

January 2010
Vol 4/No. 1
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Office of Academic & Government Grants

And In This Corner...

The Feds ... and You

As grant activity at the College has steadily increased, faculty are pursuing not only more grants but also bigger and more complex grant awards. Faculty are now asking for more explanation of external regulations and guidelines. Federal regulations and guidelines are an excellent place to begin explanations because those rules apply to all federal grants *and* to all “flow down” federal monies, even if those funds have flowed all the way down to the Carroll County level. Moreover, the principles laid out by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget for federal awards are commonly used as the guiding principles for all grant programs. Even private sponsors are beginning to ask applicants to come closer to the federal standard in grant applications.

Explanation #1: The reigning principle of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-21 (Cost Principles for Educational Institutions) is consistency:

If one were to read Circular A-21, one would find multiple directives like these:
“C. Basic Considerations:

10. Consistency in estimating, accumulating and reporting costs.

a. An educational institution’s practices used in estimating costs in pricing a proposal shall be consistent with the educational institution’s cost accounting practices used in accumulating and reporting costs....”

Or:

“14. Disclosure Statement.

e. Cost and funding adjustments. Cost adjustments shall be made by the cognizant agency if an educational institution fails to comply with the cost policies in this Appendix or fails to consistently follow its established or disclosed cost accounting practices when estimating, accumulating or reporting the costs of sponsored agreements....”

As the guiding principle of Circular A-21, “consistency” is the golden rule in RFPs and an awardee’s handling of grant funds. That is why all salary to a grant is billed as a percentage of the regular academic or annual year base salary. For example, a faculty member requests summer salary at 1/9 or 2/9s of his or her base academic year salary. This is why the College applies consistently the 30% fringe benefit rate generally used by employees on all grant applications, and this is why all faculty time—donated or supported by grant funds—must total 100% (of the regular workload). In the end, this is why the College can not bill for “special” requests....

Three OMB Circulars in particular apply to the College’s grant awards:

1. A-110: Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education....

2. A-21: Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations

3. A-133: Audits of Institutions of Higher Education....

All three circulars can be downloaded at

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default/

Next newsletter: The Feds, the Certifications/Assurances for Grants, and You

Best Practices: Searching for Opportunities (“Opps”)

Individual grants are won through faculty expertise, and most faculty are professionally active to the extent that they arrive in the Office of Academic & Government Grants with more than one funding opp that they would like to pursue. Nonetheless, this Office tries to provide additional support in searching for opps. This support would take three forms:

- (i) opps identified by this Office and emailed to potential applicants;
- (ii) searches conducted upon request (and when time permits);
- (iii) resources to help faculty be aware of or locate the ideal opps for themselves.

The latter is critical because it rests on the expertise of faculty. The main resource provided by this Office is the “Search for Funds” page located from the right menu of the “Grants Resource” website. The “Search for Funds” page consists of information, guidance, examples, and links to sponsors, databases, catalogues, newsletters, alerts and announcements of funding opps services, and more:

“Search for Funds” Table of Contents

I. Federal Databases

Examples: Grants.gov, The Federal Register, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, FirstGov for Nonprofits, Federal Business Opportunities

II. Agency-Specific Databases

Examples: Grants.gov’s “Browse by Agency” search engine; Cabinet-level agencies such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS); substrata of Cabinet-level agencies such as DHHS’ National Institutes of Health

III. Non-federal Databases

Examples: Foundation Center, GrantsNet, College Art Association

IV. Non-federal Sponsors

Examples: American Council of Learned Societies, American Philosophical Society, Social Science Research Council, Woodrow Wilson International Center, Research Corporation

V. Email Alerts/Newsletters

Examples: Institute of Museum and Library Services “Primary Source,” National Institutes of Health “Listserv,” National Science Foundation “E-Bulletin: Active Funding Opps,” U.S. Department of Education “EDInfo,” U.S. Department of Energy “DOE Pulse,” U.S. Department of Justice “JUST INFO.”

Remember....the “Grants Resource” website has been and is always there...24/7

www.mcdaniel.edu/grants.htm

As soon as you log onto the College’s “Grants Resource” website, you will find the “Mission Statement” for this Office and contact information for its Director. On the right menu, you will find links to a variety of information and resources in these areas:

- Forms, Certs, & Assurances
- Writing & Submission
- Search for Funds
- Fulbright Awards
- College Awardees
- FAQs: The Frequent Fifteen
- Grants Committee
- Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

