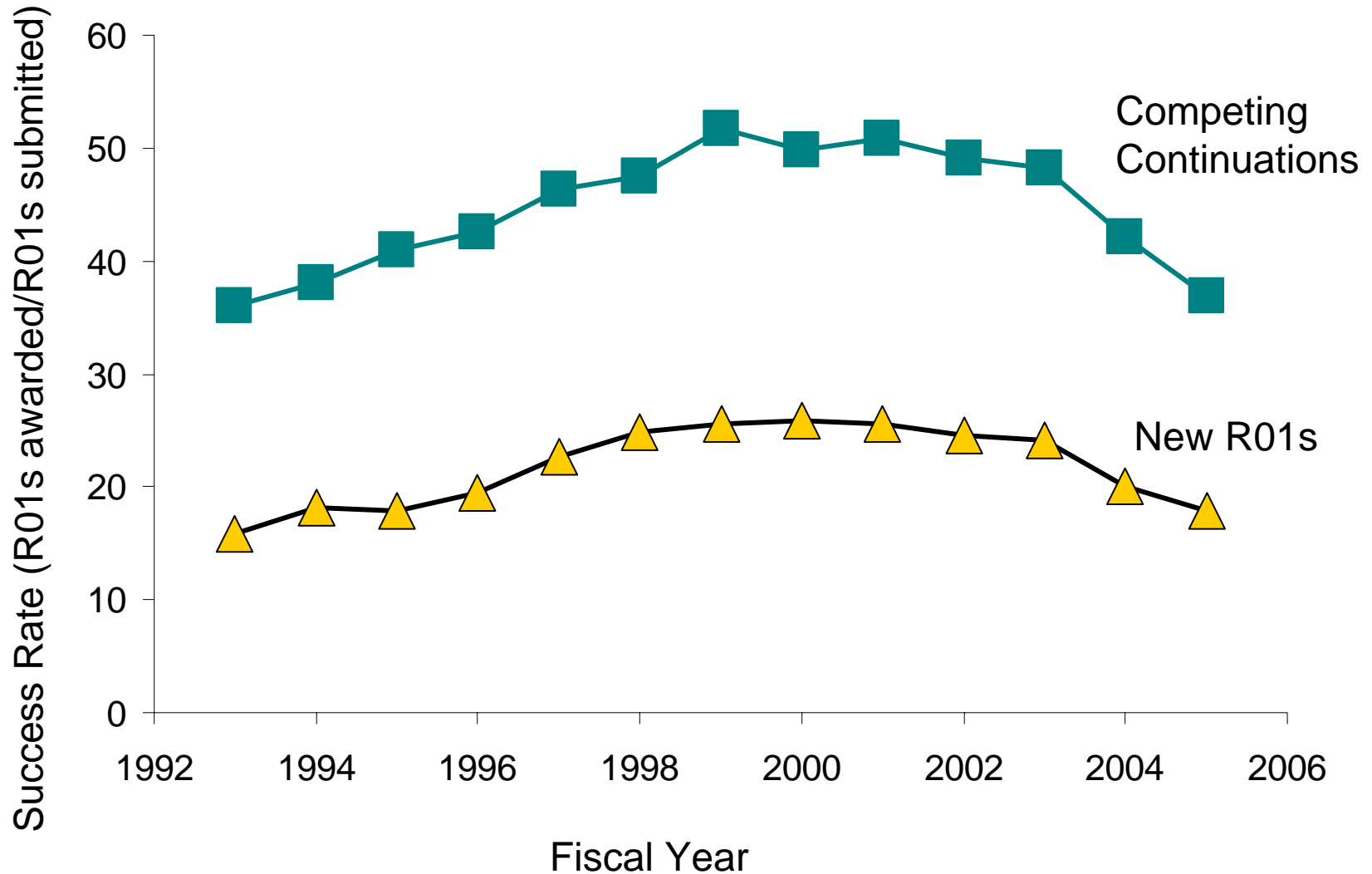
Investigators Who Have Suffered Lapses in NIH Funding Do Come Back

~1225		Number of investigators first funded by R01/R29/R23 in 1990
543	44%	Investigators first funded in 1990 with active NIH support in 2003
186	15%	Investigators with no lapse in NIH funding
357	29%	Investigators with gaps in their NIH support but with active support in 2003

The Increase in Funded RO1s that Began in 1999 Is not Yet Leading to an Increase in Successful Competing Continuations



Submit Your Competing Continuation!



Is Bridging a Good Investment?

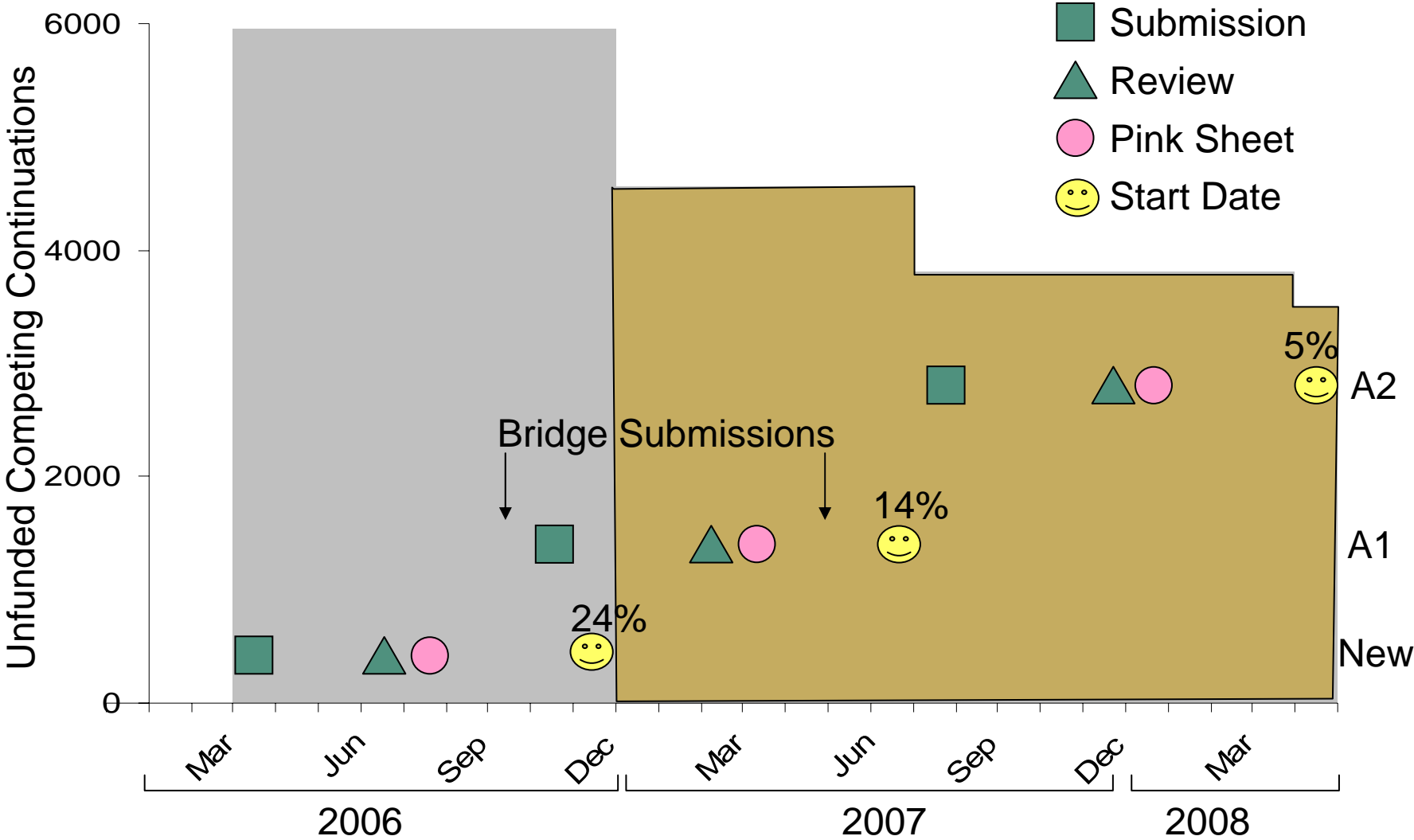
2004 NIH Data – R01s

- 5960 Competing continuations submitted
 - 1404 funded
 - 4556 not funded
 - 24% success (relative to 5960 submissions)
- A1 Submission of competing continuation
 - 745 funded
 - 3811 not funded or not re-submitted
 - 14% success (relative to 5960 submissions)
- A2 Submission of competing continuation
 - 326 funded
 - 3485 not funded or not resubmitted
 - 5% success (relative to 5960 submissions)

Is Bridging a Good Investment ?

- Assumption: Medical School receives 1% of annual 2004 NIH awarded dollars
- 60 Competing continuations submitted
 - 14 funded
 - 46 not funded
- A1 Submission of competing continuation
 - 8 funded
 - 38 not funded or not re-submitted
- A2 Submission of competing continuation
 - 3 funded
 - 35 not funded or not resubmitted

Bridge Funding Timeline for Competing Continuations



A Proposed Plan for Bridge Funding: A Shared Responsibility among the Investigator, the Department, and the School

- Investigators should be cognizant of the new climate and begin planning in the last two years of their grants for carry forwards that will allow some funding during a no-cost extension year
- If any returns to the investigator from the school/department are budgeted (IER or saved faculty salary), these should be managed thoughtfully and used as the first source of bridge funding
- The department should bear at a minimum the responsibility for the salary components of faculty and graduate students previously charged to the grant as well as space costs.
- The School should set aside funds that can be applied for as the original grant expires (after the first review) and/or nine months later (after the A1 review)

A Proposed Plan for Bridge Funding: Eligibility

- Tenure-track investigators
- The investigator's NIH (R-series only), NSF or VA competitive renewal application was not funded.
 - A new application is not eligible unless it substitutes for an existing research grant or it is from a starting investigator with demonstrated success but without an R01 equivalent.
- The competitive renewal does not necessarily have to have scored within X percentile points of the most current NIH institute payline
- The application can be submitted after the initial review, just prior to the grant's end date with a request for \$30,000, and/or after the A1 review with a maximum request for \$70,000 (\$40,000 if \$30,000 has already been awarded)
- Applicants with multiple active grants can apply, but are held to a more stringent standard
- Departments must provide at least a 1:1 match

A Proposed Plan for Bridge Funding: Application Procedure

- The competitively **reviewed grant application (both for A1s)**
- The **NIH pink sheets** or NSF/VA evaluations of the competitive renewal.
- A draft of the three-page **rebuttal** to be submitted with the revised application
- A **one-page statement from the PI** with other information that strengthens the case
- A **budget**
 - Summary of other bridge funds that are available and that have or will be used to assist in the bridging process
 - Plan for expenditures of the School funds
- An endorsement and commitment **letter from the chair**

A Proposed Plan for Bridge Funding: Selection and Funding Procedure

- A sub-committee of the Research Advisory Committee evaluates requests and recommends action
- Awards depend on availability of funds and are made at the discretion of the Dean
- Funds are transferred to the investigator's account in three quarterly payments, each payment upon receipt of a letter to the Associate Dean for Research, signed by both investigator and chair, verifying that additional external funding has not yet been secured

The Bridging Plan Was not Endorsed by Department Chairs and not Implemented

- It was clear that funds set aside in the Dean's Office would have to come from someplace
 - Funds that otherwise would go to the departments
 - If "new" money was available, it might have been more acceptable
- Department chairs have the best sense of what a faculty member needs and is likely to produce
- Strong departments were fearful that they would "lose"
 - Some had plans of their own in place
- Some departments wanted standardized guidelines to aid their decisions
- Use of reserves in faculty accounts were discussed as a departmental source, but the concept of a "loan" that would be repaid when needed inspired distrust
- What happens when departmental reserves are exhausted?

Bridge Funding: Issues for Discussion

- Mentoring with the pink sheet is critical to decision making.
 - When does it make sense to fund the re-shaping of a research program with the acquisition of new skills via an on-site or off-site sabbatical, rather than bridging?
- With loss of funding so likely, what strategies should chairs follow to maintain vital departments?
- Are we being wise in allocating huge resources to recruit “stars” from our colleagues/competitors?