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University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture Sponsored Programs Office

2015 July

Office of Sponsored Programs Newsletter

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Message from the Director

I don't know where the time went but it is time for the second newsletter from the Office of Sponsored Programs serving the Institute of Agriculture.

Notable articles in this issue contain information on Evisions which is scheduled to replace PAMS in December of this year. PAMS is the University's proposal and award management system for submissions to agencies and companies external to UT. Jane Burns continues to keep us updated on compliance issues and this edition includes information on human subjects research and new members of the IRB staff. Tips on how to request funding from foundations was put together by Courtney Holbert. December 26, 2014 the new Uniform Guidance that governs Federal awards went into effect. Will Helmrath included an article that explains the difference between direct and indirect costs. Congratulations are in order for Will as he was blessed with another daughter, Olivia Joy Helmrath born

July 7th. Mother and daughter are both doing well. Traci Stanley is currently on maternity leave following the birth of her son, Wyatt Earland Stanley on June 11. In order for you to get to know our staff, we are including a bio in each newsletter, in this issue you will "meet" Rumira Xhaferaj and her family. Also in this issue are details about *Stand Out From the Crowd*, a BIG GRANT workshop. Join us on August 14 to see how our office can help you with BIG proposals.

UTIA Office of Sponsored Programs Facebook page is another avenue we use to keep you up to date with the ever changing events in Research Administration. Please [like](#) us. An additional source of information is our web page. ([link](#))

You may submit questions, ideas or suggestions for improvements of our newsletter to me or to aggrant@utk.edu.

*Thank you,
Debbie Hampstead*



> **Evisions to replace our electronic proposal and award management system, TERA PAMS. Here are answers to some questions you may have about the transition:**

Why is PAMS being replaced? With the new system, we expect **improved maintenance and vendor support**. Computer maintenance of PAMS is difficult, since we don't have a vendor to provide support, UT has multiple "instances" of the system, and we have customized the product. All UT sponsored programs offices have worked – and will continue to work – together closely so that UT can have one university-wide "instance". Also, we will have vendor customer support available and a voice in product development. Another goal of the new system is **better reporting** capabilities for all.

What is the new system? We are contracting with Evisions, Inc. for these products:

- **Cayuse SP (Sponsored Projects)** – a proposal and award management system that will replace PAMS
This system is based on the same platform, so is similar to PAMS.
- **Cayuse 424** – for "system-to-system" proposal submission, which can be used in place of grants.gov packages and allow direct submission to grants posted by NIH, NSF, CDC, NIFA, and others
 - * *"System-to-system" is a new function for UT. Cayuse 424 will have institutional and individual profiles to facilitate proposal preparation and submission.*

When will we have the new system? The date is still tentative, but we expect it will be in December. Keep an eye out for future UTIA OSP e-mails and newsletters for announcement of the dates and other details.

What will we do when the system is down? We expect the system to be down only a few days, including a weekend. Our office will work with UTIA PIs to route proposals through PAMS, prior to the shut-down. If that isn't possible, we will wait to enter and route proposals in Cayuse SP after the down time. During the down time, we will get approvals via e-mail.

We will continue to use grants.gov, Fastlane, etc. for proposals during and immediately following the transition. Our goal is to continue submissions to agencies, without delays.

COMPLIANCE CORNER >>>

by Jane Burns

> Update on Institutional Review Board (IRB) and New Staff Members

For those of you dealing with Human Subjects research and the IRB, help is on the way! The IRB has been working to reduce review times, and the Office of Research and Engagement has hired more staff members. On August 3, IRB Compliance Officers **Kristine Hershberger** (from Purdue University) and **Laura Moll** (from Clemson University) will begin work at UT. Also, **Sara Mulville** (from Knox County Health Department) will be the IRB Specialist starting July 6th. I (Jane Burns) represented UTIA on the search committee for the Compliance Officers and am excited to see these qualified people come on board.

Please see the memo at this [link](#) for more details.

The IRB website can be found at <http://irb.utk.edu/>.

UTIA provides compliance learning sessions, usually provided at lunchtime, to help UTIA faculty, staff, and students. Please join us for the following scheduled sessions:

- **Agricultural Economic Espionage—A Growing Threat**— with Special Agent Beth O'Brien, FBI Knoxville
Tuesday, July 14, 2015 (noon – 1:00 pm; PBB 156/157)

For more information, please contact janeburns@utk.edu or visit our [website](#), where you can also find videos and materials from previous sessions.





> Foundation Funding For Your Program: How to be successful

When looking for money to support your program, the smaller, and sometimes more fruitful venues, are corporate and local foundations. Below are a few tips on how to be successful:

- Spend an ample amount of time reviewing the purpose of the foundation and the grant priority areas to see if they align with your proposal idea.
- Review IRS 990 from www.guidestar.com and see who and what the foundation has funded in the past several years.
- Contact the foundation administrator to discuss your idea and determine the amount of a typical grant before deciding to apply.
- Write your application using limited tables, bullets and graphics, bold, italicize or underline because many foundation submission portals will not recognize these features.
- If there is not a set application format, write your proposal in a simple and concise manner that explains the following:
 - * **Who**—Who will get the work done? Who will be served by the program? Describe any collaborative approaches by which the funder participates in a physical way, if possible.
 - * **What**—What will be happening? What are the specific strategies that will be used?
 - * **When**—When is the work going to be done? Use a timeline, if possible.
 - * **Where**—Where will the work take place?
 - * **How**—How will the work be accomplished? What resources will be used to get the job done? How will the work be sustained? Provide specific and measurable outcomes that can be accomplished in a specific time frame.
 - * **Why**—Why are you taking this approach? Have others used this approach and been successful? Is this approach a best practice? Why is the problem you are trying to solve significant, and how can the priorities of the foundation compliment in being a part of the solution?
- Keep your budget realistic. Foundations have a limited pot of money, and they want to impact as many communities as possible, so keep your request as realistic as possible.
- Provide a concise, well-written executive summary. This is often all someone will read before making a decision to fund your proposal.
- Include “the human face.” Add letters of support or quotes within the proposal from the target recipient about what you are doing that will aid the community. Remember that reviewers are human. The more interesting we make our proposals – the more likely the readers are to read them thoroughly.
- Write a personal cover letter to submit with your application (if allowed) to highlight items you already discussed with the administrator. Sign it personally and add a handwritten note (e.g. Enjoyed our conversation!)

If you are interested in finding some foundations to broaden your funding approach, send an e-mail to our office with several key words to describe your program area. We will do a search for you and then work closely with you to craft and submit your proposal.

- Keep applying and Good Luck!

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES >>>

- **NIH:** http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/funding_program.htm
- **USDA AFRI:** <http://nifa.usda.gov/program/agriculture-and-food-research-initiative>
- **NSF:** <http://www.nsf.gov/funding/index.jsp>
- **Grants.gov:** <http://www.grants.gov/>
- **Rural Assistance Center:** Various Tennessee Funding 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/>



> Changes to allowable Direct Costs on sponsored budgets

Effective December 26, 2014, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) consolidated several federal circulars to create a single set of minimum standards that govern the fiscal and administrative requirements for grants and agreements (known as the “Uniform Guidance”). Changes were made to specific cost items that had previously been treated mainly as indirect expenses and the University has revised several of its policies to include these changes. The purpose of this article is to give a brief overview of direct and indirect costs and highlight some of the changes and how they could impact the proposal/budget development.

> What is a “Direct Cost”? What is an “Indirect Cost”?

“Direct Costs” meet the following characteristics: allocable, allowable, and reasonable.

- An allocable cost is one that can be directly attributed to the project (For example, a portion of the PIs salary and benefits commensurate with her effort on the project or supplies used to complete a project aim).
- The cost must be allowable in accordance with Federal, Sponsor and University policy (For example, if international travel is allowed through University and Federal policies, but not according to the Sponsor’s policies, international travel cannot be charged to the award).
- Lastly, the expense must pass the reasonability test: Is the cost of the item reasonable given the project requirements and deliverable timelines? Can I purchase the same quality item from a different vendor at a better price?

“Indirect Costs” are also known as Facilities & Administration Costs (F&A). Indirect Costs are those that are, you guessed it, indirectly associated with the performance of a project and are budgeted as a percentage of the Direct Costs. Typically the types of costs that fall under the F&A category are operations and maintenance expenses, administrative expenses, departmental administration expenses, library costs, student administration and services, & sponsored project administration.

Costs such as utility and basic service charges (phones, maintenance fees, internet connection, etc) are typically treated as indirect costs, unless the location of the sponsored activity is not owned by the University.

Furthermore, the direct and indirect costs should be consistently treated as such across all sponsored activities.

> Impact on proposal budgets

The impact of some of the changes to the Uniform Guidance is felt in the following areas:

- Administrative, Clerical and Programmatic Salary Costs: Generally these salaries are still considered indirect costs; however, if 1) the services are integral to the project and 2) the individual(s) can be specifically identified with the project, a PI can include the individual(s) in the budget or obtain written approval from the Federal awarding agency before adding the individual to the project.
- Computing Devices: PIs may budget computing devices as long as the devices are essential and allocable to the project. Budget narratives should include a justification of why the device(s) is required and tie it back to the Statement of Work.
- F&A costs: Unless a program has a published statutory F&A cap, the federally negotiated F&A rate must be used. If an entity does not have a federally negotiated rate, a 10% de minimus rate is applied instead. This applies also to subawardees and a PI may not negotiate or agree to lower rates with their subrecipients.
- Visa Costs: Short-term visa costs that allow for field research or attendance at meetings in foreign locations or to allow visitors to visit the University in support of the specific projected can be budgeted with appropriate justification. Long-term visa costs (typically associated with “J” or “H1B” visas) are not allowable as a direct charge.

For more information, please visit the UT policy homepage or this link directly to [FI0206 – Sponsored Projects – Distinguishing Direct vs Indirect Costs](#). The University has also put together a “PI Quick Guide” (found [here](#)) that summarizes some of the major changes to allowable Direct Costs.

Aggrant@utk.edu

PLEASE email aggrant@utk.edu as soon as you know that you are going to submit a proposal. In your initial email include as much information as you have (ex: link to RFP, due date, will there be subs, are we a sub, etc).



> Office of Sponsored Programs spotlight is on Rumira Xhaferaj

Hi, I am Rumira! I was born and raised in Albania. In 2009 I moved to Maryville with my husband, Artan, and our two children, Sophie and Daniel, currently 14 and 12. We love the beautiful mountains in this area, and the people are all so nice! In 2014, my family and I became citizens of the United States. I have a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration from the University of Tirana, Albania, and in the fall of 2014, I obtained a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Tennessee. I joined UTIA in 2011 and currently I review and negotiate research contracts in the Office of Sponsored Programs. Artan also works for the University in the BESS department. In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my husband and children, traveling home to Albania, doing missionary work, reading, gardening (flowers), and watching old movies.

NIH UPDATES >>>

> Important Note on Deadlines for Required Final Reports & Grants Closeout

When an NIH awardee's grant project periods comes to an end, recipients must close out their grant by submitting a Final Federal Financial Report (FFR), Final Progress Report (FPR), and Final Invention Statement and Certification (FIS). The deadlines for these reports has recently changed to align with forthcoming standard award terms and conditions for participating Federal research agencies. All projects with a period of performance end date on or after October 1, 2014 must submit the final FFR, the FPR, and the FIS within 120 calendar days of the end of the period of performance. For any grants with a period of performance (project period) end date prior to October 1, 2014, the reporting deadline will be 90 days from the project period end date.

As announced in the NIH Guide, eRA systems are currently being updated to reflect these changes; we expect the "grants pending closeout" search by institution in [Commons Quick Queries](#) to reflect the new deadline by July 17, 2015.

- See more at: <http://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2015/06/30/important-note-on-deadlines-for-required-final-reports-grants-closeout/>

> How Can I Stay Up to Date on New NIH Funding Opportunities

All NIH funding opportunities are published in the [NIH Guide to Grants and Contracts](#) (as well as on Grants.gov). Here are a few options for staying on top of new announcements in the NIH Guide:

Create customized email alerts: In addition to [searching](#) the NIH Guide, you can save your search and receive an email notification when a new NIH Guide posting matches your search criteria. After performing your search, from the Results page click "Save Your Search" to sign up for alerts based on that search criteria. The system can email you with new funding opportunity announcements and/or notices related to your search on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Watch [this YouTube video](#) for a demo.

Join the [NIH Guide Weekly Table of Contents email listserv](#): Sign up for the listserv, and every Friday you will receive the week's NIH Guide notices and funding opportunities in a table of contents style digest.

[Follow @NIHFunding on Twitter](#): All NIH Guide postings go out over the @NIHFunding Twitter feed.

[Use the NIH Guide RSS feed](#): NIH funding opportunities are available in an [RSS](#) (Really Simple News Syndication) format for use in your news reader or service of choice.

- See more at: <http://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2015/06/29/how-can-i-stay-up-to-date-on-new-nih-funding-opportunities/>

Stand Out From the Crowd

**How the UTIA Office of Sponsored Programs Can Help with BIG Proposals
August 14th, 2015**

Grants that involve multi-disciplinary, multi-state, multi-investigator approaches to complex research problems are becoming an important component of federally funded research requests for applications. BIG GRANTS pose some interesting and unique challenges for PI's either as the lead PI or as a co-PI.

All UTIA faculty and interested staff (teaching, research, extension, veterinary college) are invited to attend. The workshop is being supported by the UTIA Office of Sponsored Programs and AgResearch. The location for the BIG GRANT Workshop will depend on the number of participants and will be sent out at a later time.

We hope you will take time from your busy schedules to attend this informative workshop!

Please save the date; and let Micki Heatherly (mheather@utk.edu), 865-974-7121) know if you plan on attending so we can order lunch for all attendees.

Agenda Items

- Office of Sponsored Programs
- Compliance Issues Unique to BIG Grants
- Resources Available to Assist UTIA Faculty in the Development of Big Grants
- What Happens During the Panel Review?
- Winning Proposals – Now That the Dog Has Caught the Car, What Does She Do With It?



Aggrant@utk.edu

PLEASE email aggrant@utk.edu as soon as you know that you are going to submit a proposal. In your initial email include as much information as you have (ex: link to RFP, due date, will there be subs, are we a sub, etc).