TIGER TIPS
RESOURCES FOR AUBURN RESEARCHERS

Automated Compliance Improvements of NSF Proposals

As part of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) efforts to modernize proposal submission and increase competitive fairness in the proposal process, NSF continues to focus on implementing automated proposal compliance checks in FastLane.

Effective September 26, 2016, FastLane will now check to ensure that the combined text of the Project Summary text boxes (or uploaded PDF if the Project Summary contains special characters) does not exceed one page prior to submission, rather than the current check of 4,600 characters. See the Proposal & Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG), Chapter II.C.2.b, for further information.

The compliance check will trigger an error message in the following circumstances:

- Project Summary text exceeds the one-page limit; and
- Project Summary text is entered and the user also uploads a "Project Summary with Special Characters" supplementary document.

Proposal File Update (PFU) Implications:

Proposers should be aware that if a proposal was received by NSF prior to September 26, 2016, containing a Project Summary that complies with the previous 4,600-character limit but exceeds the one-page limit, a PFU addressing any section of the proposal will result in the proposal not being accepted if it does not comply with these compliance checks. The checks will be run on all sections of the proposal, regardless of which section was updated during the PFU.

Grants.gov Implications:

Proposers should also be aware that Grants.gov will allow a proposal to be submitted, even if it does not comply with these proposal preparation requirements. Should NSF receive a proposal via Grants.gov that is not compliant, it will be returned without review. **NOTE** that for AU proposals to NSF, unless a solicitation requires the use of Grants.gov, the proposal should be developed in and submitted through the FastLane system.

NSF has created a useful matrix that reflects the specific compliance checks currently in place. This matrix is updated as new checks are implemented.