GRC Bulletin
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NASA Experts at GRC Funding Competitiveness Conference
Interested in finding out the latest funding opportunities from NASA in FY 15? Join us at the GRC Funding Competitiveness Conference, August 18-20, 2014, to hear updates from Max Bernstein and Carolyn E. Knowles.

Dr. Max Bernstein
Carolyn E. Knowles

Dr. Max Bernstein serves as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Science Mission Directorate's Lead for Research. He will provide GRC conference attendees with an extensive overview of upcoming funding opportunities and research initiatives coming out of SMD in FY 15.

Carolyn E. Knowles is the Director of NASA Internships, Fellowships, and Scholarships in the Office of Education. She will be discussing the One Stop Shopping Initiative, which is an innovative NASA-wide approach to providing students at all institutions of higher education access to a portfolio of internship, fellowship, and scholarship opportunities offered by NASA Mission Directorates and Centers.

GRC Welcomes New Program Manager
Sandy George was recently named the new GRC program manager, the position recently vacated by long-time GRCer, Linda Anthony. Since initially joining the staff as a research associate in June 2011, Sandy has steadily moved up the ranks and assumed more leadership. Currently, she is a co-editor for Deadlines; a regular contributor to GrantWeek and the Bulletin; the primary contact for six federal agencies including the National Science Foundation; the primary contact for Category C member institutions; and the project manager for the GRC Funding Competitiveness Conference. As the new program manager, Sandy will take over GrantSearch database management, maintain GRC sponsorships, oversee GRC’s social media presence and help the assistant director with customer service issues.

Prior to joining the GRC, Sandy worked at the National Archives and Records Administration, interned as an archival assistant at the Smithsonian Institute Archives, and was the senior academic advisor within the College of Liberal Arts at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. Sandy received both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in history from Texas State University. When she is not helping GRC member institutions find federal funding you can find her competing in marathons, bike races, and half and full Ironman triathlons.

GRC Program Manager Sandy George

**ED Seeking Comments on Proposed Priorities**
The U.S. Department of Education is seeking stakeholder input on 15 proposed priorities and related definitions for use in discretionary grant programs beginning in FY 15. These priorities reflect the lessons learned from implementing discretionary grant programs, as well as current policy objectives, and emerging needs in education. Comments are due by **July 24, 2014**.

**NIH SMRB Discusses Grant Review Reform**
The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Scientific Management Review Board (SMRB) met July 7-8, 2014, at the Bethesda campus to discuss new initiatives, streamlining the grant review process, and efforts to reach a more diverse pool of scientists and institutions. NIH Director Francis Collins announced that NIH senior leadership would host a first-of-its-kind meeting with leadership from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to consider how to build new technologies, advance maternal child health,
and build health capacity in sub-Saharan Africa. Director of the NIH Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives James Anderson spoke about NIH efforts to engage with pre-college students using the Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA). His presentation, “Optimizing NIH Efforts to Engage Pre-college Students in Biomedical Science” reflected the goals of SEPA’s current funding opportunity. Invited K-12 science teachers from the Washington, D.C. area spoke of teaching challenges, including rote instruction (‘teaching to the test’) and restrictions on spontaneous interactions with students, particularly those enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) classes. Several university faculty (drawn from Brown University; University of Texas, Austin; and Northwestern University) presented evidence-based studies related to curriculum and psychosocial development of STEM K-12 students.

Addressing the grants application and review process, NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research Sally Rockey described the existing process and addressed comments and suggestions for reform. Associate Director for Extramural Activities for the National Institute for General Medical Science (NIGMS) Ann Hagan voiced concern regarding the difficulty of finding competent reviewers for some of the more complex grant applications. One idea discussed by the Board was to eliminate standing review cycles in favor of rolling reviews that would activate once a critical mass of meritorious submissions was reached. The Board also expressed concern that NIH’s funding trend has grown more conservative and risk-averse to innovative science.

**Corporate Giving: Cash Versus In-Kind**

The Chronicle of Philanthropy has released a series of articles on its website (subscription only) examining recent trends in types of corporate giving. It found that many of the largest corporations are shifting from diverse funding portfolios to fewer, large-scale projects focused in areas close to the company’s expertise. This enables companies to decrease cash giving in favor of in-kind donations of company goods or services. The Chronicle of Philanthropy reports that, while U.S. corporate profits rose 5 percent to an all-time high of $1.9 trillion in 2013, cash giving rose less than 3 percent to a total of $4.6 billion. During this same period, product donations increased by 22.8 percent. According to the Chronicle’s annual report, Giving USA, overall corporate giving was down in 3.2 percent in 2013. The Chronicle of Philanthropy has also released a series of short profiles of the top ten corporate givers of cash including Walmart Stores, Wells Fargo & Company, Chevron Corporation, Goldman Sachs Group, and ExxonMobil Corporation.

**Contention Arises Over Federal Education Research Bill**

Members of the research community are openly criticizing legislation being considered in the Senate that would reauthorize the U.S. Department of Education’s research branch, the Institute of Education Sciences, arguing that “… provisions of H.R. 4366 [may] diminish the autonomy, authority, and stature of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).” In a letter addressed to Senator Tom Harkin, Chair of the
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and Senator Lamar Alexander, the Committee’s Ranking Member, the American Educational Research Association and ten other research organizations expressed a multitude of concerns over the continued reduction of the independence and authority of the NCES. In May, the bill passed in the House of Representatives.

CIES is Seeking Fulbright Peer Reviewers
The Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) is looking for Fulbright alumni and other experts to fill vacancies across 80 disciplines on over 130 review committees. CIES is responsible for conducting the initial screening (known as peer review) of potential Fulbright Scholars. Especially needed are reviewers in the fields of Life Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Journalism, Political Science, Museum Studies, Geography, Theater Arts, Music Theory, Western European History, Computer Science, American Literature, and Journalism. To learn more about the program and how to join a Peer Review committee see the Peer Review July Newsletter and visit the program website.