MEMORANDUM

To: VSoE Faculty

From: Maja Matarić
Vice Dean for Research

Nichole Phillips
Director of Research Administration

Date: Thursday, 7 March, 2013

Subject: Update on NSF Changes: Cost-Share, Broader Impacts, Organizational Support, Bio Sketches

In January 2013, NSF implemented new criteria for proposals, described in the Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures document NSF 13-001. This memo clarifies the major changes; all these are already in effect.

Cost-share: As a reminder, in January 2011, NSF revised its policy so that except when required in an NSF solicitation, inclusion of voluntary committed cost-sharing is prohibited. Per the guidelines: “In order to assess the scope of the project, all organizational resources necessary for the project (both physical and personnel) must be described in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal. This description should be narrative in nature and must not include any quantifiable financial information.” If NSF finds a violation of the policy during the merit review or budget negotiation, the proposer runs the risk of being rejected without review or declined. The Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section on Fastlane was updated in January 2013 to assist proposers in complying with the NSF cost-sharing policy.

In this year’s guidelines, NSF further clarified that Indirect Costs (F&A) are to be charged at the federally negotiated rates. This means that we will no longer be able to offer a reduced indirect cost (F&A) rate on NSF Career Program proposals. This is not a soft policy; we have already experienced its implementation, as two Career proposals submitted under the previous cost-share guidelines were required to be resubmitted with the full indirect (no cost-share) rates in order for the awards to be issued.

Broader Impacts: Broader impacts must now be included in specific sections within the Project Summary and Project Description sections. The one-page Project Summary must have separate statements that address the following: Overview of the Project, Statement of Intellectual Merit, and Statement on Broader Impacts. The Project Description must contain a separate section with a discussion of the Broader Impacts.
**Organizational Support:** Proposing organizations must now certify that organizational support will be made available as described in the proposal to address the Broader Impacts and Intellectual Merit activities. Randy Hall, Vice President of Research at USC, has instructed that when the Dean’s office approves proposals for submission, it will verify the organization commitments associated with the broader impacts and intellectual merit activities. Consequently, all proposals being routed for Viterbi signatures must be at the point where both the Broader Impacts (as per above) and Organization Support statements are clearly included as required. Proposal drafts lacking this information will not be approved, regardless of timing relative to the submission deadline.

**Bio Sketches:** Another important change is to the Biographical Sketch(es), where NSF revised the “Publications” section to “Products” and amended terminology and instructions accordingly. There is still the limit on the number of items/papers, as before. Please review and update your NSF bio sketch accordingly or the proposal will be rejected during the routing/approval process.

Should you have any questions, please contact Nichole Phillips at x03237 or nicholep@usc.edu.

cc: Research Administrators