December 16, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: NSF Researchers

FROM: Dr. Jeffrey R. Seemann
Vice President for Research

SUBJECT: Implementation of National Science Foundation Responsible and Ethical Conduct in Research Requirement

In accordance with the 2007 America COMPETES Act, the National Science Foundation (NSF) announced a new policy requiring all undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers supported by NSF to complete training in the responsible and ethical conduct of research (RCR). The implementation of this requirement becomes effective on January 4, 2010. At this time, institutions submitting proposals to NSF must certify that they have a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the RCR for undergraduate and graduate students and postdoctoral researchers who will be supported by NSF. Institutions will also be responsible for verifying and maintaining the documentation evidencing the receipt of such training.

An initial university plan has been developed to meet NSF’s January 4, 2010 implementation deadline. The plan can be accessed at the Office of Research Compliance website http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu/. The Office of the Vice President for Research is in the process of organizing an appropriate group of stakeholders, including faculty and administrators, to develop enhancements to the current university plan.

Beginning on January 4, 2010, an RCR certification will be required for all Texas A&M University (TAMU) proposals submitted through TAMU Research Services and the Research Foundation. The university’s plan is not to be submitted with proposals; however, NSF may require the university to provide the plan upon request.
Undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers will be required to complete training and pass a test within their core areas. Typically, training is provided in the following core areas:

- Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research
- Research Misconduct
- Use of Human Subjects in Research
- Use of Animals in Research
- Data Acquisition and Management
- Responsible Authorship
- Peer Review
- Mentoring
- Conflicts of Interest
- Collaborative Research

Principal investigators will be responsible for identifying paid and unpaid students and postdoctoral researchers supported by NSF awards that result from proposals submitted on or after January 4, 2010, and directing them to take the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) RCR training course available through the university’s Office of Research Compliance website at http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu/; or other RCR training approved by the Office of the Vice President for Research.

For additional information or questions, please contact Gregory L. Foxworth, Assistant Vice President, Office of the Vice President for Research, at 979-845-1812 or via email at g-foxworth@tamu.edu.

cc: Dr. R. Bowen Loftin
    Dr. Karan L. Watson

The National Science Foundation’s Federal Register announcement concerning its implementation of Section 7009 of the America COMPETES Act can be accessed at http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-19930.htm

NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide