TIGER TIPS
RESOURCES FOR AUBURN RESEARCHERS
NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION CAREER PROPOSALS

Recently, we have heard of many instances (from colleagues across the country) of National Science Foundation (NSF) proposals being returned without review because of compliance issues. One of the issue may be related to changes in recent revisions of the Grant Proposal Guide. Another factor may be increased enforcement by NSF.

In either case, with the upcoming CAREER proposal deadline in late July, we wanted to provide some tips related to some changes, as well as reminders of certain requirements:

➢ **New collaboration letter requirements for CAREER:** This year, letters of collaboration may only be ***one sentence long***. The wording, provided in the solicitation is as follows:

"If the proposal submitted by Dr. *[insert the full name of the Principal Investigator]* **entitled** *[insert the proposal title]* **is selected for funding by the NSF, it is my intent to collaborate and/or commit resources as detailed in the Project Description."**

Your collaborator should fill in the blanks, print the letter out on his/her letterhead and sign it. This letter *(with no additional wording)* should then be uploaded as a Supplementary Document. The details of the collaboration will need to be described in the text of your Project Description. Note that this applies only to the Letters of Collaboration *not* the Departmental Letter.

➢ **The Departmental Letter**: Should be no more than 2 pages in length and include the department head's name and title below the signature. The letter should contain the following elements:

- An indication that the PI's proposed CAREER research and education activities are supported by and integrated into the educational and research goals of the department and the organization, and that the department is committed to the support and professional development of the PI;
- A description of a) the relationship between the CAREER project, the PI's career goals and job responsibilities, and the goals of his/her department/organization, and b) the ways in which the department head (or equivalent) will ensure the appropriate mentoring of the PI, in the context of the PI's career development and his/her efforts to integrate research and education throughout the period of the award and beyond; and
- A statement to the effect that the PI is eligible for the CAREER program.

➢ **Results of Prior NSF Support:** If you have been supported by NSF funding in the last 5 years in any capacity (not just as PI or co-PI), you must include "Results of Prior NSF Support" as part of your 15-page Project Description. If you've been involved in more than one project, you may choose the one that is most relevant to your CAREER proposal. When describing those results, individually label "*Intellectual Merit*" and "*Broader Impacts*." You also need to be sure to cite all publications and products that came out of that project. Please ensure that you follow NSF's guidance in the Grant Proposal Guide in regard to the Prior NSF Support requirements.

➢ **Broader Impacts of Proposed Work:** You must include a separate, titled section called "Broader Impacts of Proposed Work."

➢ **Include Unfunded Collaborations and Other Resources in "Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources":** This includes collaborations for which you included a Letter of Collaboration as well as other resources that aren't included in the budget.

➢ **References Cited Instructions:** In recent years, NSF has become stricter about what must be (and should not be…) included in your cited references. Remember that this section is not included in your 15 pages, and there is not a page limit for references in the CAREER. You must include all authors in the sequence in which they appear in the publication, the article and journal title, book title volume number, page numbers (beginning and ending) and year of publication. If the publication is available electronically, include the website address.

➢ **Don't include urls in the Project Description:** You may cite a website just as you would a journal article and include the url in the References Cited section, but **don't** include the url within the 15-page Project Description.

➢ **Follow biosketch formatting requirements exactly**: This is another area in which NSF has been strictly following their guidelines. Please be sure to follow the required formatting instructions.

Most important to remember is that the CAREER solicitation is your first stop, and then anything not addressed in the solicitation is covered by the Grant Proposal Guide. If you're still not sure about an issue, please be sure to contact your contract administrator in the Office of Sponsored Programs or the appropriate college-level designee.