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University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture Sponsored Programs Office

2016 July

Office of Sponsored Programs Newsletter

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Message from the Director

> **Happy fiscal new year!** We are grateful to our faculty who contribute to our newsletter. In this issue we are pleased

to include an article on Preparing Big Grants by Dr. Doug Hayes.

In our last newsletter I mentioned that April was a busy month. However, it doesn't compare with the number of proposals we have in the hopper to be submitted July (48 plus Cotton) and August. Email aggrant@utk.edu early to reserve a coordinator and a spot on our schedule. Let us know if you would like an Orange Team Review.

This issue seems to be all about proposals. Doug Hayes has an article addressing planning, Jane Burns writes about communicating with our office, I clarify the deadline policy, and Traci Stanley describes the Orange Team review process.

A significant change for our office is that we are using the FLSA minimum annual salary rates (\$47,476) for exempt personnel that go into effect December 1, 2016. Please check out the article on Postdoc salary and let us know if you have questions.

Also, a shout out to Jane Burns and Courtney Holbert for passing the Certified Research Administrators (CRA) exam! To maintain this certification they will have to complete 80 hours of continuing education every 5 years.

Please make a note of the upcoming Compliance learning opportunities. Especially, the Responsible Conduct of Research workshop scheduled in September. RCR is a requirement for those participating on USDA and NSF projects and is an important part of any training program.

Thank You,
Debbie Hampstead



I have had the privilege of serving as Project Director (PD) for three proposals that involved multiple investigators and universities/institutes. Preparing the proposals was stressful, but provided me leadership skills that have helped my development as a faculty member and scientist. I am writing this article to pass on lessons learned in leading the preparation of “big grants” (a term coined by Stephen Oliver, former Assistant Dean of AgResearch, per the UTIA workshop held in August, 2015), a coordinated effort between the investigators and the OSP.

So, the Request for Applications (RFA) for the “big grant” that you, the “PD-apparent,” have been anticipating has come out. The first decision you need to make: **Is your team ready to apply?** This is a decision that needs to be made quickly and firmly.

The first items of business are :

- 1) to read the RFA carefully and fully;
- 2) send an email to the agency Program Director or other official identified in the RFA with a short synopsis of the proposed project, to ensure that topic is of relevance and interest.

I have listed some criteria to address the key question:

- Is your research topic truly compelling (transformative), and a good fit to the interest expressed in the RFA?
- Do you (as PD) have the time, energy, and motivation to lead?
- Do you have reliable Assistant PD(s) who will invest significantly in the leadership effort, and can be counted on via delegation? (All co-investigators must be competent, reliable, and good team players.)
- Is your team assembled to a significant extent? (Do you have a general understanding of the gaps in the team’s expertise, and sufficient time and a few “leads” to fill them?)
- Do you have a reasonably mature outline of the proposed research plan?
- Do you have a sufficient amount of preliminary data?
- Is the proposed research plan commensurate in scope with the RFA budget guidelines?
- If matching funds are involved, do you have an idea of possible sources? (Warning: The process of raising matching funds is time consuming!)

If you feel your team is not ready at the current time, this is perfectly ok. (A good rule of thumb is that you will have 2-3 attempts to apply/reapply the same proposal idea for a specific program. A poorly prepared proposal ‘pulled together’ at the 11th hour leaves a long-lasting negative impression with a Program Manager and panel!). Consider ways of further developing your team and research plan, such as **conference planning grants** that several agencies support (which are generally funded at a higher percentage than other grants). **UTIA’s AgInnovation Grants** funded a conference grant for a team that I am leading, which was beneficial in us winning the “big grant.” Also, consider leveraging your team’s inter-relationships to apply for “seed” grants to obtain additional preliminary data. Plan a trip to visit with the agency’s Program Manager.

(Note, if you have a good idea of which program that you will apply for, and can assume that the new RFA will not change significantly from those of previous years, you can enter the decision-making process described above earlier, and be ready to go when the new RFA is released.)

IRB Enhancements >>>

Enhancements have been made to the Institutional Review Board procedures. See Memo & updated IRB instructions

- http://taes.utk.edu/upload/AgRsSch/UTKIRBForm1InstructionsJuly2016_compressed.pdf
- <http://taes.utk.edu/upload/AgRsSch/IRBMemotoCampus7-1-16.pdf>.

If you have any questions, please contact the Human Research Protection Program at utkirb@utk.edu.

> Because our office is very involved in the application process, the earlier and more often you communicate with your coordinator, the better. During this busy USDA application season, it's especially important to remember these tips:

- E-mail aggrant@utk.edu or extensiongrant@utk.edu as soon as you decide you might submit a proposal. Include any of this information you have:
 - * Agency
 - * Link to Announcement/RFA
 - * Due Date
 - * Collaborating researchers, campuses, and organizations
- If you don't hear from a coordinator within 2 days, contact our office via e-mail or at 974-7357.
- Your coordinator will help establish a timeline or milestones. Notify him or her of out-of-town trips, other campuses involved, expected consultants/subawards, international collaborators, and other variables that will affect the schedule.
- Let your coordinator know all collaborators (**all co-PIs, consultants, senior personnel, etc.**) and any contact information you have for them. If people or organizations on your proposal change, let your coordinator know immediately. The biggest headaches and delays can be avoided by communicating this as early as possible.
- Tell your coordinator if you will be working on a Research and Education Center (REC). Also, contact the REC Director about the REC's budget.
- Notify your coordinator if you will be working on private land.
- Let your coordinator help with your budget, with the goal to **finalize it early**. Use their expertise.
- If your coordinator asks something, please **respond**. Even if you don't have an answer. "*I hope to know by Wednesday.*" or "*I have no clue. Can you please ask Joe?*" Any answer helps keep things on track.

If you have any questions, contact your coordinator, Jane, or Debbie. We're here to help.

And best of luck on your proposals!



COMPLIANCE CORNER >>>

by Jane Burns

> **Learning Opportunities**—Join us for these upcoming compliance learning events:

- Tuesday, July 12, 2016, Noon - 1:00 pm – **Safety and Research** (Brian Ranger, Biological Safety; Marsha Smith, Radiation Safety; and Jacob Payne, UTIA Safety)
- Tuesday, August 23, 2016, Noon - 1:00 pm – **International Travel and Collaborations-Security Resources** (Special Agent Beth O'Brien, FBI Knoxville)
- Thursday, September 29, 2016, Noon ~ 4:00 pm - **Responsible Conduct of Research Workshop** (Drs. Neal Stewart and Stephen Kania)



If you are working on projects funded by USDA or NSF, you are probably required to have RCR training. RCR training is even required for capacity funding.

This workshop is designed to meet RCR training requirements.

More information on RCR, including CITI training link, is available at the [UTIA RCR](#) website.

All above events are scheduled in Plant Biotechnology Building Room 156/157.

REMINDER ABOUT INTERNATIONAL VISITORS – If you have a visiting scholar who is or will be working with you at UTIA, please contact Jane Burns at janeburns@utk.edu as early as possible. This is in addition to communication with your department and the Center for International Education.

Postdoc Salary on Grant Proposals >>>

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) has set a new minimum annual salary of \$47,476 effective December 1, 2016 for exempt personnel. Although the University working group has not provided official guidance as yet, AgResearch and Vet Med are preparing for the most conservative scenario with postdocs remaining exempt. Since most of the proposals being submitted now will not be funded until after December, UTIA Office of Sponsored Programs, will be using the new minimum exempt salary for postdocs currently paid less than \$47,476. This will ensure that enough funds are available for post doc salaries when the proposal is funded.

Questions regarding the new minimum salary for Postdocs can be discussed with your OSP coordinator.

Research Associates are also currently exempt. PIs should consider budgeting the new minimum salary for any currently exempt position. Questions regarding the appropriateness of using \$47,476 for Research Associates may be discussed with your Department Head.

Orange Team Grant Proposal Review >>>

by Traci Stanley

> UTIA Orange Team Review Process

The UTIA Orange Team Grant Proposal Review is a voluntary program available to PIs to provide peer-review of competitive grant applications prior to submission to the funding agency. PIs may request Orange Team Review for letters of intent and/or project narratives. Upon request the Office of Sponsored Programs initiates Orange Team Review at least 28 days prior to the funding agency's deadline. This maximizes the amount of time the PI has to incorporate the team's suggestions into his/her final proposal.



Program Highlights

Goal: Provide constructive peer-review of letters of intent and/or project narratives

Expected outcome: Higher quality proposals that are more likely to receive external funding

Budget threshold: Approximately \$300,000 (unless the PI is a new investigator)

Expeditious: Review teams are formed quickly with short review periods

Confidential: Reviewers sign confidentiality disclosures and indicate any conflicts of interest

Editing Limitations: The PI should not make any edits until the team completes its review

Orange Team Review Process

1. PI informs the Office of Sponsored Programs pre-award coordinator that he/she wants Orange Team Review.
2. The Office of Sponsored Programs pre-award coordinator sends the following information to the Orange Team Review coordinator (currently Dr. Steve Oliver) at least 28 days prior to the sponsor's deadline.
 - Sponsor's request for applications (if applicable)
 - Letter of intent and/or project narrative
 - PI's list of suggested reviewers
 - PI's list of who should not review
3. The Orange Team Review coordinator recruits three reviewers from the UTIA faculty who have strong records of external funding. If appropriate the Orange Team may include other UT faculty or outside reviewers. They have seven days to review the letter of intent and/or project narrative and share their written comments with the PI.
4. Within seven days of receiving their comments the PI meets with the Orange Team to discuss their suggestions for improvement. This allows the PI two weeks to incorporate their suggestions into his/her proposal.
5. The PI provides the final ready-to-submit letter of intent or proposal to the Office of Sponsored Programs pre-award coordinator at least three business days prior to the sponsor's deadline.
6. The Orange Team Review coordinator and the Office of Sponsored Programs may ask the PI to complete a post-participation survey for program evaluation and enhancement purposes.

> CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Congratulations to Jane Burns and Courtney Holbert who passed the Certified Research Administrators (CRA) exam.

CRA is a nationally recognized certification for research administrators. The designation of Certified Research Administrator (CRA) means that an individual has met the requirements of the Research Administrators Certification Council's eligibility requirements and has demonstrated a level of knowledge necessary for a person to be a professional research or sponsored programs administrator. The benefits of certification are many:

- Professional recognition
- Personal Satisfaction
- An indicator of expertise
- Increased opportunities for employment
- Advancement opportunities
- Increased credibility with clients
- Serve as a role model to others

Proposal Deadline Clarification >>>

by Debbie Hampstead

> **With AFRI proposal deadlines quickly approaching**, I thought I would take this opportunity to remind you of our deadline policy and what happens when our deadline is missed. We already have 20 proposals due July 13/14 alone. Jane and I are the Authorized Officials (AO) who performs the final review and hits the submit button.



Our policy is to have all documents in final form and for Evisions to be certified and approved by all parties and the proposal package is ready for submission to the agency at least **3 business days prior** to the sponsor submission deadline. Final documents include all agency required documents and those from any other UT campus and subrecipient, including a letter of commitment signed by the subs AO and approval from the other UT campus OSP.

The OSP coordinator will work with you on determining a timeline appropriate for your proposal which includes time for preparing your proposal documents, obtaining all approvals, and final review by Jane or me. Documents include: budget, budget

justification, biosketch, conflict of interest, subrecipient forms, cost share approval, etc.

Too many times Jane and I have been submitting proposals that have been slammed together on the deadline day, submitting them without Evisions approval and without review prior to hitting the submit button. Not meeting the deadline is a disservice to those that meet the deadline. When proposals are submitted late it impacts the time we have for those who submitted timely.

Please allow us to work with you as a member of the proposal development team with the goal of submitting a proposal that is complete, thoroughly reviewed, meets agency requirements, resulting in a highly competitive application.

> Office of Sponsored Programs spotlight is on Debbie Hampstead

It is my turn to tell you a little about myself. I am thrilled to be back at the Institute of Agriculture. I have been Director of the UTIA Office of Sponsored Programs since November of 2013. I became a Certified Research Administrator in 2003. My prior grants and contract experience was gained at UTK (5 years) and Vet Med (9 Years). Following graduation, I worked in the laboratory animal field at UT Health Sciences, UTK, and IACUC. I have had the privilege to serve on lots of committees and work with a variety of dedicated people.

Personally, I live in Powell with my husband Bob and have raised two children. I recently became a grandmother June 22 when our son John Paul and his wife Ryan gave birth to Hilary in Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan. My daughter Emily and her husband Ian live in Morgantown, WV. I enjoy scrapbooking, gardening, tracking my ancestry, and serving at Messiah Lutheran Church.

Stop by and visit our office in 224/225 Morgan Hall.



#FundingOpp >>>

- **NIH:** http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/funding_program.htm
- **USDA AFRI:** <https://nifa.usda.gov/page/search-grant>
- **NSF:** <http://www.nsf.gov/funding/index.jsp>
- **Grants.gov:** <http://www.grants.gov/>
- **Rural Assistance Center:** Various TNFunding Opportunities at <http://www.raconline.org/states/tennessee/funding>
- **Philanthropy News Digest (Foundation Center):** <http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/>
- **Morris Animal Foundation:** <http://www.morrisanimalfoundation.org/researchers/>
- **Grant Resources in Science, Math, and Integrated STEM:** <http://www.cesa2.org/programs/stem/STEMgrants.cfm>

Tips for Grant Writing links:

- <http://www.sloan.org/apply-for-grants/tips-for-writing-a-successful-grant-proposal/>
- <http://grantspace.org/blog/top-5-tips-for-successful-grant-proposals>
- <http://www.ninds.nih.gov/funding/grantwriting.htm>



OSP Office Left to Right: Rumira Xhaferaj, Jane Burns, Will Helmrath, Debbie Hampstead, Karin Langan, Cathy Creswell, Kathy Dalton, Shirley Phillips, Courtney Holbert, Traci Stanley

UTIA Office of Sponsored Programs Facebook & Twitter pages are avenues we use to keep you up to date with the ever changing events in Research Administration.

***** We use #FundingOpp *****

An additional source of information is our web page. ([link](#))
You may submit questions, ideas or suggestions for improvements of our newsletter to aggrant@utk.edu.

