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From the Director's Office

Aloha Kākou,

We have seen a slowing down of the awards received by the University of Hawai'i (UH) in the past few months, which could be caused by the uncertainty of the federal budget. Although the awards are streaming in, some of the funding has been delayed. However, the good news is that proposal submissions are still growing steadily at UH. As soon as the federal budget is settled, we hope that award funds will be released to UH. This year, to date, we have received a total of \$415 million in awards.

As a reminder, spending on ARRA awards should be made timely and expeditiously in accordance with the pace of your project(s). The university's ARRA expenditures amounted to nearly fifteen percent (15%) of total awards received at the end of February, which is significantly below the national average of seventy-five percent (75%). While competitive awards generally have initial start-up periods, we strongly encourage you to develop and follow an expenditure plan in order to ensure the timeliness of expenditures for the successful completion of your ARRA award(s). Please let us know if you have any questions.

Updates to the National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Fellowship Guide and some help in interpreting National Institutes of Health (NIH) proposal scores are included in this month's issue. We hope you find the information useful.

We want to thank everyone in advance for your kokua in completing the F & A space survey on time. The deadline for completing the survey is May 15, 2011. Additional online sessions have been offered to assist the field in inputting data in April. Please register to take advantage of the opportunity. For more details, see the article below.

Mahalo,

Yaa-Yin Fong
Director, ORS



National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Fellowships Guide Update and Funding Model

New Funding Model and Reporting Requirements

GRFP is attempting to streamline the funding process by aligning the GRFP with typical NSF procedures, adding incremental funding, and changing reporting requirements. The new model will distribute funding incrementally and on an annual basis. The aim is to provide institutions with the money earlier. The incremental funds are anticipated for release by mid-summer and mid-fall, pending the availability of funds. Note, any surplus funding on expiring GRFP awards will require a no-cost extension to be submitted, and the funds must be fully expended prior to receiving a new award.

In addition to the new funding model, the GRFP has updated its reporting requirements. The GRFP is attempting to reduce the number of reports it previously required by eliminating the need for certain reports. Particularly, it has eliminated the need to submit grant rosters and multiple submissions. Only one submission will be required at the end of the fellowship year. However, fellows will need to make a tenure declaration in order to receive funding, and the declaration must strictly adhere to the declaration deadline. The PIs and FOs will also be required to submit a GRFP Annual Report by October 1, 2011.

Updates to the Program Solicitation

The GRFP has updated portions of the program solicitation. The updates provide clarification on eligible degree programs and a revision of the fields of study section. Additionally, the Fellows Abroad program has been discontinued. Specifically, the international travel award will be discontinued. Also, it should be noted, fellowships cannot be accepted or combined with other federal fellowships.

GRFP Guide Updates

The GRFP has made several updates, additions, and provided clarifications on a variety of areas within the guide. The following are some areas that have been updated in the guide: program calendar with critical deadlines, acronyms, definitions, terms, links, contacts, and appendices. Additions to look for are the incorporation of an academic/research advisor and responsible conduct of research language. Also, the GRFP provided clarification on the following issues: fellowship acceptance, deferrals, status definitions, tenure beyond degree completion, stipend supplementation, and fellow service expectations. In regards to service expectations, NSF fellowships require fellows to refrain from engaging in formal service and GRFP institutions cannot request or require service. The rationale is a fellow will be able to devote one-hundred percent of his or her time and effort to graduate studies and research without service expectations.

For more specific language on the updates, additions, and clarifications, please consult the GRFP webpage (http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=6201).

Understanding the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Proposal Scores

The Office of Research Services (ORS) is sometimes asked to interpret the scores PIs receive on their National Institutes of Health (NIH) applications. Here's some useful information that will give you a general idea of how your application has scored and what that means for your chances of receiving funding. First, it's important to break down the various measurements your application has received. The two categories are impact score and percentile rank (or payline).

The impact score your application receives is a reflection of its scientific and technical merit and is a result of the peer review committee's input. The score is based upon the following elements: significance, investigator, innovation, approach, and environment; along with other factors, such as the protection of human subjects and vertebrate animal care and welfare. The impact scores range from 1 to 9, with 1 being an exceptionally strong application, and 9 being a substantially weak one.

Next, the percentile rank your application receives is a reflection of how well it did as compared to all of the other applications you are competing within the current funding round and the two preceding rounds. The higher the percentile rank received, the better your chances are of receiving funding. Some, but not all, applications receive percentiles. Applications in response to a Request for Application (RFA) usually do not receive percentiles, in which case the impact score is the only indicator of your success.

As well, some institutes at the NIH use paylines rather than percentile ranks. A payline expresses the availability of funds for grants, the number of applications accepted, and the average cost of research project grant applications in the current fiscal year. When paylines are used, the strength of your impact score will determine if you fall in or out of the payline criteria, and ultimately your chances of receiving a grant.

To strengthen your chances of getting funding, here are the key questions you should think about when writing the scientific portions of your NIH application:

- Why should this research be done?
- What is the (potential) impact of your research?
- How will this research result in scientific advancements?
- Why are you using this type of methodological approach?
- How will you protect human subjects and/or vertebrate animals' care and welfare?

If you receive feedback from the peer review process that indicates you may resubmit your application, carefully review the critiques and address each point in the introduction and research strategy sections of your resubmission. Remember to check if there are any restrictions on the number of resubmissions that are allowed for a previously submitted application.

As always, the Office of Research Services is here to help guide you through the process. If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Halaszyn, Contracts and Grants Manager, ORS Kaka'ako Satellite Service Center at jhalaszy@hawaii.edu or (808) 692-1807.

Updated Subaward Procedure and Request for Information

As an update to the procedure announced in last month's newsletter, effective as of March 1, 2011, all subaward agreements (regardless of amount) for subawards issued under prime awards to the University of Hawai'i will be processed through the Office of Research Services (ORS).

ORS has received many inquiries regarding whether tax clearances and cost or price justifications will be required. Per confirmation from the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i (RCUH), cost or price justifications will no longer be required for subawards. RCUH is currently working on updating their website. ORS and RCUH are still in the process of confirming whether tax clearances will still be required. Once confirmation is obtained, information will be included in a future newsletter.

As we continue to work with RCUH to finalize the procedure, ORS and RCUH have further determined that for new subawards below \$25,000, the principal investigator (PI) and/or the fiscal officer (FO) should prepare a subaward agreement using the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) subaward agreement template "as is", if possible, and obtain the subrecipient's signature prior to submitting the subaward agreement to ORS. If the subrecipient requires changes to the template, please follow the procedure outlined in the March 2011 newsletter for subawards greater than or equal to \$25,000 (see http://www.hawaii.edu/ors/documents/newsletter/ORS_Newsletter_March_2011.pdf).

During the transition period, if you already have a subaward on the RCUH template that is fully negotiated and ready for signature, please notify Darcie Yoshinaga at dsy@hawaii.edu as soon as possible so that ORS can obtain additional information and provide you with further instructions as to how to proceed. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and for your patience as we are finalizing the overall process with RCUH.

F&A Space Survey Data Entry Sessions

The deadline for the F&A space survey is May 15, 2011. For the units selected for the F&A space survey, Space Survey and Integrated Planning (SSIP) has arranged to provide data entry advice and assistance the Keller ITS Training Room on the following dates:

Session 1: Thursday, April 21, 2011, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Session 2: Monday, April 25, 2011, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Session 3: Tuesday, April 26, 2011, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Session 4: Friday, April 29, 2011, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Each session can accommodate up to 15 persons. Please make reservations with Mark Gilbert of SSIP at markdgil@hawaii.edu if you would like to attend.

Because the sessions will be used to help facilitate data entry into the AiM space survey system, please collect your survey data before you attend a session. If you believe you have persons and accounts that are not in the AiM system, please contact Kevin Hanaoka, Cost Studies Manager, at hanaokak@hawaii.edu, so that he can verify or add the information to AiM.

ORS Helpline Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

I am thinking about submitting a proposal in the future, what should I do to get started?

As early as possible, fill out and electronically submit the advance notification form located on the ORS website:

<http://www.ors.hawaii.edu/index.php/advance-notification>

What is the purpose of the advance notification form?

Once you submit the advance notification form, the pre-award specialist who will be handling your proposal will be informed of the upcoming submission. Once the pre-award specialist is informed of the submission, they will be able to better assist you with proposal preparation or fulfilling pre-submission requirements.

What if I don't need help with a proposal?

We still ask that you fill out the advance notification form so our office knows to expect your proposal for submission and can plan accordingly.

Do you have a Question or Comment for ORS?

Please feel free to contact us at the ORS Helpline:

Email: helpline@ors.hawaii.edu or Phone: (808) 956-5198