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University of Tennessee Office of Research

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Office starts ‘EARLY ALERT’ forecast for limited submission RFPs Will hold competitions in advance of announcements

Large grant programs such as those funding major research centers require long lead times to prepare successful proposals. The need for increased lead time poses particular challenges for programs that limit the number of proposals the university is allowed to submit. Sponsors often do not release a new program solicitation until just a few weeks or months before the deadline, leaving the university limited time to conduct an internal competition, select the strongest candidates, and still allow the chosen investigators sufficient time to develop a competitive proposal.

For recurring grant programs, waiting on a new program solicitation can be self-defeating. “If you wait until the new RFP hits the streets, you’re already out of the competition,” says Robert Porter, Director of Research Development. “For large grant programs like NSF research centers, successful PIs will often prepare multiple serious, long-term proposals. And proposals that need partnerships of any kind—whether they be linkages to the public school system or collaborators with other universities—take far longer to develop than the investigators realize.”

To address this problem, the Office of Research will implement a policy of forecasting the probable release date of expected limited submission announcements and will initiate the process of internal review and selection based on the previous announcement. As a result, the PIs who are selected will enjoy more realistic timetables to prepare complex proposals.

“Beginning with this newsletter, the Office of Research will post as many ‘early alert’ or ‘forecasting’ announcements as we can identify,” Porter said. “For the most part, we ask that investigators adopt a more proactive stance toward these programs and gear up to start their proposals on an earlier timetable than they’re accustomed to.”

As they look at RFPs, faculty should be alert for language in the solicitation that limits the number of proposals an institution can submit and should contact the Office of Research to determine the status of any existing or planned internal competitions.

Details: Contact Robert Porter (reporter@utk.edu, 865-974-3053) with questions about limited submission solicitations, deadlines, or policies.

ORU public hearings set for Haslam Building

Public budget hearings for the proposals submitted by Organized Research Units at UT Knoxville will begin at 8 a.m. on Thursday, April 29, and continue until 4:50 p.m. on Friday, April 30, in Room 440 of the Haslam Business Building, a conference room above the atrium on the 4th floor of the building’s West wing.

Organized Research Units are campus research centers recognized by the UT Office of Research as independent entities. The Office of Research will make limited allocations of funds to help select units with administrative and research-operational costs. Potential ORUs include emerging centers that have the potential to make a significant impact on a topic or discipline, or also any group of faculty working on a common research mission.

The Office of Research has invited some 31 ORU directors to give public presentations. More information: Jane Taylor (tayloje@utk.edu) Details: http://research.utk.edu/orus/

Burman to coordinate outreach, engagement for Office of Research

Elizabeth Burman has joined the UTK Office of Research as the new outreach and engagement coordinator. Burman has long been involved at the University of Tennessee East Tennessee Regional Economic Development Initiative and has varied nonprofit experience in both the United States and Canada. She has also worked as a freelance writer and web developer. She attended Smith College in Massachusetts and Whitman College in Washington, from which she graduated with a B.A. with honors in English and an art minor. She holds a professional certificate in nonprofit management from Duke University.

Contact: eburman@utk.edu, 865-974-8363.
Departments must establish, submit refund policies

Jonee Daniels-Lindstrom, associate vice chancellor for finance and administration, has announced required elements relating to refund policies for the UT Knoxville campus. Daniels-Lindstrom notes that the university returns funds to individuals, institutions and companies for a variety of reasons. The new refund policies, duplicate previous policies that may have been perceived in error, cancellations and some deposits. Each UT department issuing refunds must develop and follow its own policy concerning the amount and payment of refunds. These refund policies must be reviewed and approved by campus chief business officers. Departments are responsible for entering their own refunds in IRS. Treasurer Charles (Butch) Peccolo has announced a revision to two fiscal policies relating to refunds: F90310 - Receiving and Depositing Money and F10505 – Processing and Paying Invoices. The policy changes were effective April 1, 2010. Departmental policies and procedures, once established, should be sent to Gena Wilson (gwilson@utk.edu) for review and approval.

Available details: https://my.tennessee.edu/page/?_pageid=34,432358&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Note: This forecast is based on previous RFPs for this program and may vary from the final schedule or details of the expected solicitation.

EARLY ALERT: NSF Materials Research Science and Engineering Centers (MRSEC)

Through its Materials Research Science and Engineering Centers, the National Science Foundation supports interdisciplinary materials research and education while addressing outstanding problems in science and engineering. MRSECs require outstanding research quality and intellectual breadth, provide support for research infrastructure and flexibility in responding to new opportunities, and strongly emphasize the integration of research and education. These centers foster active collaboration between universities and other sectors, including industry, and they constitute an important network of university-based research centers addressing materials research. MRSECs address problems of a scope or complexity requiring the advantages of scale and interdisciplinary interaction provided by a center. A MRSEC is expected to operate at a single institution or involve two or more institutions in partnership. Budgets average $10 million to $12 million over five years, with the possibility of renewal for another five years; 12 to 15 awards in each three-year cycle; last cycle was 2007.

Expected schedule: Announcement expected in 2010.

Available details: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=52585

Note: This forecast is based on previous RFPs for this program and may vary from the final schedule or details of the expected solicitation.

EARLY ALERT: CUR will name fellows for undergrad research leadership

The Council on Undergraduate Research requests nominations for the CUR Fellows Awards, which are presented at the organization’s biennial national conference to two CUR members who have developed nationally recognized research programs involving undergraduates. Each CUR Fellow will also be awarded a Brian Andreone-CUR Student Research Fellow-ship that they will give to a deserving undergraduate at their institution. Award given in recognition of outstanding research and teaching in an undergraduate or graduate institution. CUR Fellows will have selected outstanding achievements in research and teaching to enhance collaborations. Center teams may include researchers from disciplines other than chemistry and from academia, industry, government laboratories and international organizations.

Expected schedule: Preliminary Phase I center startup proposals will be due in February, 2011 with budgets averaging $500,000/year over three years. Phase II proposals, if awarded, will average $4 million/year over five years, with possible renewal for a second five year term.


Note: This forecast is based on preliminary announcements for this program and may vary from the final schedule or details of the expected solicitation.

EARLY ALERT: NSF Centers for Chemical Innovation (CCI)

The National Science Foundation CCF program supports centers that can address major, long-term basic chemical research problems that have a high probability of both producing transformative research and leading to groundbreaking innovation. Appropriate research problems are high-risk but potentially high-impact and will attract broad scientific and public interest. Centers are expected to be agile centers that can respond rapidly to new opportunities and make full use of cyberinfrastructure to enhance collaborations. Center teams may include researchers from disciplines other than chemistry and from academia, industry, government laboratories and international organizations.

Expected schedule: Preliminary Phase I center startup proposals will be due in February, 2011 with budgets averaging $500,000/year over three years. Phase II proposals, if awarded, will average $4 million/year over five years, with possible renewal for a second five year term.


Note: This forecast is based on preliminary announcements for this program and may vary from the final schedule or details of the expected solicitation.

EARLY ALERT: NSF NSF Emerging Frontiers in Research Innovation (EFRI)

The National Science Foundation’s EFRI funds interdisciplinary initia-tives at the emerging frontiers of engineering research and education. EFRI seeks transformative concepts, potentially leading to new engineer-ing research areas for NSF and other agencies; new industries or capabil-ities that result in a leadership position for the country; and/or significant progress on a recognized national need or grand challenge. Makes 12-15 awards annually, averaging $500,000/year for four years; new core themes announced each year.


Note: This forecast is based on previous RFPs for this program and may vary from the final schedule or details of the expected solicitation.