

From: Pell, Eva J. [mailto:ejp@psu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2009 8:29 PM
Subject: please forward to URC and UPCADS

From: Eva J. Pell

To: URC and UPCADS

Re: Stimulus funding

We are all sitting on the edges of our chairs waiting to see how the respective agencies respond to the funds flowing through the stimulus package. In the last couple of days we have been in contact with the NIH, DOE Office of Science and NSF to see what we could learn. I am providing you with several verbatim conversations to keep you in the loop. I will also provide you with a summary and proposed strategy. First, what we have learned:

1. Today Alan Snyder, Peter Schiffer, Peter Hudson and I were on a call with Ray Klington the interim administrator of NIH. The transcript of that conversation is attached.
2. Yesterday I had an email exchange with Jim Collins, an Assistant Director of NSF and the head of the Bio Directorate. I posed several questions to him focused on the broader questions around the agency. I have pasted the exchange below.

The NIH and NSF responses have in common several things. First, the lion's share of funds will be used to fund proposals that are already in the system and were viewed as fundable by peer review and weren't funded because the money simply ran out. Both agencies will have \$300 million for equipment grants. The decision on how those funds will be deployed has not yet been resolved by either agency. However, we want to be ready. Peter Schiffer will be convening the Big Equipment committee formed over the last year to review the items currently on the list and to discuss the current priority listing and to determine whether any new items should be added. Obviously the same items may not be appropriate for NIH and NSF. Once we see what the rules are and before final decisions are made on proposal submission appropriate consultation will occur. There will also be some construction funds from both agencies and in this case we will work with a series of options developed together with the Office of Business and Finance and appropriate Deans.

3. There is less money in the Office of Science at DOE but we were particularly concerned about whether the funding for the Energy Frontier Research Centers had survived since we submitted several key proposals. I had an exchange with Pat Dehmer, Director of the Office of Science at DOE. She said: "The quick answer for the EFRCs is that they are alive and well in the new Administration. Regarding the funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we cannot provide the details of funding until we have completed discussions with the Secretary and the Administration; this should not take long". She forwarded my email to Harriet Kung who said "This is to follow up on Pat's response below. As you know, the EFRC was part of the FY 2009 budget request of the Office of Basic Energy Sciences (BES) in DOE's Office of Science. Currently, our EFRC plan is on track, with an award announcement date scheduled by April, 2009. We will not be able to share any follow-up EFRC solicitation plan at this time. You may find the status of the EFRC on our website: <http://www.sc.doe.gov/bes/EFRC.html>. We will also make public the details of the stimulus spend plan as soon as we receive clearance for approval and dissemination of information.

This is a pretty general update. If any of you have specific questions or want details on the funding levels just let me know.

Email from NSF:

Dear Eva,

Since we don't have budget numbers, we have no specific plans for allocating funds in BIO or the other directorates. Arden has advised caution, and we've advised the PDs to stay calm and await guidance once we know what the dimensions of any Recovery funds will look like. We're still discussing how any equipment/infrastructure/facilities funds might be handled. Basically, it's too early to answer.

Regarding Q#3: The numbers that Congress has considered for NSF in the Recovery Act are based on portfolio analyses showing that, for example in BIO alone, we have enough proposals in the directorate that are ranked excellent or very good that we could award some \$450M. The point is that we don't need more proposals as we have many E and VG proposals in the building that we could fund already. So we will not be encouraging proposals outside of our regular solicitations.

Regarding the Sept 30, 2010 deadline: The Recovery language used so far is clear regarding priorities, which include improving success rates, creating jobs, and aiding young investigators. Further, the funds should be spent quickly. So, depending on the guidance we receive, we could have until September 30, 2010 to obligate the funds, but we are likely to be encouraged to obligate funds as quickly as possible in the spirit of the Recovery Act. PIs will be guided to expend any funds quickly.

My responses apply NSF-wide.

I hope this helps. Basically, we're encouraging patience until we all know more details. Please call or write if I can be of any additional help.

The April BIO-AC meeting promises to be very interesting as we cover these issues and more.

Regards,
Jim

From: Pell, Eva J. [mailto:ejp@psu.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 11:51 AM
To: Collins, James P.
Subject: Update

Hi Jim,

Thank you again for providing me with some insight a few weeks ago. Now that the stimulus package is being (or has been) signed everyone is scrambling again to figure out how to proceed. I was at a meeting with Deans yesterday and 3 of them had spoke with folks at NSF with feedback. I thought it

might be helpful to see if I could get from you, information that could affirm or inform that information. Below are a list of questions. Again it may be too soon to be asking you these questions but figured I'd get them in for your to respond to when its appropriate.

1. Will there be a new solicitation for equipment/infrastructure or will you be working from existing competitions just digging deeper into the list?
2. How will the facilities modernization portion be handled?
3. The bulk of the \$3 billion would appear to be program money. Others here have spoke to some of your colleagues and have come away with the impression that the goal will be to fund more of what has already been proposed to improve the rate of success. Is this in fact accurate?
4. What is meant by the phrase "...to remain available until September 30, 2010." Does that refer to the time until funds are obligated or until funds are expended?
5. Are your responses (particularly 1-3) for the entire Foundation or just for the Bio Directorate?

Thank you in advance.

Best,
Eva

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