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GRANT TECHNICAL WRITER SERVICES

Vice President for Research, Dr. Russ Lea, has initiated a long-term effort to provide support for grant writing and to improve the success rate of funded proposals. Working in coordination with the Department of English and the Graduate School, Russ is providing a full scholarship for a Master's level graduate student to work in Research Administration. The graduate student, Ms. Amy Brown, will assist faculty with reviewing their proposals for technical English writing skills, expression, and compliance with agency guidelines. Within a short time, Amy will also be engaged in grant writing especially for large scale, multidisciplinary proposals.

Principal Investigators needing assistance with technical writing or Principal Investigators who have received declined notices are highly encouraged to contact Amy for assistance. Amy's email address is amybrown@usouthal.edu.

Amy Brown
Grant Technical Writer

Contact to improve English language grammar and expression
Contact to improve resubmission of unfunded proposals

amybrown@usouthal.edu

NIH MODULAR BUDGETS ACCEPTED

The National Institutes of Health offers a modular budget format for a number of funding programs. These include the R01, R03, R15, R21, and any others defined by NIH. The modular budget is comprised of \$25,000 block increments instead of a line-item budget.

Effective immediately, Principal Investigators are not required to provide a detailed budget form during the submission process of proposals allowing modular budgets.

From NIH:

In modular grant applications, total direct costs not exceeding \$250,000 per year in any year, will be requested in \$25,000 increments instead of being compiled from detailed and separate budget categories. Applications requesting more than \$250,000 in any year will be required to follow the traditional application instructions and applicable NIH policies. For more information: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/modular/modular_review.htm

PROPOSAL RE-SUBMISSION SUPPORT

Faculty time and effort to write proposals and the loss to the University when proposals are not funded are enormous. For example in 2007, over \$24.7 million was the total dollar amount listed for declined proposals at the University of South Alabama. In order to better assist faculty, the College Assistant/Associate Deans are engaging in active encouragement of Principal Investigators to consider re-submissions of their proposals. Principal Investigators are also invited to use the new services provided by the Grant Technical Writer [see lead article.]

Overall, funding rates significantly improve on the second and third submissions. Paying close attention to the Reviewer's Comments, communication with the Program Officer as applicable, seeking mentored reviews by experienced researchers, and seeking the services of Amy Brown, Technical Grant Writer, are all part of the competitiveness process.

FACULTY INPUT / RESEARCH OPERATIONS COUNCIL

Having met for two quarterly meetings, the newly organized Research Operations Council (ROC) is rapidly becoming a useful tool for communication among staff and offices engaged in Research Administration. The Departmental Grants Administrators, College Grants Administrators, Office of Sponsored Programs, Office of Grants Administration, Office of Grants & Contracts Accounting, Office of Research Compliance, and the Vice President of Research use the ROC to discuss hot topics, training needs, work flow issues, and new federal developments.

Faculty are highly encouraged to communicate their concerns with all facets of research administration to make processes and procedures more user friendly and less cumbersome. While matters of being a responsible researcher cannot be skirted, it is in the best interest of all to maximize time on research.

DoD F&A RESTRICTIONS

The Department of Defense (DoD) FY 2008 budget includes a new provision limiting Facilities & Administrative cost recovery to no more than 35% of the total dollar amount of any award. This provision is contained in Section 8115 of the DoD Appropriations Act of 2008.

Based upon guidance issued by the Council on Governmental Relations, the limit applies, so far, only to "basic research" and only to agreements funded with Fiscal Year 2008 dollars. The provision also applies only to the Prime Awardee. It does not flow down to subordinate (subcontractor) entities.

It is not likely this provision will have an adverse impact upon the University of South Alabama. Only institutions with an indirect cost rate of 56.8% or more stand to lose out on full indirect cost recovery on any award made with these FY 2008 funds.

Here's why:

We submit an Academic proposal budget for \$ 100,000 in direct costs and (assuming no exclusions for equipment, tuition, etc.) \$ 38,000 in indirect costs. DOD awards us the full \$ 138,000. The \$ 38,000 in indirect costs represents only 27.5% of the total award of \$ 138,000. That's well under the 35% cap. The same with the College of Medicine's 47% rate: \$ 47K would be 31.9% of \$ 147K.

UNIVERSITY PROVISIONAL F&A RATES

The University's F&A Cost Rate Agreement will expire and move from Pre-determined Rates to Provisional Rates beginning 10/01/2008. The new rate agreement being negotiated with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will be announced when it becomes available

NSF GOALI PROGRAM / DR. DENIS GRAY

Last month the University hosted a seminar on building collaborations with industry. The seminar was led by Professor Denis Gray who is a nationally recognized strategist in the field of university / industry collaborations. Dr. Gray has extensively studied the institutional practices and leadership traits necessary to sustain productive university/industry collaborative research projects, centers and institutes. Dr. Gray, Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor at North Carolina State University, is a consultant and evaluator to the National Science Foundation (NSF) on capturing the successful elements of large scale Industry/University Cooperative Research Centers (IUCRCs) and was commissioned to write the guide book for forming such collaborations (available at: <http://www.ncsu.edu/iucrc/>).

One of the NSF programs mentioned specifically by Dr. Gray for institutions our size and experience is the NSF Grant Opportunities for Academic Liaison with Industry (GOALI) Program. Proposals are accepted at anytime, however, investigators must contact the Program Officer prior to submission. Funding provided by the NSF GOALI Program focuses on stimulating interactions among faculty, postdocs, students, and industry engineers/scientists.

NSF GOALI

Examples of Proposal Ideas

- An extended faculty visit to industry (of several months duration) to foster industry-university collaboration;
- A faculty visit to industry (of several months duration) at the beginning of a multiple-year university-based research project with the intention of transfer of research results to industry by project's end;
- Visit of a leading engineer, scientist, or manager from industry to a university, to catalyze collaborative research or teach and develop curricula;
- Support for one or two semesters of work in industry by a doctoral student under the guidance of an academic adviser;
- Post-doctoral support for one or two years of work in an industrial setting, under the guidance of an academic mentor in collaboration with an industrial partner;
- Support for a supplement to an existing grant for high-risk/high-gain research in order to gain basic knowledge necessary for development of a generic technology;
- Opportunities for graduate students and faculty to attend planned seminars or carry-out of research;
- Support of untenured faculty for an internship in industry;
- Research Experiences for Industry (REI) opportunity support;
- University-based support for partnering university and industry scientists, or engineers, or both on a research project of mutual interest, including joint graduate student advising. A letter from the industrial collaborator(s) documenting the intention to collaborate should be appended to the proposal;
- Support for interdisciplinary research or educational projects of two or three faculty from different academic units to interact with one or more industrial partners in a virtual industry-university group or network;
- Research support in conjunction with a new industrial chair position,
- Support for continuing education in industry towards advanced degrees; and
- Research Experiences for Teachers in Industry (RETI) to gain research experience in an industrial setting.