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Subject: OSP's plans for managing the upcoming NIH Challenge deadline
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Dear NIH PIs:

I am writing to inform you of OSP's plans for managing the upcoming NIH Challenge Grant deadline, and to ask you to get your proposal(s) into OSP as soon as possible, but no later than 9 am Tuesday, April 21st. Note that this is the beginning of school vacation week when many working parents try/have to take time off.

MIT is preparing over 100 proposals for this deadline as the prime organization, plus another 20 proposals where MIT is a sub. We are also assisting in the submission of 35+ applications for the Broad. As a matter of scale, MIT submitted 406 proposals to the NIH in FY08, so this one call for proposals represents about 38% of our annual volume.

To address this unprecedented challenge, OSP is:

- Planning early and late shifts for the office staff in order to submit to grants.gov and NIH Commons during the off-peak times
- Strategically teaming contract administrators to review proposals more efficiently
- Investigating the programming of several additional validations in Coeus to alert DLCs about common errors
- Developing one set of comments from the contract administrator and the Liaison back to the DLCs when changes are required
- Developing a common list of "overrides" that OSP can make without returning the proposal to the DLC
- Programming other routing options for corrected proposals which will minimize the approvals in the revised proposal process

More detailed information on these topics will be released as soon as the modifications to Coeus have been finalized.

As previously stated, reviewing and submitting system-to-system proposals via Coeus are far less time consuming than Adobe proposals. The internal review process for Adobe packages is significantly more onerous than Coeus proposals,

due to the fact that each and every standard field (i.e. MIT's DUNS number or congressional district) must be checked for spacing, typos, etc. as they will cause the application to error.

In March, Grants.gov reported that Adobe applications failed the submission process three times more frequently than system-to-system proposals. Therefore, we are asking those departments who do not use Coeus to make the shift now – OSP is prepared to assist in the preparation and have created a Challenge Grant Prep Guide specifically for Coeus. For those who still choose to use Adobe for prime submissions, your proposals will be processed in OSP as time becomes available. I regret that we have to do this, however, we simply cannot assure that these applications will be submitted on time, given the volume of proposals that OSP needs to process and the large amount of effort to review and submit these proposals.

During the week of April 21, OSP will be focusing on the submission of these applications; therefore, all other non-proposal work in progress will be subordinate. After the deadline, we will work to clear the backlog and catch up on missed business as soon as possible. These steps are necessary in order to meet this unprecedented increase in proposals.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Michelle

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