Introduction to Sponsors and Award Mechanisms

OSR-Evanston
Proposal Development Series

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What are Sponsored Programs?

• Research, training, service, or similar activity funded by an external entity for a specific purpose

• Evanston campus sponsored programs span
  – A broad range of academic disciplines
  – A broad range of sponsors
Why Sponsored Programs?

• Generate and disseminate knowledge
• Train future generations
• Impact society at the local, regional, national and international level
• Build/upgrade facilities
• Attract the best faculty
• Attract the best students
• Attract the best sponsored programs!
• Rankings
**Types of Sponsors**

- Broad range of sponsors fund activity at the University
  - Federal
  - State and local government
  - Foundations/nonprofits
  - International
  - Industry
- It’s important to understand that these sponsors have different missions and priorities
- Sponsors may not always understand business and legal framework of the University
Federal Sponsors & Funding

• Funding driven by the federal budget, which guides annual funding for the government
• President & Congress agree on a budget number
• Congress appropriates funding to and passes appropriation bills, the President approves
• Agencies receive funding via those appropriations, and are able to fund sponsored projects
Federal Sponsors & Funding

• Most significant source of funding for the University
• 26 grantmaking agencies
• Sequestration
  – Took effect March 2013
  – Congress has recently restored some of the deep cuts to scientific research as a result of sequestration, but overall funding for research has been effectively flat for about a decade
• Perspective of the tax-payer
• Transparency, accountability
National Science Foundation (NSF)

- NSF is the funding source for approximately 24 percent of all federally supported basic research conducted by America's colleges and universities.
- NSF is the only federal agency whose mission includes support for all fields of fundamental science and engineering except for medical sciences.
- Primary source of federal funding in fields such as mathematics, computer science, and the social sciences.
- Divided into 7 directorates.
- Fulfill mission primarily via issuing grants with limited terms.
  - FastLane
National Institutes of Health (NIH)

- Part of the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Largest funder of biomedical research in the world
- 27 institutes & centers with individual research agendas
- NIH also conducts its own research through its Intramural Research Program
- Use of activity codes to differentiate programs
  - Research Grants (R series), Career Development Awards (K series), Research Training and Fellowships (T & F series), Program Project/Center Grants (P series)
- Grants.gov, eRA Commons
Department of Energy (DOE)

• Mission focused on national security and prosperity by addressing energy, environmental, and nuclear challenges
• 17 national laboratories
• More likely to engage in classified research related to matters of national security (nuclear programs)
• Grants.gov, Portfolio Analysis & Management System (PAMS)
Department of Defense (DOD)

- Research mission aligned with the armed services
- More likely to engage in classified research related to matters of national security
- Includes Army, Air Force Office for Scientific Research (AFOSR), Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)
- Grants.gov
Industry

- Different missions and priorities than universities
- Seek competitive edge in the marketplace
- Interested in rewarding shareholders
- Tend to view sponsored research as a purchase of goods or services
- Typically view information as confidential
- “Closed” to outsiders
- Most interested in highly applied work
Foundations/Associations/Societies

• Generally nonprofit, more in-line with mission of the University
• Increased accountability with emphasis on impact – definitions of impact can vary
• Institutional relationship can be a consideration
• Often interested in funding research overlooked by federal sponsors
  – Seed funding for new research
  – Funding for education, training, and outreach
Foreign

- Large, crosscutting “category” of sponsor
- Federal, foundation, industry
- Different cultural and legal frameworks present challenges
- We are not able to do business in the same way with every foreign state
Agreement Types

• Different award mechanisms

• Some common characteristics
  – Competitively evaluated
  – Agreement is with the institution
  – Scope of work defines project
  – Defined project period
  – Terms and conditions provide legal and operational framework for administering the award
  – Unilateral vs. bilateral vs. multilateral
  – Payment schedule/structure
Grants

• Award mechanism associated with financial assistance
• Hypothesis-driven activity
• Typically initiated by the grantee
• Generally the most flexible award mechanism
• Principal purpose is to benefit the grantee and the public
• Funded by groups with purposes that are scientific, educational, or philanthropic
Cooperative Agreements

- Award mechanism associated with financial assistance
- Sponsor is significantly involved in the scientific or programmatic activities
- Substantial involvement includes guidance, coordination, and/or participation in the work performed under this award mechanism
- Principal purpose to benefit the public
Contracts

- Award mechanism associated with procurement and acquisition
- More rigid performance requirements associated with project milestones and deliverables
- Generally the least flexible award mechanism
- Principal purpose is to benefit the sponsor
- Majority of industry agreements use a contract mechanism
Subawards

• Agreement with a third-party organization for their programmatic involvement in a portion of research
• Subrecipient typically performs work at their site using their personnel and resources
• Subrecipient takes full responsibility, including intellectual leadership, for their portion of the research, captured in a scope of work
• Incoming vs. outgoing
Other Types of Agreements

• Amendments
• Data Use Agreements
• Non-Disclosure/Confidentiality Agreements
• Facility Use Agreements
• Master Agreements
Grants vs Gifts

**Grants**
- Strings attached
- Specified statement of work
- Reporting requirements
- Performance period
- Must be routed through Office for Sponsored Research
- Subject to University policy

**Gifts**
- No strings attached
- No specified statement of work and/or deliverables
- Minimal reporting requirements*
- Irrevocable
- Subject to University policy (e.g., travel)
Summary

• Broad range of sponsors fund sponsored activities at the University
• Understanding the approach and mission of the sponsor is important when seeking funding and when evaluating an award
• Federal funding is predominant at the University, often with most rigorous requirements
• Primary types of agreements include grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and subawards
• Difference between grants and gifts
Proposal Development Series

- Focused on the pre-award process for research administrators
- Covers topics relevant to successful proposal development and submission from the administrative point of view
  - Introduction to Sponsors & Award Mechanisms (7/18)
    - Reading and Evaluating Solicitations (8/5)
    - Anatomy of the Administrative Shell (8/25)
      - Developing Budgets (9/12)
      - Effective Communication (9/30)
Future Series

• Financial Accounting and Management
• Legal Requirements and Compliance
• Upcoming Brown Bags, August and September
  – Standard Research Agreement
  – Working with National Laboratories

*If you’re interested in collaborating with OSR-Evanston on a brown bag, please let us know!
Questions?

Thank you!