

Office of Sponsored Programs

The mission of the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) is to assist the MIT research community in securing sponsored research funding that is consistent with the mission and goals of the Institute; to provide information and assistance in managing sponsored research funding; to provide the proper stewardship of research funds that satisfies both the sponsor and the Institute; and to advocate for MIT research to outside entities. Primary functions of the office are:

- Proposal review to ensure adherence to sponsor requirements and compliance with Institute and sponsor policies.
- Review and negotiation of agreements, including outgoing subawards, to ensure consistency with the Institute's corporate charter and status as a tax-exempt educational institution and compliance with Institute academic and research policies such as those relating to freedom to disseminate research results, access for all foreign faculty, staff, and students to MIT's educational and research activities, control of intellectual property, and full cost reimbursement.
- Post-award administration to provide assistance to departments, labs, and centers in meeting MIT and sponsor requirements.
- Calculation, audit defense, and negotiation of MIT's facilities and administrative and employee benefit rates.

Challenges and Accomplishments

Training

The new website for Coeus, MIT's electronic research administration system, was launched in December 2009, and the new OSP website was launched in June 2010. Both represent vast improvements over the previous versions, and involved rewriting and updating hundreds of pages of content. The new sites are clear and easy to navigate. The user community has widely praised these sites and has offered ideas for improvements that are being incorporated regularly. The new sites can be found at <http://coeus.mit.edu/> and <http://osp.mit.edu/>.

Following on work begun by MIT's Training Alignment Team, a collaborative group of training providers with the mission of aligning and enabling Institute-wide training for world-class work, OSP pilot-tested a comprehensive Sponsored Projects administration training program for senior departmental administrators. Fifteen administrators from 14 departments, labs, and centers in five schools and the Office of the Provost participated as learners and program reviewers. The goal of the program is to prepare administrators to carry out and oversee critical research administration and compliance tasks. The program invited and engaged experts from 20 departments and functional areas. One significant product of the program development is a working draft of a new reference document, *A Guide to Research Administration at MIT*. The program will be rolled out to the research administration community in fall 2010, with a goal of training one senior administrator in each department with appreciable research volume by the end of the fiscal year.

Streamlining and Improving the Sponsored Project Proposal Process

In response to the 2009 MIT Institute-wide Planning Task Force recommendations, OSP and the Research Administration Coordinating Committee (RACC) are taking leadership roles to facilitate process improvements across the MIT research community that make significant and measurable improvements in the development, review, and submission of sponsored project proposals. Tools will be developed to support community proposal preparation. At this time, federal agency-specific proposal guidelines and checklists, highlighting important features in federal funding announcements, are being disseminated via the OSP website. OSP systems for monitoring proposal preparation and review have been improved.

OSP continues to see improvement in the quality of OSP proposal review, resulting from OSP core training improvements initiated in May 2009. This continued improvement has enabled OSP to initiate development of a program to streamline OSP review by authorizing qualified OSP administrators to submit proposals without senior staff review. Next steps include engaging researchers and research administrators to identify areas for further improvement

Non-Federal Agreements

In FY2010, the number of non-federal agreements negotiated by OSP increased 14% to 319, totaling over \$170.1 million. Further, expenditures for non-federal awards grew at a rate of 16.2% (excluding the Broad Institute).

In response to the task force recommendations, OSP has begun a program to improve the way in which non-federal negotiations are conducted and the way we communicate with the MIT community. The program includes developing more standardized business processes, developing more templates for frequently drafted research agreements to speed up new agreement development as well as improving existing templates to reduce language that is confusing or triggers unnecessarily difficult negotiation, improving our communications with agreement stakeholders inside and outside of MIT, and performing a benchmark customer satisfaction survey and longitudinal surveys after negotiations are complete to gauge satisfaction and provide feedback for continued improvement of our performance. This work will continue through FY2011 and FY2012.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, also known as the Economic Stimulus Package, calls for federal funding agencies to invest approximately \$22 billion in extramural research by September 2010 for the purpose of stimulating the US economy, in particular, retaining existing and creating new jobs. Both the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Department of Energy (DOE) received about 50% more in funding (\$3 billion each) in addition to their usual FY2009 appropriation amount (about \$6 billion each). The National Institutes of Health (NIH) received another \$10 billion in addition to their \$29 billion FY2009 annual appropriation. The other funding agencies received more modest increases in funding through ARRA.

To date, MIT has received 165 awards totaling \$134 million. These awards come with stringent additional reporting requirements. Specifically, principal investigators (PIs)

are required to provide quarterly reporting of expenditures, progress on the project, and counts of the number of jobs created and retained for each award funded with ARRA funds for the life of the project, up to five years. The first report was due 10 days after the close of the quarter ending September 30, 2009, seven months after the announcement of the ARRA funding program. OSP, in coordination with the Office of the Vice President for Finance (VPF), developed a new module in Coeus to enable PIs to meet the reporting requirements as easily as possible. The system was widely considered to be a success, ensuring compliance with federal requirements and minimal PI effort. The team that led this project won an MIT Excellence Award in the spring.

MIT received a prestigious facilities development award from NIH (\$15 million) and smaller equipment and renovation awards from NSF and NIH. The full list of ARRA awards can be found at <http://osp.mit.edu/coeus/user-guides/osp-guide-to-arra-reporting/report-of-mit-arra-awards/>.

Research Administration Coordinating Committee

The Research Administration Coordinating Committee (RACC) was launched in March 2009 to provide ongoing review of research administration policies, systems, and business practices and processes to improve the way we manage sponsored funding at MIT. In FY2010, RACC developed improved processes for bringing the campus in compliance with certifying salaries on sponsored awards and streamlining and improving the award closeout process, both overseen by VPF. The group also advised OSP on the development of a response to a new NSF requirement that those students (undergraduates and graduates) and postdoctoral researchers who receive NSF funds be trained in the responsible conduct of research. For FY2011, process improvement efforts are scheduled around the development and processing of proposals and the management of cost sharing related to federal awards. RACC is a group of volunteers and does not have a staff.

Impact of National Policies on Research Activities

Conflict of Interest

NIH and Congress continue to scrutinize researchers with potential conflicts of interest. The NIH requested comments on its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking issued in May 2010. The proposed new policy includes several changes that would impact MIT. We expect a new NIH policy to be released in FY2011, at which time OSP and the VPF will seek input from the Committee on Outside Professional Activities, and the Committee on Managing Potential Conflicts of Interest, chaired by professor Sheila Widnall, prior to developing to any new policies.

Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act

In an ongoing effort to increase transparency in spending federal funds, the government has just announced new reporting requirements that require MIT to provide details on all subawards issued from federal awards. Like ARRA, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requirement will include specific organizational information about our subawardees, including the name of the subawardee organization, D-U-N-S® Number, the top five highest-compensated individuals at the organization, and other details. This information must be submitted

within 30 days of the execution of each subaward. OSP is leading an effort to develop an efficient system for reporting this information to the government on a regular basis.

Research Volume

The MIT total research volume (expenditures) for FY2010, excluding Lincoln Laboratory and the Broad Institute, was \$614 million. The MIT Brown Book reports \$626,560,519 in expenditures for FY2010; however, there were \$12,189,623 of Broad Institute expenditures that posted in FY2010. In Table 1, FY2010 excludes all Broad Institute expenditures.

The adjusted FY2009 numbers for comparison with FY2010 MIT campus research volume are as follows:

- Broad Institute FY2009 volume was \$178,147,946.
- MIT campus volume in FY2009 excluding Broad Institute was \$540,055,353.
- MIT campus volume for FY2010 excluding Broad Institute was \$614,370,896, which represents an increase of 13.76% over the adjusted FY2009 expenditures.

The volume breakdown by major sponsor is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Research expenditures by sponsor (in thousands of dollars), FY2006–FY2010.*

	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
	Original source	Proximate source	Original source	Proximate source	Original source	Proximate source	Original source	Proximate source	Original source	Proximate source
Federal										
DHHS	195,573	174,171	201,557	177,175	226,307	198,205	255,896	231,449	136,923	123,100
DOE	67,265	60,179	64,741	55,990	64,889	57,239	65,356	58,183	72,599	65,035
DOD	89,535	54,196	90,571	57,113	87,370	55,526	97,528	63,650	106,890	69,969
NSF	65,040	54,412	65,057	52,006	64,973	51,120	61,386	47,864	69,802	54,678
NASA	31,229	19,405	27,889	16,536	25,479	14,923	27,358	16,433	30,629	20,464
Other	15,709	11,569	14,589	12,026	14,891	12,715	14,975	12,644	13,311	11,258
Subtotal	464,351	373,932	464,404	370,846	483,909	389,728	522,499	430,223	430,154	344,504
Nonfederal										
Industry	73,179	99,712	75,190	99,771	79,016	100,285	96,214	116,170	89,790	110,101
Nonprofit	28,306	86,015	37,590	99,934	50,909	117,469	63,817	128,327	50,040	106,136
Other	21,660	27,837	21,084	27,717	29,209	35,561	35,673	43,483	44,387	53,630
Subtotal	123,145	213,564	133,864	227,422	159,134	253,315	195,704	287,980	184,217	269,867
Total	587,496	587,496	598,268	598,268	643,043	643,043	718,203	718,203	614,371	614,371

Note: Original Source includes expenditures on awards directly from US government agencies plus expenditures at MIT through subawards. For example, if we receive Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) funds via a subaward from Princeton University, we would count it as DHHS funding under Original Source column, and Nonprofit under Proximate Source. Therefore, federal funds would be higher under the Original Source column.

*Totals exclude Lincoln Laboratory.

OSP operating statistics for FY2008–FY2010 are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Office of Sponsored Program Operating Statistics, FY2008–FY2010.

	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010
New proposals (excl. Broad)	2,142	2,373	2,439
New proposals	2,239	2,497	2,440
New awards (no Broad)	976	936	1,135
New awards	1,049	1,013	1,137
New contracts (US fed, excl. Broad)	26	24	28
New contracts (non-fed, excl. Broad)	319	280	256
New contracts (US fed)	26	25	28
New contracts (non-fed)	332	289	256
Active contracts (US fed, excl. Broad)*	88	89	84
Active contracts (non-fed, excl. Broad)*	828	840	826
Active contracts (US fed)*	92	91	84
Active contracts (non-fed)*	865	854	826
Active consortia	56	54	57
Total # active consortia members	271	227	222
Consortia expenditures	\$35,157,926	\$37,575,903	\$28,260,230
ARRA proposals	—	274	124
ARRA awards	—	23	136
ARRA awards: total anticipated \$	—	\$13,378,861	114,415,688
Coeus help-desk tickets	—	1,605	2,853
Active internal orders	8,244	8,655	8,856
Internal order initiated in the FY (by effective date)	964	853	630
Subawards issued	190	188	205
Subaward invoices posted to SAP	2,434	2,816	3,022

*Includes fellowships, IPAs, and instruction

Michelle D. Christy
Director, Office of Sponsored Programs

More information about the Office of Sponsored Programs can be found at <http://osp.mit.edu/>.