

National Science Foundation  
Office of the Director  
Arlington, VA 22230

Important Notice No. 127

July 8, 2002

**IMPORTANT NOTICE TO  
PRESIDENTS OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES  
AND HEADS OF OTHER NATIONAL SCIENCE  
FOUNDATION GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS**

**Subject: Implementation of new *Grant Proposal Guide* Requirements Related to the Broader Impacts Criterion**

The National Science Board approved the use of two merit review criteria in March 1997, and each subsequent issuance of the *Grant Proposal Guide* (GPG) since 1997 has continued to strengthen the coverage relating to the importance of broader impacts in the preparation and review of proposals submitted to NSF. In addition, two separate Important Notices<sup>1</sup> have been issued to inform/remind the community of NSF's intentions in this area.

In an effort to increase compliance with these requirements, the January 2002 issuance of the GPG incorporated revised proposal preparation guidelines relating to the development of the Project Summary and Project Description. The GPG now specifies that Principal Investigators (PIs) must address both merit review criteria in separate statements within the one page Project Summary. The GPG also reiterates that broader impacts resulting from the proposed project must be addressed in the Project Description and described as an integral part of the narrative. Examples illustrating activities likely to demonstrate broader impacts are available electronically at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf022/bicexamples.pdf>.

In order to ensure that proposals are treated equitably, the FastLane system has been enhanced to remind/inform PIs of the new proposal preparation requirements. Through incorporation of reminders in the proposal preparation process in FastLane, as well as increased coverage of these guidelines on the NSF website, we expect to increase compliance by informing PIs of the requirements at the point in the process when the information will be most useful.

Effective October 1, 2002, NSF will return without review proposals that do not separately address both merit review criteria within the Project Summary. We believe that these changes to NSF proposal preparation and processing guidelines will more clearly articulate the importance of broader impacts to NSF funded projects.

We continue to appreciate your commitment to conveying the importance of both intellectual merit and broader impacts of research and education activities to both the Principal Investigators who are developing and submitting proposals, as well as to those who may serve as proposal reviewers. NSF continues to strengthen its internal processes to ensure that both of the merit review criteria are addressed when making funding decisions.

Rita R. Colwell  
Director

<sup>1</sup>Important Notice 121, *New Criteria for NSF Proposals*, and Important Notice 125, *Merit Review Criteria*, both addressed the issuance and implementation of broader impacts of the proposed effort in the preparation and review of proposals submitted to NSF.