NSF CAREER Workshop

Otis
History

- Applied July 2006 – rejected
- Waited one year to build publication record
- Applied July 2008 - successful
What is the CAREER?

• Not a lot of $$. One student/year for 5 years.

• Good visibility within your community.

• Not a requirement for tenure.

• A great opportunity to develop your 5-year vision...
Recipe for success

1. Provide a very clear and complete literature review with a ton of references. Have a grad student help you with this.

2. Need one clever idea/hook.

3. Need to support the hook with convincing and understandable preliminary results.

Do I need to call/visit the PM?

• Possibly helpful, but not necessary

• Consider first submitting a regular NSF proposal to your PM (on a different topic)
  – This will give you visibility even if it’s not funded
  – Will also give you an early chance to navigate the NSF program structure
A panelist’s perspective...

• The panelists are reviewing a wide variety of proposals – they won’t all be qualified to judge your proposal

• They need to see an appropriate blend of excitement and believability

• They are desperately seeking weaknesses in proposals – don’t give them a thread to pull on...
Misc advice

• Use LaTeX. More robust, more fun, you’ll take more pride in your document.

• Show a draft to 2 or 3 trusted colleagues (your old advisor? mentor?)

• Make an attempt on your first year. Your proposal may be a bit anemic if you didn’t do a postdoc, but it will help shape your research.