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To: Department Chairs, Center Directors, & the UMBC Research Community

From: Karl V. Steiner, Vice President for Research

Via: Keith Bowman, Dean, College of Engineering and Information Technology
William LaCourse, Dean, College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences
Scott E. Casper, Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Re: Clarification and Enforcement of existing Proposal Submission Deadlines and Procedures

Effective August 2019, the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) in the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) will explicitly abide by existing procedures for proposal submission deadlines. Under this procedure, a fully completed proposal and all attachments must be sent to OSP in a “ready-to-submit” state **no later than three (3) UMBC business days prior to the sponsor deadline** in order to be submitted to the sponsor.

At the beginning of each day, OSP will review proposals in Kuali due to the sponsor over the next three days, and if a proposal is found not to be in “ready to submit” condition, OSP will contact the PI and appropriate institutional officials with a reminder.

Any proposals not received in a “ready-to-submit” condition by 9:00 am on the due date to the sponsor will not be submitted by OSP and will be returned to the PI and the institutional unit. In addition, OSP will inform the appropriate Associate Dean for Research or respective official of any such returns.

OSP serves as the authorized office to submit all proposals for extramural support of research, scholarship or creative achievement on behalf of UMBC. The grants and contracts experts in OSP are responsible for verifying that the contractual and budgetary components for every proposal meet sponsor solicitation requirements and institutional guidelines. These solicitation guidelines are unique for each proposal and can vary significantly among sponsors from public, private, or foundation sectors.

OSP plays a critical role in the proposal submission process. Rapidly advancing technologies and increasing competition for limited funding resources often lead sponsors to identify non-compliance up front. Sponsors might refuse to review proposals for (sometimes minor) administrative omissions. It is discouraging to all of us when a proposal is not accepted or is returned for non-technical reasons (e.g., page length, font size, margins, or missing documents), but, more importantly, it tarnishes the professional reputation of the PI and reflects poorly upon the entire UMBC research community and our collaborative partners.

What is a “ready-to-submit” proposal?

A complete, “ready-to-submit” proposal is one that has been routed for signatures via Kualu and has been fully approved based on the prior submission of the key information required for review, including details on institutional commitments (i.e. space, time, and effort) and budget. The “ready-to-submit” proposal must also include a final title and executive summary as well as the complete and final versions of all the necessary forms and documents. That is, the PI should have all the documents ready for OSP to submit the proposal to the sponsor. In addition, if the proposal is to be submitted via an electronic submission system (i.e. Fastlane, Research.gov, Grants OnLine, NSPIRES, Grants.gov, etc.) all documents must be uploaded to the system and OSP must have been given “submit” access via Kualu, or any other appropriate electronic submission system.

What support will be provided to the Principal Investigators?

The OVPR, in coordination with the Colleges, Schools, and the Research and Creative Achievement Council, has held and will continue to hold outreach and education sessions to enhance all PIs’ awareness of these requirements.

OSP will initiate the three-day reminders on August 1, 2019 and will implement the 9:00 am return procedure on September 1, 2019.

The OVPR recommends that PIs consult with their unit’s research administration and with OSP about their proposals as early as possible. This is especially necessary when pursuing complex and multiple PI-led proposals. We consider the preparation and submission of these proposals as a team effort where we share a common goal – submitting a successful, winning proposal as effectively and efficiently as possible.