Welcome to the SPA Newsletter!

We are pleased to introduce the first edition of Sponsored Programs Accounting’s newsletter! We will be using this periodic newsletter to communicate updates on federal, state and university policy changes as it relates to post award issues, as well as communicating other important Sponsored Programs Accounting (SPA) updates.

Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013 will be a time for evaluating existing policies, procedures and business processes. We have already begun increasing our training and outreach activities (see page 3) and hope to work with the Tufts Research Community during this exciting time.

OMB Head Calls for Accelerating Spending of Remaining ARRA Funds

NIH, HRSA and the National Science Foundation have each recently issued notices warning recipients of Recovery Act funding that previously automatic no-cost extensions will not be granted and that projects need to end by Sept. 30, 2013, unless the agency has given prior approval. This is necessary because the Office of Management and Budget has said projects funded with Recovery Act money should be completed by this date, or agencies will have to take steps to "reclaim funds that remain unspent."

In its Dec. 13 notice, NIH noted that for projects that already have end dates beyond Sept. 30, 2013, "NIH staff administering these grants will also reach out to recipients to discuss possible strategies for accelerating progress and expenditures. Revised award terms will vary depending on the award terms provided in the current notice of award."

In a nearly identical notice also issued on Dec. 13, NSF outlined the requirements for expenditures by Sept. 30, 2013, but also indicated that it may seek a waiver from OMB’s mandates. For any awards "anticipated to continue past September 30, 2013, NSF grantees must contact the program officer identified in the award notice in writing that an extension of the expiration date is vital for the completion of the project," NSF said. "All requests must be received on or before June 1, 2012, regardless of the current project expiration date. Prior written approval to extend beyond September 30, 2013 will only be considered" based on OMB criteria and "only if NSF receives a waiver from OMB," NSF said.

Other government agencies are expected to issue similar notices to grantees who received Recovery Act funding.

Link to NIH notice:

Link to NSF notice:

Link to OMB memorandum:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memos/2011/m11-34.pdf
NIH Salary Limitation –
NIH Guidance to Follow Soon

The NIH budget approved December 23, 2011 reduces the salary cap from Executive Level I ($199,700) to Executive Level II ($179,700).

New proposals to NIH or AHRQ must utilize the $179,700 cap.

Section 203, General Provisions of H.R. 2055 includes this language: “None of the funds appropriated in this title shall be used to pay the salary of an individual, through a grant or other extramural mechanism, at a rate in excess of Executive Level II.”

NIH has not yet provided details regarding implementation of this reduction to the salary cap. NIH currently is finalizing guidance, which should be available during the week of January 9th. It has been over a decade since this salary level has decreased, so there are a number of issues that need to be addressed. SPA will provide additional updates as we learn of them.

OMB Circular A-21: Changes in the Works?

Are major changes coming for OMB Circular A-21 that might reduce the administrative burden associated with managing grants? It looks like that is a distinct possibility. A Task Force was formed earlier this year by agency leadership at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the White House, DHHS, DoD, NSF, DoE, and other agencies to develop recommendations for substantive changes to OMB Circular A-21. OMB Circular A-21 is the document that contains cost principles which provide the general accounting guidelines for research universities and helps define which costs are allowable and allocable to federally funded awards. It is a vital guide for researchers and administrators at Tufts University.

Some of the A-21 Task Force Recommendations include:

- Reduce the burden of effort reporting
- Allow direct charging of research administrative and compliance support (i.e., F6b)
- Reduce the burden of subrecipient monitoring
- Prohibit voluntary committed cost sharing on all federally-sponsored programs
- Create a mandatory cost sharing exemption for research universities and institutions

We will keep the Tufts University community advised as events unfold.

The 45-page recommendation document can be found at www.cogr.edu (see Latest News!, July 28, 2011 link on the COGR home page).

At the request of the A-21 Task Force, COGR prepared a follow-up proposal to the original July 28 recommendation to discontinue the effort reporting requirement. The 10-page recommendation document can be found at www.cogr.edu (November 9 - Effort Reporting Requirement).
Revised NIH and NSF Grants Policies

The National Institutes of Health has revised their Grants Policy Statement. The changes are effective October 1, 2011 and apply to all grants and cooperative agreements with budget periods beginning on or after this date. The complete document can be found here:


NSF’s entire suite of Award Terms and Conditions has been revised. The revised Terms and Conditions will apply to all new NSF awards and funding amendments to existing NSF awards issued on or after February 1, 2012. These Award Terms and Conditions are available electronically at:

http://www.nsf.gov/awardsmgr/award_conditions.jsp?org=NSF

Please find some examples of significant changes in the left hand margin.

Training and Outreach

We are pleased to announce that Sponsored Programs Accounting has two new training sessions we are offering to the Tufts Research Administration community. Carol Liedes has put together two great presentations: "The Fundamentals of Post Award Research Administration and Grants Management," in addition to our 4 e-learn courses offered on line.

The Fundamentals of Post Award Research Administration course is intended primarily for the newcomer involved in post award sponsored programs administration or for the individual who is seeking a broader view of post award research administration. This session is targeted specifically to departmental administrators. The Grants Management course is geared towards more seasoned departmental research administrators. It addresses topics such as an OMB A-21, cost transfers, foreign travel, cost sharing, grant closeouts, best practices, etc.

Please check TELD at http://go.tufts.edu/teld for training dates.

Also, since training grants are complex and can be challenging, we would also like to offer to host a NIH Training Grants Round Table discussion.

Please contact us if you are interested in one of our training opportunities.

NCURA Educational Programs


Registration now open

http://www.ncura.edu/content/educational_programs/sites/fra13/index.php

NCURA Region 1 Spring Meeting ~ Save the Date!

May 6 – 9, 2012 Newport, RI ~ for more information please visit:

www.ncuraregion1.org

NCURA YouTube

Tuesday Check out NCURA’s YouTube Tuesdays at

http://www.youtube.com/user/ncura1959 where each week your colleagues will be sharing tips and information on topics of interest to research administrators.
Changes to the Processing of Non Grant Labor Adjustments

Effective February 1st, all labor adjustments for hourly employees from Dept ID to Dept ID and all Dept ID to Dept ID labor adjustments for semimonthly employees on non-covered personnel reports will be processed through the HR Service Center. We made this decision in order to alleviate some of SPA’s non grant related responsibilities so that we can better service the Tufts Research Community.

Staffing Announcements

Janet Martignetti

After 9 1/2 years of dedicated service to the University, Janet Martignetti will be leaving to join Boston Dynamics in Waltham as the Deputy Finance Officer. Janet’s last day at Tufts is Friday, February 3rd.

Janet’s talents have contributed significantly to strengthening SPA’s post award operations. She has done excellent work in an extremely demanding and complex environment.

Janet is someone known for her commitment to her work. She is well respected by her staff and her colleagues at Tufts. She is a pleasure to work with and her absence will be a loss to Tufts.

Please join us in thanking Janet for her service to SPA and to Tufts and to wish her continued success in her new job.

Cathy Sohngen

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome our newest staff member Cathy Sohngen, to the Office of Sponsored Programs Accounting in Medford. Cathy will be joining our team officially on Monday, January 30th.

Prior to joining SPA, Cathy had been working at Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH for the past 6 years, in various roles in Sponsored Research.

In her new position as a Senior Grant Accountant, Cathy will be responsible for overseeing the grants and contracts for the School of Engineering, The Gordon Institute, The Center for Science and Math Teaching and Financial Aid.

Please join SPA in welcoming Cathy to Tufts University and wishing her well in her new position.

Visit our website for comprehensive grant information at http://finance.tufts.edu/spa

As always, please call with any questions or concerns you may have!